

Cheshire Local Access Forum



Agenda

Date:	Friday 18th June 2010
Time:	9.30 am for 10.00 am start
Venue:	Groundwork Cheshire, Navigation Road, Northwich, CW8 1BE

Directions to Groundwork Cheshire , Northwich on Pages 1 - 4

1. **Apologies for Absence (10.00 - 10.05)**

2. **Minutes and Matters Arising (10.05 - 10.10)** (Pages 5 - 16)

To confirm the minutes of the Cheshire Local Access Forum held on 18 March 2010 and to receive information on the long distance paths which can be found in Cheshire

3. **Best Practice Recommendations from Cheshire Local Access Forum to Parish and Town Councils (10.15 - 10.30)**

Andy Gildon and Mike Scott to report on the Best Practice Recommendations

4. **Post Local Government Review Contacts (10.30 - 10.35)**

Amy Rushton (Cheshire East) and Angela Simpson (Cheshire West and Chester) to report on the Rights of Way Team staffing structures

5. **Working Groups (10.35 - 10.50)**

John White to report on the establishment of Working Groups

6. **Public Rights of Way Annual Report (10.50 - 11.00)** (Pages 17 - 44)

Amy Rushton (Cheshire East) and Angela Simpson (Cheshire West and Chester) to report on the Public Rights of Way Annual Reports

For requests for further information

Contact: Rachel Graves

Tel: 01270 686743

E-Mail: Rachel.Graves@cheshireeast.gov.uk

7. **Rights of Way Improvement Plan Updates and Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2 Development (10.50 - 11.00)** (Pages 45 - 54)

Denise Snelson (Cheshire West and Chester) and Genni Bulter (Cheshire East) to report on the projects in the current Rights of Way Improvement Plan and on the development of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2

8. **Public Rights of Way Regulatory Decision Making (11.15 - 11.30)** (Pages 55 - 56)

Angela Simpson (Cheshire West and Chester) to report on the change in the way the Cheshire West and Chester Public Rights of Way (PROW) Committee will function

9. **Feedback from North-West Regional Chairs' Meeting (11.30 - 11.45)**

John White to report on the items discussed at the meeting of the North West Regional Chairs' meeting

10. **Reports from Members (11.45 - 12.00)**

11. **Any Other Business**

12. **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Cheshire Local Access Forum will be on Friday 17 September 2010

Directions to Groundwork Cheshire



Directions via:

- Road & motorway
- Railway
- Bus
- Maps

By Road and Motorway :

From South(M6) –

- Take Junction 18 off the M6 taking the A54 to Middlewich. Go through the town following the A54 through Middlewich, then taking the A533 to Northwich through the village of Bostock.
- On reaching a roundabout, turn right up the A533 to Northwich and at the next roundabout turn left up to the lights at Leftwich.
- Go straight over at the lights along the A533 into Northwich through Kingsmead.
- At the bottom of this road is J & S Motorycles. Turn left at the lights, over the swing-bridge and then left just over the bridge down Navigation Road passed British Waterways.
- Follow the road down till you come to a small industrial estate on your left and the Groundwork Cheshire sign. Turn left here and the office is at the far end of the car park.

From North & East (M6) –

- Take Junction 19 off the M6 following signs for A556 Northwich. Follow this road through two set's of lights passed Lostock Gralam till you come to large roundabout.
- Cross over the roundabout passed Roberts Bakery through the lights till you come to another roundabout. Turn right here down to the A533 Northwich, left at the roundabout and clock tower following the A533 into Northwich through Kindsmead.
- At the bottom of this road is J & S Motorycles. Turn left at the lights, over the swing-bridge and then left just over the bridge down Navigation Road passed British Waterways.
- Follow the road down till you come to a small industrial estate on your left and the Groundwork Cheshire sign. Turn left here and the office is at the far end of the car park.

From Chester direction –

- Coming along A54 from Chester, follow signs for A556 passed Delamere towards Northwich.
- On reaching Sandiway continue along the dual carriageway over the river till you come to a roundabout. Turn left at the roundabout down to the A533 Northwich, left at the roundabout and clock tower following the A533 into Northwich through Kindsmead.
- At the bottom of this road is J & S Motorcycles. Turn left at the lights, over the swing-bridge and then left just over the bridge down Navigation Road passed British Waterways.
- Follow the road down till you come to a small industrial estate on your right and the Groundwork Cheshire sign. Turn left here and the office is at the far end of the car park.

From Frodsham direction –

- Follow signs for Northwich from Frodsham along the A553 into Northwich through Barnton.
- Turning right at the lights over the bridge, passed Winnington through two set's of lights and drop down a small mini roundabout. Turn right here up the A559 and turn left at the next set of lights.
- Before you reach the swing bridge in front of you turn right down Navigation Road passed British Waterways.
- Follow the road down till you come to a small industrial estate on your right and the Groundwork Cheshire sign. Turn left here and the office is at the far end of the car park.

By Railway :

Trains are once an hour, arriving at Greenbank Station (from Chester around 30 minutes passed the hour and from Manchester 20 minutes passed the hour.)

See National Rail Enquiries for more information or ring 08457484950

Train-line from Chester to Manchester –

- Destination station is Greenbank Station along the line which is a miles walk from Groundwork Cheshire.
- Upon leaving the station onto Chester Road, turn right along the road and follow it north-east towards Northwich town centre, passing the roundabout and under the former railway bridge passed several shops of Castle.
- Take the second road off to your right which will be Darwen Street which passes the Darwen Primary School on your left.
- Follow this road down towards the railway bridge, taking the first turning on your left Spencer Street and follow this road down till you come to a small industrial estate on your right and the Groundwork Cheshire sign. Turn right here and the office is at the far end of the car park.

By Bus :

- The following bus services stop in Northwich Town Centre which is a 10-12 minute walk from Groundwork Cheshire : 1, 1A, 2, 2A, 29, 31, 36, 36A, 26B, 45, 46, 48, 82, 289, X22
- From the town centre bus station, head along Chester Road west towards the swing bridge and cross over at the lights along London Road passed J & S Motorcycles and turn right here towards the swing bridge, cross over the swing bridge and turn right up Navigation Road till you come to the small industrial estate and the Groundwork Cheshire sign. Turn left here and the office is located at the far end of the car park.
- Please use the following website to aid in finding the right bus service to Navigation Road and Northwich Town Centre.
<http://www.cheshire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/F2CD3F81-EA6B-4EC2-BC22-699D98308FD1/0/NorthwichDestinationFinderPortrait.pdf>

Area Map.



Northwich Town Map.



MEETING : CHESHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
DATE : 18 JUNE 2010

REPORT OF : COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS
Contact : Genni Butler & Denise Snelson
Officer 01606 271817 or 01606 271931

MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

- 1 To confirm the minutes of the Cheshire Local Access Forum held on 19 March 2010 (Appendix 1).
- 2 At the last meeting, Members of the Forum requested information on the long distance paths which can be found in Cheshire. The table in Appendix 2 outlines the name of the path, the start and finish points, the length and target user group. The table also presents which organisation is responsible for promoting the route and whether any additional resources are allocated.

RECOMMENDED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2010 be confirmed as a correct record and the list of Long Distance Paths in Cheshire be noted.

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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE CHESHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM held on Friday 19 March 2010 at Jubilee Hall, Knutsford.

PRESENT:

Forum Members

John White (in the Chair)
Robert Anderson
Neil Collie
Helen Connolly
Andy Gildon
Dale Langham
Andrew Needham
Keith Osborn
Keith Pennyfather
Michael Scott
Kath Wurbacher

Officers and others

Genni Butler, Cheshire East Council
Rachel Graves, Cheshire East Council
Amy Rushton, Cheshire East Council
Hazel Barber, Cheshire West and Chester Council
Laura Shakeshaft, Cheshire West and Chester Council
Angela Simpson, Cheshire West and Chester Council
Denise Snelson, Cheshire West and Chester Council
Martin Thornhill, Cheshire West and Chester Council
Caroline Wilkinson, *pmpgenesis*
Graham Dutton, Warrington Borough Council
Dan Johnston, JACOBS
Anna McFarlane, JACOBS
Simon Hayton, JACOBS

Two members of public were present.

Action

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Rachel Bailey, Ken Edwards and John Taylor.

2 MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

Minutes 37 – Cheshire East Policy on Structures on Public Rights of Way

The Cheshire East Council Public Rights of Way Committee had adopted the Policy on Structures on Public Rights of Way at its meeting on 1 March 2010.

Minute 38 Local Transport Plan

Michael Scott confirmed that a response had been submitted on behalf of the Forum to the Local Transport Plan consultation. No

response had yet been received.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2009 be agreed as a correct record.

3 A556 PROJECT

Don Johnston, Anna McFarlane and Simon Hayton from Jacobs attended the Forum to brief Members on the Amended Preferred Route for the A556.

An announcement had been made that morning of the amended preferred route of the A556 scheme from Junction 19 of M6 to Junction 7 of M56. The scheme would include an improved layout of the M56 Junction 7; a split level junction with the A50 between Hoo Green and Mere; a direct connection to M6 Junction 19, and the villages of Bucklow Hill and Mere would be bypassed. Before an application for Development Consent was submitted to the Infrastructure Planning Commission, a public consultation would be held to seek views on more detailed proposals.

The public rights of way affected by the proposed new road were highlighted to the Forum. A non-motorised survey was to be carried out which aimed to obtain baseline information on pedestrian, cyclist and equestrian traffic. It was proposed that face to face interviews be carried out at various locations along the route. Each survey would last for 12 hours and would take place midweek and at weekends. The survey would identify the popular routes currently used; the aspirations of pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders; identify circular routes, and allow concerns and comments about the scheme proposals to be raised and suggested improvements to be noted. A wide range of user groups would also be consulted on the proposals.

Forum members asked a number of questions about the proposed route and survey to which the officers from Jacobs responded. They were asked to submit any further comments to Anna McFarlane with by email to anna.mcfarlane@jacobs.com or by post to

Anna McFarlane
Jacobs
Fairbarn House
Ashton Lane
Sale
M33 6WP

The Chairman thanks Don Johnston and Anna McFarlane for their presentation.

4 POST LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

The Forum was updated on the staffing structures for the Green Space Services in both Councils.

Amy Rushton reported that in Cheshire East since the last meeting, Richard Doran had been appointed to the position of Countryside Development Manager, Julie Molyneux had been appointed to the position of Community & Visitor Service Manager and George Broughton had been appointed to the post of Parks Development Manager. A copy of the staffing structure was handed out to Members.

For Cheshire West and Chester, Angela Simpson reported that the proposed structure had now been through the formal consultation process and appointments were being made. Officers were at present relocating to new offices and their new telephone numbers would be circulated to Forum Members.

AS

5 LINKS WITH PARISHES: THE ROLE OF PARISH FOOTPATH WARDENS

Following discussion at the last meeting, the parish and town councils in Cheshire had been asked, via the Cheshire Association of Local Councils, if they had a footpath warden. So far ten responses had been received which showed that three parish councils had wardens one had a footpath committee, four had nominated councillors for footpaths, one had no dedicated representative and one had a councillor who was a member of a public footpath society.

Members asked if any details were written down on the role of parish wardens and their duties. Graham Dutton reported that Warrington Borough Council had a parish warden scheme whereby parishes appointed path wardens who reported the conditions of the path network from their own surveys. The resulting maintenance items were recorded on a database for prioritisation and action. The Council provided guidance, training and forms for completion to the parish wardens. It was agreed that copies of Warrington's guidance and forms would be forwarded to Genni Butler.

GD

Andy Gildon and Michael Scott agreed to work with Genni Butler in developing best practice recommendations that the Forum could offer to parish and town councils.

GB/AG/MS

6 CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER OPEN SPACES AUDIT MEMBERS FEEDBACK

Hazel Barber, Green Space Policy Officer, Cheshire West and Chester Council and Carolyn Wilkinson, *pmpgenesis*, briefed the Forum on the Open Spaces Audit carried out by Cheshire West and Chester Council.

The Council had appointed a specialist sport and leisure consultants *pmpgenesis* to undertake an assessment of open space, sport and recreation facilities across the Borough. The study aimed to map out the quantity, quality and accessibility of open spaces, sport and recreation facilities in order to prioritise areas for improvement and development and to protect important sites.

The survey had been sent out randomly to 10,000 households in the Borough and could also be completed on-line. Parish councils and sports clubs had been invited to attend a number of focus group meetings to discuss any issues.

The Council was now in the process of collating the responses to identify and assess the current and future needs of people living, working and visiting the Cheshire West and Chester area.

Forum Members were asked to review a number of maps after the meetings to help ensure that all areas of open space, sport and recreation facilities had been recorded correctly and were also encouraged to complete the survey on-line and submit any comments as soon as possible if they resided in the Cheshire West and Chester area.

7 RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATES

Members were updated on the Rights of Way Improvement Plans for Cheshire. The report received outlined details of the current projects on general infrastructure, access for equestrians and off road cyclists, accessibility and events and promotions. Progress on the following projects was reports:

- Sandstone and Gritstone Trails – the walkers’ leaflets had been revised and reprinted
- Accessible Cheshire Countryside – new leaflets called “Walks for All” detailing accessible sites and routes across Cheshire were being printed, which were aimed at users with disabilities and also pushchair users
- discoverscheshire.co.uk – the revised site had been delayed due to mapping problems but was expected to go live in April 2010.

Members asked if the format of the report could be revised so that any progress with a project is highlighted in italics and also include details why any projects are not progressing.

GB/DS

8 FEEDBACK FROM NORTH WEST REGIONAL LAF CHAIRS’ MEETING

The Chairman reported on the topics discussed at the North West Regional Chairs’ meeting and briefed the Forum on:

- National Survey of Trails – a survey of national trails had been carried out and guidance was being issued on how to look

after them. It was suggested that a list of trails in Cheshire be brought to the next meeting so that the Forum can review them.

AR/MT

- Consultation on National Park Boundary Changes – a consultation was taking place on changes to the boundaries of the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Parks.
- Coastal Access – the Marine and Coastal Access Act had now come into force and Natural England was working on how to implement the legislation.
- Natural England Greenspace Priorities -
- Training Budget – bids had to be submitted by 10 June 2010. Members were asked to let Genni Butler or Denise Snelson know of any training requirements so that a bid could be submitted.

All

9 REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

Keith Osborn and Michael Scott reported that they had attending training for new members and had found it very useful and beneficial and encouraged other new members to attend future courses.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Defra Consultation

Defra were seeking views on proposals to update the Government's strategy for the inland waterways of England and Wales – "Waterways for Everyone". The consultation document could be viewed on the Defra website and the closing date for responses was 26 March 2010.

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/waterways>

Alleygating

The Chairman reported that the alleygate in Winsford, discussed at the September 2009 meeting, was now in place. He also reported that he had been consulted about an alleygate in Crewe, which was supported by all parties involved.

Working Groups

The Chairman suggested that the Forum establish a number of working groups to help contribute to the work of the Forum and reported that other Local Access Forums found them beneficial. It was agreed that further information on the role of the working groups be brought to the next meeting in June and Members were asked to bring suggestions on topics for the working group to this meeting.

JW

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would take place on Friday 18 June 2010. at a venue to be confirmed.

GB/DS

APPENDIX 2 – LONG DISTANCE PATHS IN CHESHIRE

Path	Start	Finish	Length	Target users	Body responsible (for promotion)	Additional maintenance from CEBC/CWAC over and above the norm
Baker Way	Christleton	Brines Brow	21km/13miles	Walkers	CWAC, Mid Cheshire Footpaths Society	
Bishop Bennet Way	Beeston	Wirswall, Shropshire	55km/34miles	Riders	CWAC, Shropshire Council	
Bollin Valley Way	Macclesfield	Partington	40km/25miles	Walkers	CEBC, Bollin Valley Partnership	Yes – through BVP
Cheshire Ring Canal Walk	Marple	circular	158km/58miles	Walkers, Cyclists	British Waterways	
Cloud 7 Circuit	Nr Congleton	Circular	53km/33miles	Walkers	Unknown	
Crewe & Nantwich Circular Walk	Crewe /Nantwich	Circular	48km/29.5 miles	Walkers	CEBC	
Dane Valley Way	Buxton	Middlewich	66km/41miles	Walkers		
Dee Way	Ddualt, Gwynedd	Prestatyn	204km/127 miles	Walkers	Gwynedd, CWAC, Flintshire, Wrexham, Denbighshire	
Delamere Loop	Circular		35km/22mile	Riders	CWAC	
Delamere Way	Frodsham	Warrington	34km/21miles	Walkers	CWAC, WBC, Mid Cheshire Footpaths Society	
E2 European Long Distance Path	Dover	North!	Miles!	Walkers	?	
Eddisbury Way	Frodsham	Burwardsley	27km/17miles	Walkers	Mid Cheshire Footpaths Society	
Gritstone Trail	Disley	Kidsgrove	56km/35miles	Walkers	CEBC, Staffordshire CC	Yes: staff resource and budget allocation
Head in the Clouds	Nr Congleton	Circular	34km/21miles		LDWA	

Ladybrook Valley Interest Trail	Cheadle	Disley	16km/10miles	Walkers	Stockport MBC	
Llangollen Canal Walk	Llangollen	Hurleston	82km/51miles	Walker	British Waterways	
Longster Trail	Helsby	Chester	16km/10miles	Walkers	CWAC, Mid Cheshire Footpaths Society	
Macclesfield & Peak Forest Canals	Kidsgrove	Manchester	64km/40miles	Walkers	British Waterways	
Marches Way	Chester	Cardiff	329km/204miles	Walkers	Various inc.CWAC	
Middlewich Challenge Walk	Church Minsulll?	Middlewich?	35km/22miles	Walkers	John Merrill Foundation	
Middlewood Way	Marple	Bollington	16km/10miles	Walkers, Riders, Cyclists	CEBC, Stockport MBC	Yes: staff resource and budget allocation
North Cheshire Way	Chester	Disley	113km/70 miles	Walkers	Mid Cheshire Footpaths Society	
North West Coastal Trail	Proposed			Walkers	Various	
Salt & Sails Trail	Winsford	Weston Point	32km/20miles	Walkers	John Merrill Foundation	
Salter's Way	Broken Cross	Saltersford	38km/24miles	Walkers	John Merrill Foundation	
Sandstone Trail	Frodsham	Whitchurch		Walkers	CWAC, CEBC	Yes: staff resource and budget allocation
Shropshire Union Canal Walk	Wolver-hampton	Ellesmere Port	106km/66miles	Walkers	British Waterways	
South Cheshire Way	Grindley Brook	Mow Cop	55km/34miles	Walkers	Mid Cheshire Footpaths Society	
Staffordshire Way	Mow Cop	Kingsford, Worcs.	153km/95miles	Walkers	Staffordshire CC	
Three Counties Challenge	Circular	n/a	45km/28miles	Walkers	John Merrill Foundation	
Trent & Mersey Canal Walk	Runcorn	Shardlow, Derbys.	161km/100 miles	Walkers	British Waterways	

Vale Royal Round	Northwich	Circular	56km/35miles	Walkers	CWAC	
Weaver Way	Frodsham	Audlem	65km/40miles	Walkers	CWAC, CEBC, British Waterways	
Whitegate Way	Winsford	Cuddington	11km/7miles	Walkers, Riders, Cyclists	CWAC	
Wirral Shore Way	Chester	West Kirby	35km/22miles	Walkers	?	
Wirral Way	West Kirby	Hooton	19km/12miles	Walkers, Riders, Cyclists	CWAC	

LDWA = Long Distance Walkers Association

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MEETING : CHESHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
DATE : 18 JUNE 2010

REPORT OF : PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY MANAGER
Contact : Amy Rushton
Officer : 01606 271827

PROW ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10 AND WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 This report records the achievements of the Council in terms of its public rights of way functions during the year 2009/10 and sets out the proposed work programme for the year 2010/11. Details are set out in Appendices.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Members note the Annual Report for 2009/10 and the proposed Work Programme for the Public Rights of Way Team 2010/11.

3.0 Risk Management

- 3.1 Members are requested to note the fact that the Public Rights of Way Team does not currently have the resources to carry out path inspections under section 58 of the Highways Act 1980 (see 11.5.1. below). The County Council lost the 2 posts of 'survey assistant' under the 'Transforming Cheshire' restructure in 2007. These posts assisted the County Council in defending against insurance claims where individuals had accidents on public rights of way. For example, a claim for an accident on Sound FP6 was successfully defended in 2004, because the path had been inspected by the survey assistant.
- 3.2 It has not been possible to continue the survey in such a systematic and meticulous fashion ever since the posts were lost. Bridges continue to be surveyed every 2 years, but paths in general do not.
- 3.3 As described below at 11.7.2, one member of the Legal Orders Team left to go on maternity leave in March 2010, due to return March 2011. Insufficient funds are available within the Greenspaces Service to allow the recruitment of maternity cover. The work of the Legal Orders Team will suffer as a result; in particular, applications for Definitive Map Modification Orders will not progress very far and will certainly fail to be determined within the statutory 12 month timeframe. One result of this may be that applicants seek directions from the Secretary of State

against the Council¹, to have their applications determined within a given time. A number of such directions being issued against the Council would have extremely negative results from a public relations perspective. It would also place existing staff under even more pressure.

4.0 Background and Options

4.1 The work programme for the Public Rights of Way Team is usually approved by the Rights of Way Committee each April, in the form of a series of targets. Targets are set in the context of the Countryside Agency's (now Natural England) National Targets for public rights of way, which have as their aim that the rights of way network in England and Wales should be:

- Legally Defined
- Properly Maintained
- Well publicised

4.2 In addition to those targets, and reflecting the range of new work imposed by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, targets in relation to four other areas are also set:

- Implementation of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan
- Implementation of the CROW Act 2000: New Duties and Powers
- Countryside Access Development and Initiatives
- General Support and Administration

4.3 Because of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), the County Council's Rights of Way Committee was not able to set such targets for the new authorities at its last meeting on 23rd January 2009.

4.4 Cheshire East Council's Rights of Way Committee met for the first time on 1st June 2009. At that meeting, it considered a 'position statement' for the Public Rights of Way Team, which included targets for 2009/10 loosely covering the same areas as in previous years. Each area is examined individually, below, with the successes of 2009/10 and targets forming the 2010/11 work programme contained within the relevant appendices. However, it should be recognised that the 2009/10 targets were set at a time of great uncertainty, with unknown quantities in terms of structures, staff and financial resources.

4.5 Network Management – Maintenance and Enforcement

4.5.1 The Maintenance and Enforcement Team comprises three full-time officers who deal with the protection and maintenance of the network. They operate on an area basis, with each officer

¹ Schedule 14 paragraph 3 (2), Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

responsible for approximately 630 kilometres of the network. Within their area, they are responsible for maintenance and enforcement to remove obstructions and keep the path network available for use.

- 4.5.2 Since the implementation of LGR, the maintenance and enforcement officers have found their workload increasing, due to the fact that the disaggregation of the path network into East and West resulted in a longer area network to look after (an additional c.90km each). Conversely, their area budgets have decreased, meaning that officers have more paths to look after, with less money.
- 4.5.3 An outline report and work programme for the Maintenance and Enforcement Team is attached at Appendix 1. The component tasks represent the “Milestones” identified in the former Countryside Agency’s National Targets.

4.6 **Path Inspection**

- 4.6.1 The Public Rights of Way Team does not have dedicated staff to carry out path inspections under section 58² of the Highways Act 1980 (see above at 10.1). Another form of path inspection exists in the form of the former national Best Value Performance Indicator 178: percentage of paths deemed ‘easy to use’. Although councils are no longer required to report on BVPI178, the national group, the County Surveyors’ Society, is keen that authorities continue to collect this data and in Cheshire it has been collected as a local indicator for the Local Transport Plan - LTP 13.
- 4.6.2 The team duly carried out the BVPI178 inspection this year: the percentage pass rate was 84%, which compares very favourably with a pass rate of 69% for the County Council’s last survey in 2008.

4.7 **Rights of Way Improvement Plan - Access Development**

- 4.7.1 There is one full-time member of staff dedicated to the implementation of the existing ROWIP and access development projects. They are also jointly responsible for the administration of the Cheshire Local Access Forum and for writing the new ROWIP for Cheshire East Council, to be published as part of the Council’s third LTP in 2011. This post sits outside the Public Rights of Way Team and is line-managed by the Visitor Services and Community Manager.
- 4.7.2 A Project Board and Steering Group have been established to assist with the process of developing Cheshire East’s new ROWIP.

² Section 58 HA80 = “Special defence in action against a highway authority for damages for non-repair of highway”. Under this section it is a defence to prove that the authority had taken such care as in all the circumstances was reasonably required to secure that the path of the highway to which the action relates was not dangerous to traffic. In other words, systematically inspecting the network for defects (and subsequently repairing them) provides the Council with a defence against claims for damages.

The Project Board consists of a broad range of officers from different Council services, who all contribute their expertise and knowledge in helping define the scope and focus of the new document, and (it is anticipated) in identifying resources to implement the 'Statement of Action' once it is adopted. The Steering Group consists of elected Members from the Rights of Way Committee, together with the portfolio-holder for Health and Wellbeing. Their role is to direct the project programme and to monitor progress against the project time plan.

- 4.7.3 Against the background of developing the project management framework for the new ROWIP, work has continued this year in delivering access projects from the existing one. Appendix 2 contains an outline report and work programme for Access Development. Project delivery will inevitably be curtailed 2010/11 as the demands of developing ROWIP2 take precedence.

4.8 **Legal Orders Team**

- 4.8.1 The legal orders team comprises three officers (2 x full-time, 1 x part-time) who operate on a caseload basis and deal with public path orders, (diversions and extinguishments), definitive map modification orders, (changes to the definitive map) emergency and temporary closures, land searches, planning applications and day to day enquiries.
- 4.8.2 The team has an income target relating to public path orders and temporary closures (£43,316), which is an erroneous 'hangover' from the County Council in the days when there was a dedicated income-generating post for this area of work – the income provided the salary for the post. In the absence of such a post in the structure for Cheshire East, this target could not be met. At the time of writing, the income generated by the team for the financial year 2009/10 stood at £26,649. This is impressive in the absence of a dedicated income generation officer. An income-generation post is currently being recruited on what will initially be a fixed 1 year contract to address this.
- 4.8.3 One member of staff from this team has recently left to go on maternity leave, due to return March 2011. As there is insufficient budget within the Greenspaces Service to permit the recruitment of maternity cover, it is inevitable that the work of this team will suffer as a result, and it is likely that backlogs of Public Path Orders and Definitive Map Orders will increase as the remaining staff try to keep on top of the daily demands of responding to enquiries, dealing with planning applications (which are time-limited) and their existing case-loads.

- 4.8.4 Details of the outstanding workload and the forecast work programme for the Legal Orders Team are attached at Appendix 3 which includes a summary of this year's work.

4.9 **Policy development**

- 4.9.1 Cheshire East Council inherited a raft of County Council policies relating to the public rights of way function. Where necessary, these were amended for the new authority and approved by the Rights of Way Committee: -

- Amendments to the Maintenance and Enforcement Protocol
- Statement of Priorities for Definitive Map Modification Orders
- New Charging Policy for Public Path Orders, Searches & Temporary Closures
- Policy for Structures on Public Rights of Way
- Standard Response Times for Different Categories of Problem on the Network

4.10 **Local Access Forum**

- 4.10.1 Following LGR, both authorities formally decided to continue with one, pan-Cheshire Local Access Forum. The Cheshire and Warrington Local Access Forum held its last meeting on 18th September 2009 (the LAF year runs from September to September), following which Warrington Borough Council formally decided to withdraw from the Forum and to join forces with the Halton Local Access Forum. The last Annual Report of the Cheshire and Warrington Local Access Forum is attached as Appendix 4.

- 4.10.2 Therefore the first meeting of the new 'Cheshire Local Access Forum' was held on 18th December 2009. This included an induction session for the 7 new members of the Forum. The agenda included: -

- Election of Chair and Vice-chair
- Approval of the annual report
- Post-LGR update from CEC and CWAC
- Consideration of the draft Cheshire East Policy on Structures on Public Rights of Way
- A presentation on the CWAC Local Transport Plan 3
- A report on DEFRA Circular 1/09 (implications for LAFs and Local Authorities)
- ROWIP updates from CEC and CWAC
- Feedback from the north-west regional LAF chair's meeting

- 4.10.3 The Cheshire Local Access Forum is still to decide its priorities for 2010, but will continue in its role as a statutory advisory body for matters relating to countryside access. It will respond to consultations on corporate policy (e.g. the Local Transport Plan, Sustainable Communities Strategy etc.) and will be closely involved in the development of the new CEC and CWAC ROWIPs. Its next meeting is on June 18th 2010.

- 4.10.4 The Cheshire Local Access Forum is to be complemented by 2 new Rights of Way Fora for CEC and CWAC. These liaison

groups will be based on the model for the former Cheshire Rights of Way Forum, and will meet twice a year, meeting for the first time in June 2010. They will be constituted:

- To enable interest groups (users, landowners and others) to engage in constructive debate and discussion about issues of law, policy, principle and work programming with members and officers of the Council;
- To encourage understanding of each others' concerns;
- To participate in the consultation process associated with the new Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Cheshire East.

As was previously the case, the Forum will not meet to discuss the facts, merits or demerits of individual cases, which should be dealt with direct with the relevant officers.

4.11 **Budget**

- 4.11.1 The team has suffered, along with the rest of the Greenspaces Service, from a lack of clarity over the exact budget available to it in the financial year 2009/10, which can be attributed to the disruption caused by LGR and the difficulties experienced by the finance teams over the amalgamation of County and Borough resources, which has taken priority. The table below represents our 'best estimate' as to what our resources were (and thus what were our spending limits), based on the high-level budget information provided to us at the start of the financial year.

Centre	Type Costs	2009 - 10
		Budget £
Countryside Access Development	Employees	37,446
	Transport	3045
	Supplies/Services	8643
	Capital (from LTP)	24,000
Maintenance and Enforcement Team	Employees	184,039
	Transport	11,396
	Contractors	99,621
	Materials	23,241
	Capital	0
	Income target (enforcement charges)	-4050
Legal Orders Team	Employees	137,791
	Transport	2410
	Contractors	13,574
	Materials	0
	Capital	0

	Income target (from PPOs and Temp closures)	-43,316
		360,049

- 4.11.2 The base revenue budget for contractors and materials has not increased over the past 6 years (there was a one-off capital element last year under the County Council). The increasing demands on the budget after LGR (see 11.4.2 above) resulted in funds being almost completely expended by December 2009 and work other than planned pre-allocated commitments has had to be cut back. In addition, a moratorium on all non-essential spending was imposed over the Health and Wellbeing service in October 2009 and remains in place.
- 4.11.3 It is of great concern that Cheshire East has inherited a base level of budget committed to the maintenance of the network that is falling well short of meeting current and future expectations. This is especially so in a climate of severe budgetary pressures which the authority faces across all service areas.

4.12 **Conclusion**

- 4.12.1 The Cheshire East Public Rights of Way Team began 2009/10 with sense of anticipation; a sense of a new beginning with new opportunities and challenges that despite the hard work that it would undoubtedly create, had an appeal to all of us. Indeed after the seemingly unending pressures of firstly the Single Status Review and secondly the Transforming Cheshire structural review, staff felt that the new authority would offer a period of consolidation, allowing us to concentrate on what we do best, continuing to develop our services.
- 4.12.2 As well as continuing with the “day job” the team have been concentrating on the disaggregation of the last remaining unit assets and this process is now complete. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the group of people whose professionalism and effort has done so much towards making the rights of way network in Cheshire East what it is today.
- 4.12.3 The continuing interest and support from Members, senior officers, the Cheshire Local Access Forum and the various user group representatives has been greatly appreciated. This operating partnership provides a template for other authorities and has enabled our high standards of service delivery to be continued.

5.0 **Access to Information**

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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Designation: PROW Manager

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Email: amy.rushton@cheshireeast.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

SECTION 3: NATIONAL TARGET 2: "PROPERLY MAINTAINED"

Component Task		Source			Achievements April 2009 to March 2010	Targets 2010/11
No	Measure of Success					
3.1	All footpaths, bridleways and byways correctly signposted where they leave a metalled road.	C/side Act 68 NERC Act 06			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 323 signs erected across the borough. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Installation of additional signs and replacement signs following loss and damage to ensure the requirements of Countryside act 1968 s 27 are fulfilled.
3.2	All PROW clear of obstructions, misleading notices, other hindrances or impediments to use.	HA 80 s130			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enforcement actions saw 2 notices served for cropping and 17 for general obstruction. Additionally a number of "seven day" warnings were issued in relation to cropping offences. Officers have also been involved in ensuring the removal obstructions etc. in many other cases for which the service of notice did not become necessary (43 "informal" written warnings). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reprint of amended protocols on enforcement (approved by ROW Committee June 2009) and promotion/distribution to landowners. Carry out necessary enforcement work in line with adopted protocols to ensure that the duty set out in Highways act 1980 is fulfilled.
3.3	Bridges, stiles, gates etc are in place where required; all are safe and convenient to use.	HA 80 s41 and s146			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In East Cheshire 253 stiles, 69 gates and 35 bridges have been installed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation and promotion to landowners of the new policy in relation to boundary structures (approved by ROW Committee March 2010). Renew and repair structures to ensure that they adequately allow the public to access all public paths in the county. Assist owners and occupiers to repair and replace stiles and gates on public rights of way.

Component Task		Source			Achievements April 2009 to March 2010	Targets 2010/11
No	Measure of Success					
3.4	Surface of every PROW is in proper repair, reasonably safe and suitable for the expected use.	HA 80 s41			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A routine maintenance programme is in operation and 360 paths across the borough were subject to routine strimming/ tractor flailing at least once during the growing season with many cut more frequently. <p>Special surfacing projects facilitated with additional funding from other departments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gawsworth BY24, 280m: General surface repairs Macclesfield FP26, 92m: Tarmac Macclesfield FP71, 48m: Tarmac Macclesfield FP75, 53m: Tarmac Macclesfield FP78, 32m: Tarmac Henbury FP7, 672m: Gritstone Holmes Chapel RB4, 140m: Emergency surface repairs Middlewich FP14, 131m: Gritstone Edleston BR1, 52m: Extensive restoration works including drainage & the construction of a causeway over extremely wet area Chorlton FP7: Boardwalk installed over flooded area Chorlton FP12: Boardwalk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The routine maintenance programme will be extended as new paths requiring routine maintenance are encountered (e.g. paths created through ROWIP). Officers will continue to work with colleagues in other departments and other partners in order to facilitate additional funding for special projects in relation to rights of way wherever possible.

Component Task		Source			Achievements April 2009 to March 2010	Targets 2010/11
No	Measure of Success					
					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> installed over pond Bickerton FP28 (Witches Staircase): Large scale steps, revetment & surfacing works 	
3.5	All PROW inspected regularly by or on behalf of the authority.	HA 80 s58			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The path inspection regime has ceased since the loss of the two Assistant Rights of Way Officer posts in the team in 2007, who acted as path inspectors. It has not been possible to continue the survey in such a systematic and meticulous fashion as previously. Bridges continue to be surveyed, but paths in general do not. This could result in a lack of a legal defence to claim(s) for personal injury. All maintenance officers hold bi-annual meetings with the relevant representative of the walking and equestrian user groups to agree priorities for work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The maintenance officers will continue to hold bi-annual meetings with the relevant representatives of the walking, equestrian and other user groups to agree work priorities and to discuss the results of the survey work carried out by these groups.
3.6	The authority is able to protect and assert the public's rights and meet other statutory duties (e.g. to ensure compliance with the Rights of Way Act 1990).	HA 80 s130			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All cropping obstructions were responded to within 4 weeks of reporting. A new 'response time' standard for dealing with different sorts of complaints in relation to PROW issues was approved by Committee 1st March 2010. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to adhere to the response times set out in the new standard.
3.7	Waymarks or signposts	C/side			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waymarking is undertaken by 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waymarking and signposting will be

Component Task		Source			Achievements April 2009 to March 2010	Targets 2010/11
No	Measure of Success					
	are provided at necessary locations and are adequate to assist users. Waymarking scheme/initiative in place.	Act 1968 s27			staff and contractors as appropriate. Additionally waymarkers are provided to partners such as Mid-Cheshire Footpaths Society and the Ramblers' Association to enable them to replace missing and damaged waymarkers.	undertaken as appropriate.

APPENDIX 2
RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN (1) IMPLEMENTATION
COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS DEVELOPMENT

Component Task		ROWIP Target	Achievements 2009-10	Targets 2010-11
No				
1	Bollington – bridge over canal at Clarence Mill to link towpath (FP52 Bollington) with Clarence Road		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners = Macclesfield Countryside Management, Bollington Civic Society, Bridge Engineers, British Waterways, Friends of Bollington Recreation Ground, adjacent landowner. Bridge constructed (September 2009). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to source funds for ongoing maintenance costs and agree with planning that CE can adopt the structure for a PROW. Dedication of a PROW across new structure and down British Waterways' track to park and adjacent circular loop.
2	LTP Area Programme Crewe and Nantwich – Crewe to Nantwich greenway		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners = Sustrans, Highways, Weaver Valley Regional Park Creation of new bridleway link between Crewe (Queen's Park) and Nantwich Riverside over land owned by the Beam Heath Trust. Part of the Sustrans 'Connect 2' project using the People's Millions Lottery Money. Applications for funding secured. Design and landowner negotiations continue. Public consultation exercise to follow. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure a section 25 creation agreement with the Beam Heath Trust to create the new Public Bridleway section.
3	Nantwich Riverside Loop		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners = James Thompson, Nantwich Riverside Officer, British Waterways Continuing contributions to James' overall package of projects. Part of Weaver Valley Regional Park. Circular 'Nantwich Riverside Loop' route linking riverside and canal. Path improvements and new bridge. £50k WREN bid successful October 2009 for upgrading towpath (Edleston FP8) as part of Riverside Loop project. Installation of route signage complete. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of leaflet to promote loop.

Component Task		ROWIP Target	Achievements 2009-10	Targets 2010-11
No				
4	Access Improvements as part of 'Middlewich Vision'		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners = Middlewich Vision Upgrade FP2 Stanthorne to bridleway status, Stanthorne Mill. Have carried out Land Registry searches and checked research files – need to approach landowners to test water (suggested Town Council could do it). Other works assessed on FP19. FP14 – completed surfacing works and removal of gate undertaken August 2009 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will continue to attend meetings but new delivery projects will be put on hold whilst ROWIP2 is developed, unless Congleton Area Highways can deliver them on our behalf.
5	discovercheshire.co.uk		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners = ICT, Tourism colleagues June 09 - new version due for release, faster navigation and possibility to create micro-sites. December 09 - delays with the new version. due to mapping problems but will be live soon. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement in site development and content management group will continue but input will be limited whilst ROWIP2 is developed.
6	ECOMINDS		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners = Countryside Rangers, Adult Services East (Sandbach) Working with established group "Greenleaves Conservation Volunteers" (group of mental health service users) to create bid for funding so they can become independent and bid for tenders for PROW work etc. – developing them into a social enterprise, providing tools and transport etc. Working with Alistair Wright (ranger) and Paul Biddulph (adult services). Draft policies for group drawn up for inaugural meeting prior to bid submission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involvement to be supportive, but limited, as the group now need to take the lead themselves on developing their bid.
7	Walks for All Leaflet		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners = Countryside Management Service & disability representatives August 09 – draft leaflet with disability user 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch leaflet with promotion and wide distribution, website etc.

Component Task		ROWIP Target	Achievements 2009-10	Targets 2010-11
No				
			<p>groups for comment on format and information content. October 2009 – draft received from designers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> December 09 - user groups in the process of trialling routes. 	
	White Nancy Footpath –new footpath up to the viewpoint of White Nancy in Bollington		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners: Landowners and KRIV project volunteers Agreement entered into to establish a new public footpath 	
	Peckforton Estates – two permissive paths for horse riders created		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners: Landowners and Habitats and Hillforts Landscape Partnership Scheme Agreements entered into to establish new permissive paths for horse riders 	

ROWIP2

The principle target for this work area 2010/11 is to develop the framework for ROWIP2, in accordance with the following timeline: -

Stage	Tasks	Apr-10	May-10	Jun-10	Jul-10	Aug-10	Sep-10	Oct-10	Nov-10	Dec-10	Jan-11	Feb-11	Mar-11	Apr-11
Project management	ROWIP steering group meeting (indicative)	■		■		■	■		■		■			
	LTP steering group meeting (indicative)		■	■	■	■	■	■		■		■	■	■
	Report to CLAF meeting			■			■	■		■			■	
Engagement	Identify internal & external engagements													
	SCS/LTP/LDF shared consultation													
	SCS agreed			■										
	LDF core strategy consultation							■	■	■				
	LDF core strategy agreed										■	■		
Evaluation of ROWIP1	evaluate ROWIP1													
Network assessment	update analysis of current network													
Demand assessment	update analysis of present/future demand													
Gap analysis	identify gap and means to address	■	■											
Strategy plan	consultation events	■	■	■	■	■	■	■						
	preparation of strategy document				■	■	■	■						
	ROWIP strategy to ROW committee						■							
	Portfolio Holder approves ROWIP strategy						■	■						
	LTP pre-strategy public consultation				■	■	■	■						
	LTP Members' Workshop proposed					■								
	LTP draft strategy to Cabinet							■						
	LTP draft strategy public consultation							■	■	■				
	LTP draft strategy to Cabinet again									■				
	LTP strategy to Full Council for approval											■		
Implementation plan	prioritise projects, assign times & costs						■	■	■	■				
	ROWIP imp. Plan to ROW committee									■				
	Portfolio Holder approve ROWIP imp. plan									■				
	LTP Implementation plan writing									■	■	■	■	
	LTP Implementation plan to Cabinet												■	
Full ROWIP	internal promotion											■	■	
	advertise and external promotion											■	■	■
Implementation	monitoring & reporting													■

Appendix 3

Legal Orders Team

SECTION 2: NATIONAL TARGET 1: “LEGALLY DEFINED”

Component Task		Source	Achievements 2009/10	Targets 2010/11
No	Measure of Success			
2.1	Definitive Map and Statement to be completed for any previously unmapped area	WCA 81 S53(1) (c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete
2.2	No RUPPs remaining on Definitive Map	WCA 81 S54	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No further reclassification required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete
2.3	No backlog of legal events requiring orders to be made	WCA 81 S53(2) (a) & 53(3) (a)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal Event Modification Order made for all legal events in 2009/10 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal Event Modification Order to be made for all legal events in 2010/11 Schedule 5 Para 2 of CROW Act 2000, commenced April 2008, obviates need for separate legal event order where Definitive Map change cited. However, national debate about the technical aspects of this provision and advice to LAs is to continue making separate LEMOs for time being.
2.4	No backlog of applications to modify the Definitive Map	WCA 81 Sch 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 Schedule 14 applications determined and a further 7 applications under active investigation during the year (see below). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Target depends on recruitment of an income generation post to deal with PPOs and free-up officer time to deal with Schedule 14 applications. If recruited, target is to determine 10 cases. If not,

Component Task		Source	Achievements 2009/10	Targets 2010/11
No	Measure of Success			
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 24 applications remain in backlog (see below). The oldest of these dates to 2002. 	<p>target is 4.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources will not permit investigation of "List B" cases or internal investigations.
2.5	No backlog of other cases that may result in the need to change the Map	WCA 81 S53	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of last remaining 'Discovering Lost Ways' case following abandonment of project by Natural England. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete.
2.6	No backlog of decided applications/other cases awaiting definitive map modification orders	CoAg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 DMMO order made during the year 2 applications determined Part of 1 application refused 1 DMMO order confirmed 0 appeals against refusal, awaiting decision 0 appeals against non-determination within 12mths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to make orders as soon as reasonably practicable. Contested DMMOs to be submitted to PINs. Directed applications/orders to be processed as required.
2.7	The authority has considered the need to consolidate the Map and take any necessary action	WCA 81 S56	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of digital map for consolidation complete. Work to consolidate statements begun. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On hold due to lack of staff.
2.8	Statement of Priorities published	CoAg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statement of Priorities approved by ROW Committee on 1st June 2009. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to prioritise Definitive Map Work in accordance with the Statement of Priorities
2.9	No other matter affecting the Definitive Map	CoAg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic list of map anomalies was completed in 2008. 2 anomalies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No progress can be made with rectifying anomalies without additional staff resources (in addition to PPO income

Component Task		Source	Achievements 2009/10	Targets 2010/11
No	Measure of Success			
	outstanding		corrected during 2009/10.	generation post).

Summary of work from April 2009 to March 2010, backlog of work outstanding and forecasts for 2010/11

Area of work	Work completed/in progress April 2009 – March 2010	Backlog	Projected work 2010/11
Planning application consultations	115	n/a	150
Rights of Way searches	34	n/a	40
Highways Act s31 deposits	6	n/a	10
Temporary & Emergency Closures	45	n/a	60
Gating Orders	0	n/a	0
Public Path Orders HA80	20 Orders confirmed, 17 cases in progress	28 applications on waiting list	30 Orders to confirmation stage if income generation post recruited, 15 if not
Public Path Orders TCPA90	1 Order confirmed, 5 cases in progress	n/a	10 if income generation post recruited, 5 if not
Contested Orders referred to PINs	HA80 = 8 WCA81 = 0 TCPA90 = 0	6 contested WCA81 cases to be referred to PINs	
Definitive Map Modification Order Applications – schedule 14 applications	CH = 1 Order confirmed, 5 in progress	24	10 if income generation post recruited, 4 if not

Definitive Map “List B” issues	0	11	2 if income generation post recruited, 0 if not
Definitive Map Anomalies (investigation/legal orders required)	2 completed	260+	0 without additional staff resources or additional budget to commission consultants

Access to the countryside without the car

One issue to which the Forum has not given much attention hitherto is ensuring that the Cheshire countryside is accessible to all residents and visitors irrespective of their means of travel. With increasing attention rightly being given to climate change and the need to cut greenhouse gas emissions, the need for people to be able to reach the countryside easily in a more sustainable way than by car perhaps merits being placed higher up the Forum's agenda. The Forum has a duty to improve public access, and this should extend equally to those who are socially excluded, or who suffer disability, or who for various reasons either cannot or do not drive a car, as well as car owners who might decide not to drive if they are made aware of the other options available.

The two new unitary authorities are responsible for co-ordinating public transport, thus relevant aspects the Forum might press for the Councils to consider could include the existence and viability of local bus services which provide access to key countryside sites (or could perhaps easily be tweaked to do so), the adequacy of information, marketing and promotion about such services, and in some cases the need for shuttle services from nearby railway stations or special recreational journeys such as those which have operated in recent years to Tatton park, Jodrell Bank, National Trust properties and the Sandstone and Gritstone Trails.



The Forum might equally lobby for the introduction of new multi-modal tickets, along the lines of the one-time Sunday Adventurer Ticket which was valid on buses throughout Cheshire, or for the extension of the area of validity of some existing leisure tickets such as the Wayfarer Ticket, which for almost 30 years has provided a cheap and flexible means of access by bus and rail to the northern part of the Forum's area. The Forum might also emphasise the importance of Council-sponsored guided walks and events being planned to start from bus stops or stations and being deliberately timed to accommodate those arriving by 'greener' means of transport than by car. All these are issues relevant to the Forum's agenda.

Keith Pennyfather

Safety Improvements on Rural Roads

The Forum is concerned about the safety of vulnerable road users who have to use sections of rural roads to complete journeys on foot, by bicycle or on horseback. Traffic using rural roads has grown steadily and many roads carry significant traffic volumes. Many rural roads are narrow, have no footway and may not even have a verge. In these locations there is a potential conflict between pedestrians forced to walk along the carriageway and fast moving traffic. In many cases the visibility is poor and accidents, or near-misses, may occur.

The Forum considers that minor improvements could bring significant safety benefits and improve the accessibility of people living in rural areas.

These improvements may be as simple as cutting the verges so that they can be brought into use, constructing narrow footways, or providing a footway behind the boundary fence or hedge. The rural roads to be considered first should include short lengths where a narrow road has been used to connect parts of the public rights of way network or where there are rural businesses or other developments along the road.

The Forum is campaigning to ensure that potential schemes are identified and that the concept is included in the next Local Transport Plan due to start in 2011. Please contact the Local Access Forum if you know of sections of rural road where these low cost safety improvements would make a difference.

Membership

Member	Area of interest		
John White, Chairman	Walking	John Mitchell	Land management
Barbara Smith, Vice-chair	Land management	Keith Pennyfather	Sustainable transport
Peter Chapman	Walking	David Robinson	Cycling, local government
Neil Collie	Walking	John Taylor	Land manager, accessibility
Evelyn Cragg-Hine	Walking, education	Eleanor Johnson	Councillor, Cheshire County Council;
Ken Edwards	Walking, local government	Alan Litton	Councillor, Warrington Borough Council
Dale Langham	Cycling and walking as sustainable transport	Andrew Knowles	Councillor Cheshire East Council
John Lilley	Walking, planning strategy	Richard Short	Councillor, Cheshire West and Chester Council

CHESHIRE & WARRINGTON LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Public
Footpath

Annual Report
July 2008- September 2009



Chairman's Introduction

2008/2009 has been a year of change and consolidation as the Cheshire County authority became two unitary authorities; Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester. Also Warrington Borough Council decided it would be better served by joining the Merseyside Local Access Forum.

Consequently the supporting officers have all changed roles and in some case retired. However the officers have throughout continued to work to further the aims of the Forum despite the uncertainty. I am pleased to say that the two new Cheshire councils have agreed to support the new Cheshire Local Access forum.

Our agendas have covered presentations, consultations and specific issues that have arisen during the year within our remit.

We have continued to monitor and support the Rights of Way Improvement plans and discussed any gating orders affecting access. The formation of a regional and an English national access forum will provide us with support from Defra and Natural England. It will also enable us to share issues with neighbouring forums and influence national proposals.

This year we will be recruiting new members to serve for the next three years of the forum. I would like to thank those who have retired for their contribution and companionship and look forward to working with the new and continuing members on the priorities for 2010.

John White

What I like about the Cheshire Countryside

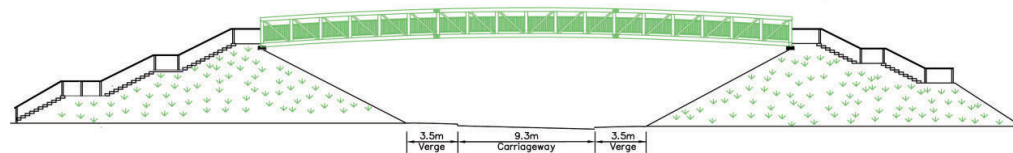
I walk about 600 miles of the rights of way in Cheshire each year as a member and leader of walking groups. The main benefit I get from this is getting out into open spaces with rolling hills, valleys, waterways, trees wildflowers and attractive buildings. How else can you get fresh air, become an expert on cattle, stiles, footpath lore and improve physical and mental fitness.

I am responsible for monitoring a section of Cheshire's footpaths and this adds an understanding of the legal aspects, liaison with officers and undertaking some minor physical improvements myself. Getting an overgrown, badly signed path improved (yes there are some!) is quite satisfying!

One of the main concerns this year has been walking through cattle. Groups of young heifers or bullocks in the spring can be quite intimidating and bulls have a bad reputation. The only difficulties we have had is with penned-in animals on a right of way or cows with young calves. Usually a small diversion will avoid the hazard.

Landowners vary from the welcoming who want a chat to the obstructive and rude - a copy of the Rights of Way protocol with diplomacy can help!

The replacement of stiles with gates is very welcome particularly as one ages but nettles and brambles in the autumn, mud in winter and horse tape all the time are a nuisance. Those responsible for maintenance budgets please note! However the benefits of walking through this varied countryside make these inconveniences bearable.



Alderley Edge and Nether Alderley Bypass

The Local Access Forum has taken a keen interest in the development of this major road scheme. In particular, it has commented on the provision of facilities for walkers and cyclists.

The new bypass of Alderley Edge & Nether Alderley will be a fast single carriageway road and will not have any junctions with side roads. Overbridges will be provided where the existing roads cross the line of the bypass. The Forum has welcomed the inclusion of separate cycle tracks and footways which are being provided on both sides of the new road and which will link to the existing road network by sloping ramps.

In addition, a number of footpaths that cross the line of the bypass could conveniently be diverted to use the bridges being built for the side roads. However, there was no convenient diversion for two footpaths one in Chorley Parish and the other in Nether Alderley Parish. The designers insisted that walkers could safely cross the new carriageway 'at-grade' that is, by walking across the road between traffic travelling at sixty miles per hour in both directions.

In January 2005, the Local Access Forum opposed the County Council at the Public Inquiry into the proposed Alderley Edge & Nether Alderley Bypass. In evidence to the Inquiry the chairman of the Forum stated:

'Bridges provide a safe crossing for walkers of all ages as well as for people with disabilities. Also, a bridge is visible from a distance, making it obvious to people using the footpath that there is a safe crossing facility. It can also be seen as a feature of aesthetic merit in the landscape setting.'

On publication of the independent Inspector's report, he concluded that 'in the interests of good practice' a pedestrian footbridge should be provided to take the footpath over the bypass, but left the final decision to the County Council.

Having received this encouragement from the Inspector's report the Forum continued to press for a footbridge. In April 2008 the County Council finally agreed that a footbridge would be provided as part of the scheme. Construction of the bypass commenced in October 2008 and the footbridge has received planning permission from Cheshire East Council. It will be an elegant single span steel structure painted green and seated on the landscaping mounds on each side of the new road. In this case, the persistence of the Forum has paid off and walkers of all abilities will be able to use the local footpaths in safety.

The priorities 08-09

- Influencing Town and Parish Councils. To this end, the Forum invited a representative from the Cheshire Association of Local Councils to give a presentation at a recent meeting to clarify how the Forum might engage with and influence these groups.
- Carried over - To seek clarification nationally on the definition of the term 'cycleway' and the possible implications where work is conducted to 'upgrade' public footpaths without proper legal work to change their status.
- The ongoing situation with regard to budgets and funding for the PROW Teams of the new Unitary Authorities in Cheshire and Warrington Borough Council.
- Influencing the new Unitary Authorities in Cheshire to ensure that the Local Access Forum remains vibrant and meaningful and that it has a seat on the Area Boards once they are created.
- Safety on rural roads with particular regard to the needs of vulnerable road users who wish to use rural roads as part of a journey by walking, cycling or horse riding.

Priorities for 09-10

- Involvement in ROWIP2 and LTP3; safety on rural roads; urban rural access; how does access better raise the health and wellbeing of the residents of the county

MEETING : CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
DATE : 18 JUNE 2010

REPORT OF : Angela Simpson – Greenspace Manager
Contact : Martin Thornhill
Officer

GREENSPACE POSITION STATEMENT AND ANNUAL REPORT

Summary: This paper outlines the new structure for Greenspace and how the developing Greenspace strategy will contribute to the Council's Corporate Themes and in turn influence public rights of way (PROW) legal orders.

1.0 THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 1.1** The new structure for Greenspace and the proposed Strategy aim to achieve best practice and value for money and concentrate on putting customers first. It will also facilitate the delivery of objectives which contribute to all of the Council's Corporate Themes, most notably the Health and Well Being, Environmental Sustainability and Jobs and Enterprises imperatives.

2.0 GREENSPACE STRUCTURE

- 2.1** After a long period of consultation and recruitment the new structure is now in place, with the last two members joining the team in the next month.
- 2.2** The structure reflects the recent drive for transformation and creates a flexible and skilled team structure to develop and deliver a new strategy for Greenspace.
- 2.3** The Greenspace Team is responsible for maximising the quality, opportunity and benefits if the Greenspace network within the wider Green Infrastructure. The Greenspace Network encompasses urban parks, country parks, PROW and allotments.
- 2.4** An illustration of the structure can be found in Appendix 1.

3.0 GREENSPACE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1** A strategic framework for the effective management, development and care of our Greenspace Network will be set out in a Greenspace Strategy to ensure that all physical resources are accessible and

managed to enhance the many social, economic and environmental benefits of greenspace.

- 3.2** It will be developed under the direction of the Senior Greenspace Officer (Strategy) and will set out a vision and an action plan based on an assessment of community needs and aspirations for maximum cultural and recreational activity within the natural environment.
- 3.3** The strategy will be developed over the coming 12 months, starting with a thorough qualitative and quantitative assessment of all accessible greenspace in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17).
- 3.4** A separate assessment of the accessibility and quality of the PROW network is due for completion in June and will inform future investment programmes.
- 3.5** The data and policies emerging from the strategy will shape and inform corporate priorities for Greenspace and the Green Infrastructure (e.g. through the developmental framework).
- 3.6** It is anticipated that a draft strategy will be available for public consultation in December 2010.

4.0 ENGAGEMENT GROUPS

- 4.1** Effective community engagement and an understanding of community needs and expectation is essential to the management of a Greenspace Network and will inform the development of the Greenspace Strategy.
- 4.2** A review of the most efficient ways to engage is required to ensure the most efficient use of office time and tangible benefits to both user groups and the Council.
- 4.3** Information on the relative accessibility of the entire network will be available for users wishing to plan new routes via the internet later in the summer.

5.0 NETWORK MAINTENANCE

- 5.1** The Senior Greenspace Officer (Network and Operations) manages the site management and operational issues of the entire greenspace resource, including the maintenance of PROW.
- 5.2** Two Team Leaders manage a team of Greenspace Rangers and Greenspace Network Officers across a geographical area divided approximately on an east / west split.
- 5.3** Over the past 12 months the PROW network has seen the improvement and replacement of:

- 273 finger posts
- 43 stiles
- 23 bridges
- 8 gateways

5.4 Ditching, resurfacing and civil engineering works were undertaken on a Restricted Byway in the parish of Barrow and a Bridleway running through the parishes of Cotton Edmunds and Christleton.

6.0 DEFINITIVE MAP AND LEGAL ORDERS

6.1 A temporary reduction in capacity of the Greenspace Team means the inherited backlog of legal work (DMMOs and PPOs) has been reduced but not as quickly as would have been expected. A list of outstanding DMMO applications is published on the website . It is expected that those that have a high priority marking will be resolved or completed by April 2011. Work on PPO applications has been ongoing.

- 3 are completed
- 2 have been referred to the Planning Inspectorate
- 2 have been confirmed
- 2 to be determined
- 2 with outstanding objections

There are at present over 300 anomalies identified with respect to the Definitive Map, some may be resolved through orders or other legal processes and these will be investigated and concluded in sequential order depending on the anomaly, easiest to resolve first.

6.2 The restoration to four Greenspace Technical Officers in the next month will see an increase in the processing of legal orders.

6.3 Initial priority will be given to areas that contribute to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan or promoted route.

6.4 It is acknowledged however, that in respect of DMMOs, an applicant has the right to apply to the Secretary of State for the Council to be directed to determine the outcome of the application if this has not been done within 12 months of it being registered. Where directions are made, a strict time limit is imposed necessitating such applications to be dealt with out of turn.

6.5 In this respect, further options, where necessary, for the expedient reduction of this backlog are being explored.

For further information:

Officer: Martin Thornhill

Tel: 01606 288537

Email: martin.thornhill@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

ANGELA SIMPSON GREENSPACE MANAGER

MARTIN THORNHILL SENIOR GREENSPACE OFFICER (STRATEGY)

To manage the development and delivery of a Greenspace Strategy, incorporating the development and implementation of policy and investment programmes to ensure the provision, protection and maximised use of the Greenspace and Right of Way network.

HAZEL BARBER GREENSPACE POLICY OFFICER	JILL CONNOLLY GREENSPACE POLICY OFFICER	CLAIRE KEANE GREENSPACE DEVELOPMENT OFFICER
Develop and implement policy to ensure the effective protection and management of the Greenspace and rights of way network across the borough and to provide policy and technical input to the Greenspace Strategy.	Develop and implement policy to ensure the effective protection and management of the Greenspace and rights of way network across the borough and to provide policy and technical input to the Greenspace Strategy.	Develop and implement investment and improvement programmes to ensure the effective provision of a Greenspace and rights of way network which meets community and strategic needs and expectation across the borough.

MARY LAVERY PROJECT OFFICER	DENISE SNELSON PROJECT OFFICER
Playbuilder delivery of year 1 and 2 Improvement Plan for the next 5 sites and securing match.	Produce the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for the next 5 years.
Support Stage 2 Grosvenor Park HLF bid	Completion of Castle Park HLF project.
Westminster Park pavilion.	Delamere loop and Mickle Trafford greenway projects.
Lead Green Flag and other accreditations	
Support management of \$106 funds.	
Support any further greenspace development projects and 10 year capital programme delivery.	Support any further greenspace development projects and 10 year capital programme delivery.

ADELE MAYER TECHNICAL OFFICER	DAVID CHAPMAN TECHNICAL OFFICER	DEE MCCARTHY TECHNICAL OFFICER	KAY FOSTER TECHNICAL OFFICER
Process PROW procedures	Process allotment procedures	Repairs and maintenance recording / reporting system	In Bloom' campaign
	Facilities data processing - site audits	Performance Indicator processing	Events and lettings - facilitation and system progression
		Customer care system progression	Consultation collation - surveys / focus groups etc.
		User profiling and data collation	Baseline data collection and collation
ROSE MILLINGTON TECHNICAL ASSISTANT		BERNI FLEXEN TECHNICAL ASSISTANT	
Events and lettings administration	Events and lettings administration	Events and lettings administration - weekly bulletin	
Customer care - including complaints/queries	Customer care - including complaints/queries	Customer care - including complaints/queries	
'In Bloom' administration	'In Bloom' administration	Greenspace web page updates	
Facilities data collection	Facilities data collection	Facilities data collection	
Allotments administration	Allotments administration	PROW administration	
Community engagement - admin support	Community engagement - admin support	Coordinate Greenspace integrated filing system	
Payment / Invoicing - admin support	Payment / Invoicing - admin support	Payment / Invoicing - admin support	
		Maintain Staff Records - leave / flexi time / sickness etc.	

ANGELA SIMPSON
GREENSPACE MANAGER

IAN HESKETH
SENIOR Greenspace Officer (OPERATIONS AND NETWORK)
Manage and maintain the physical condition and public use of the green spaces and the rights of way network within service priorities; necessary licenses, legislation and agreements. To provide policy and technical input to the Greenspace Strategy and deputise for the Greenspace Manager as required.

LAURA SHAKESHAF
Greenspace OPERATIONS AND NETWORK TEAM LEADER (WEST)
RESPONSIBLE FOR:
Greenspace sites and maintenance and Enforcement issues on the Rights of Way Network in the West and South of the Borough.

RICHARD SNOW
Greenspace OPERATIONS AND NETWORK TEAM LEADER (EAST)
RESPONSIBLE FOR:
Greenspace sites and maintenance and Enforcement issues on the Rights of Way Network in the East of the Borough.

RICHARD ANKERS	SAUL BURTON	JUSTIN DYKE	ROBYN MOSELEY
GREENSPACE NETWORK OFFICER	RANGER	RANGER	RANGER
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	RESPONSIBLE FOR:	RESPONSIBLE FOR:	RESPONSIBLE FOR:
Greenspace Network (Rights of Way maintenance and enforcement) south of borough.	WIRRAL COUNTRY PARK WILLASTON MEADOW	STANNEY WOODS MERSEY FOREST SITES NESTON SITES	HELSEY QUARRY INCE NATURE RESERVE JACK'S WOOD
MIKE BOLTON	JOHN STREET	ANDY JAMES	TIM LLOYD
GREENSPACE NETWORK OFFICER	RANGER	RANGER	RANGER
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	RESPONSIBLE FOR:	RESPONSIBLE FOR:	RESPONSIBLE FOR:
Greenspace Network (Rights of Way maintenance and enforcement) south of borough.	SANDSTONE TRAIL FARNDON PICNIC SITE THE YELD GRESTYS WASTE	CALDY VALLEY BLACON NATURE PARK CHESTER MEADOWS DUKES DRIVE WESTMINSTER PARK	RIVACRE LOCAL NATURE RESERVE SOUTH RIVACRE

STEVE HOLDEN	STEPH HEFFERAN	PETE SCHOFIELD
GREENSPACE NETWORK OFFICER	RANGER	RANGER
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	RESPONSIBLE FOR:	RESPONSIBLE FOR:
ASHTONS AND NEWMANS FLASHES MARSHALLS ARM BARNTON TUNNEL TOP	ASHTONS AND NEWMANS FLASHES MARSHALLS ARM BARNTON TUNNEL TOP	DAIRY HOUSE MEADOWS BANDSHED WOOD BARNTON TUNNEL TOP
CHRIS MOSELEY	SIMON WOOD	DAVE COMER
RANGER	RANGER	RANGER
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	RESPONSIBLE FOR:	RESPONSIBLE FOR:
MARBURY COUNTRY PARK CARTELEDGE MOSS LEFTWICH MEADOWS	WHITGATE WAY LITTLE BUDWORTH COMMON BOWYERS WASTE FLAXMERE MOSS VALE ROYAL WOODS	SHACKLEY MERE WADES CLOUGH WEAVER PARKWAY
DAVID JAMES	TONY BLACKLEDGE	
RANGER	RANGER	
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	RESPONSIBLE FOR:	
ANDERTON NATURE RESERVE FURREY WOOD	WEAVER PARKWAY WINSFORD FLASH	

MEETING : CHESHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
DATE : 18 JUNE 2010

REPORT OF : COUNTRYSIDE ACCESS DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS
Contact : Genni Butler & Denise Snelson
Officer 01606 271817 or 01606 271931

RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN - CURRENT PROJECTS

1 The Countryside Access Development Officers are engaged in a wide range of activities which includes, but is not solely confined to, the implementation of the ROWIP priorities identified during the 2005/6 consultation process.

2 The identification of projects is often the result of working with partners or following up suggestions where an amount of ground work has already been done at a local level. This is sometimes at the expense of pursuing projects from the existing dataset of ROWIP suggestions, but has advantages in terms of funding opportunities and joint working.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHESHIRE EAST ROWIP2

3 The new Cheshire East ROWIP is being developed, in line with the Local Transport Plan 3. It will comprise a 15 year strategy covering 2011-2026 and 3-year implementation plans. A consultation process for the ROWIP has been developed spanning the spring, summer and autumn of this year. This work includes engagement through Town and Parish Councils, Local Area Partnerships, web based consultation and direct contact with user groups and the wider public. Consultation is initially concentrating on confirmation that the priorities for the ROWIP identified for the County Council plan remain valid for Cheshire East. In addition, suggestions for improvements to Rights of Way which offer an active travel route are being sought. The questionnaire seeking this input is appended and is available online at www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/prow.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER ROWIP2

4. A report is appended.

RECOMMENDED:

That:

- **the report be noted; and,**
- **Members of the Forum, and their wider networks, be encouraged to feedback into the consultation on the priorities for the Cheshire East Rights of Way Improvement Plan.**

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APPENDIX - PROGRESS ON THE RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN – CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Project	Completion date	Partners	Detail	Update June 2010
Bollington – bridge over canal at Clarence Mill to link towpath (FP52 Bollington) with Clarence Road	ongoing	Bollington Civic Society, British Waterways, Friends of Bollington Recreation Ground, adjacent landowner	Project lead = Richard Doran & Civic Society. PROW involvement = helping with any shortfall and dealing with the dedication of a PROW across new structure and down British Waterways' track to park & adjacent circular loop. Opportunities identified and approach made to BW.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awaiting BW response (chased)
Bollington upgrade of FP17 to bridleway status	Ongoing	Landowners, KRIV, Bollington Town Council Footpaths Committee	Landowners have agreed to upgrade a footpath to bridleway status. This will link a cul-de-sac bridleway in Rainow parish. Local support and opposition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CE PROW Committee approval sought 10th June 2010
LTP Area Programme Crewe and Nantwich – Crewe to Nantwich greenway	Ongoing	SUSTRANS, Highways, Weaver Valley Regional Park	<p>Creation of new bridleway link between Crewe (Queen's Park) and Nantwich Riverside over land owned by the Beam Heath Trust. Part of the Sustrans 'Connect 2' project using the People's Millions Lottery Money.</p> <p>Applications for funding secured. Design and landowner negotiations continue. Public consultation exercise to follow.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder group established • CE PROW Committee approval sought 10th June 2010
Nantwich Riverside Loop	ongoing	British Waterways, Nantwich Town Council, Shropshire Union Canal Society, Nantwich Civic Society, Acton, Henhull and Edleston Parish Council, Riverside Concern, Nantwich in Bloom	<p>Continuing contributions to overall package of projects. Part of Weaver Valley Regional Park.</p> <p>Nov 08 – working on circular 'Nantwich Riverside Loop' route linking riverside and canal. Path improvements and new bridge. WREN bid successful October 2009 for upgrading towpath as part of Riverside Loop project.</p> <p>Towpath improvement works scheduled for April 2010. Sign posting and waymarking being installed. Leaflet to be published.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage completed • Works delayed by BW until summer 2010 • Leaflet being drafted up
Betchton FPs 17 & 18	On hold	North-Staffs Bridleways Association	Upgrade FPs 17 and part 18 to bridleway to connect the Salt Line to the Wheelock Rail Trail. Will depend also if the underpass for the WRT is successful. WRT project on hold until new authorities established (couldn't spend the money in time) so this idea will be revisited then. In the meantime the principal landowner has been written to.	

discovercheshire.co.uk	ongoing	ICT, Tourism colleagues	Redevelopment of www.discovercheshire.co.uk and re-launch due summer 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Walks for All leaflet routes uploaded ready for launch
Crewe Business Park	On hold	Crewe and Nantwich Borough Council (Izzy Rutter), Julie Molyneux	Input into Access to Nature Bid to improve the green spaces around the Crewe Business Park. Funding from ATN would be revenue and used for an officer post. Capital works could be funded by WREN? Improvements would include infrastructure to facilitate access for disabled people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project on hold
ECOMINDS	March 2010	Rangers, Adult Services East (Sandbach)	<p>Working with established group "Greenleaves Conservation Volunteers" (group of mental health service users) to create bid for funding so they can become independent and bid for tenders for PROW work etc – developing them into a social enterprise, providing tools and transport etc.</p> <p>Working with Alistair Wright (ranger) and Paul Biddulph (adult services). Draft policies for group drawn up for inaugural meeting prior to bid submission.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistance given to Greenleaves – next stage for funding applications is in their hands
Cheshire East News / other publications	ongoing	Communications teams	<p>Providing news material for Council newsletters and promoting work of PROW/CMS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 2009 – Middlewich FP14 improvements feature in Middlewich Guardian 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2010 – Walks for All leaflet launch featured on CE website, CE News, CE internal staff newsletter and Congleton Chronicle, Housing Association newsletters, PCT staff newsletters, Disabled Holiday Information website, local third sector organisations, Ableworld etc. • May/June 2010 - Presentations on the potential of PROW for leisure, health and transport given to Local Area Partnerships and bulletin circulated to Members

CESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER COUNCIL UPDATE ON RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROJECTS

Project	Completion date	Partners	Detail	Update June 2010
Cuddington new footpath to link bowling green to FP21 Cuddington upgrade to surface and installation of new bridge	2011/12	Cuddington PC,	Not within priority funding list for Highway for 2010/11. Capital bid potential for 2011/12 or possibility for external funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital bid for 2011/12 Pursue external funding
Flintshire to Neston Cycleway	Long term	Sustrans, CCC Regeneration, Flintshire CC, Engineering Service etc.	<p>Securing cycling/walking link between Deeside and Neston. Approach to RSPB has been made by Sustrans. RSPB have agreed to permissive footpath, but not to cycling yet. Definitive Map Team dealing with Old Quay and Snab Lane claims – both to be DMMO'd as footpaths. Part of North West Coastal Trail (NWCT) – will be taken forward as part of this project.</p> <p>Council has sent letter of support to Network Rail to compliment Sustrans application for this stretch</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> DMMO priority document will be produced June 2010 Investigate link to Wirral Way 2010
North West Coastal Trail	Long term	NWDA, surrounding authorities, North West Coastal Forum	<p>Merseyside & Cheshire Coastal Access Group meet quarterly. NW Coastal trail proposed route through Frodsham Marsh & Flintshire to Neston cycleway</p> <p>Marine & Coastal Access Act gives Natural England a duty to implement a walking route around the coast by 2020. Working closely to secure both objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possible source of funding to secure footbridge across Weaver navigation 2010/11
Weaver Way and associated projects	2010	Regeneration, British Waterways, Weaver Valley Regional Park partners	Riversdale Bridge to be completed Autumn 2010. Additional footpath improvements along River Dane through Vickers parkway should be completed June 2010. Future improvements to tow path from Hartford Blue Bridge to Winsford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Riversdale Bridge completion Autumn 2010 Footpath improvements June 2010

Project	Completion date	Partners	Detail	Update June 2010
Bishop Bennet Way Road	2011	Road Safety Team	Wetreins Green stretch on the 2010/11 capital bid list, other improvements will be assessed. Road crossing surveyed for improvement possibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital programme 2010/11
'Walks for All' Cheshire West and Chester	2010	Volunteer group	No steps no stile, walks for all booklet to be launched at the Cheshire Show stand 2010. Will be available on the web pages and will be uploaded to Discover Cheshire website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch Cheshire Show June 2010 Webpage in June 2010 Discover Cheshire upload by Autumn 2010
Accessibility	2010	ICT WEB	Entire Network Survey information will be coming in at the beginning of July 2010. Information will include entire network survey which will include photographs of all furniture on route gates/stiles/steps etc, path condition, gradient, view points. On line mapping web page will hold all the information for the public. The on line mapping itself will undergo improvements including updating of fault report system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information delivery July 2010 Web package Autumn 2010
Discover Cheshire	2010	Tourism	New version due June 2010 upload of Walks for All trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> June 2010 new version
Cheshire West and Chester publications & events	2010	Communications	'Waterways' stand at Cheshire show promoting access to and recreation around waterways. Continuing to provide articles for newsletters promoting PROW/greenspace	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheshire Show stand 2010

Cheshire West and Chester Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) Progress

Background:

The purpose of the new ROWIP is to identify how well our access network currently performs for Cheshire West and Chester residents and visitors alike

The plan must contain:

- An assessment of the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public
- An assessment of the opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open air recreation and the enjoyment of the authority's area
- An assessment of the accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems
- A statement of action proposed for the management of the local rights of way and for securing an improved network of local rights of way, with particular regard for matters dealt

Local authorities will be expected to consider their contribution to national transport goals as over-arching priorities for their ROWIP. These five goals are as follows:

- Economic Growth;
- Climate Change;
- Better safety, security and health;
- Greater equality of opportunity; and
- Quality of life.

The tables below list the how the ROWIP will progress for Cheshire West and Chester

Consultation Process

DATES	SUBJECT	TARGET AUDIENCE	CONSULTATION METHOD
December 2009-July 2010	Open Space Audit (PPG17)	Households, user groups, Town & Parish councils	Questionnaires & presentations
June 2010-August 2010	Focus groups use/demand	Hard to reach groups & non users	Specific question feedback
June 2010-August 2010	Citizens Panel use/demand	Hard to reach groups & non users	Specific question feedback
June 2010- August 2010	Use/demand Questionnaire	Town & Parish Councils	Postal questionnaire
June 2010- August 2010	Use/demand questionnaire	Web users, search requests	Website questionnaire
June 2010- August 2010	Use/demand questionnaire	User groups & landowners	Postal questionnaire

Survey process

DATES	SUBJECT	TARGET	METHOD
February 2010- July 2010	ROW Accessibility Network Survey	Cheshire West and Chester ROW Network	Survey, images, gradients

Cheshire West and Chester ROWIP Programme

DATES	ROWIP PHASE
December 2009- August 2010	Open Space Audit/ Accessibility network Survey/User & Demand consultation
July 2010-August 2010	Writing draft document
August 2010	Writing Draft 5 year Implementation programme
September 2010	Draft Plan & Implementation programme to CLAF & Committee
October 2010- December 2010	Draft Plan & Implementation programme out to 3 month public consultation period
January 2011	Incorporate Feedback into Plan
February 2011-March 2011	Plan Adopted
April 2011	Plan in place

The ROWIP Steering group will continue to meet monthly until the Plan is adopted

CLAF



Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Public Rights of Way comprise footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic. They form a network across the borough in both urban and rural areas, offering both leisure activities and transport links.

Cheshire East Council is in the process of revising the County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan which covered the period 2006-2011. A new plan is being compiled to reflect the geographic area of Cheshire East and to tie in with the next Local Transport Plan to cover the next 15 years.

A great deal of research was undertaken for the first improvement plan, and now we are seeking to confirm that the findings of that research remain valid, rather than start again from scratch.

Your input is greatly appreciated – **thank you!**

Alternatively, please send it to: ROWIP2, Public Rights of Way, Cheshire East Council, Phoenix House, Clough Road, Winsford, CW7 4BD or rowip@cheshireeast.gov.uk.

1. What do you see as the most important priorities for Public Rights of Way?

Tick the 3 most important priorities

- ☐ Improve paths between homes and schools, shops etc.
- ☐ Promote leisure routes to support local rural businesses
- ☐ Make paths easier to use by removing stiles and barriers
- ☐ Provide leaflets and information for people to find out where routes are
- ☐ Promote routes that people can get to by public transport

2. What actions would help people in your area to use public rights of way more?

Tick the 3 most important actions

- ☐ More signposting and waymarking
- ☐ More vegetation cutting on paths
- ☐ More information about routes through leaflets and websites
- ☐ Making existing routes easier to use by replacing stiles with gates
- ☐ Better surfaces and drainage on existing routes
- ☐ More paths available for cyclists and horseriders
- ☐ New routes to fill in gaps in the network of public rights of way

3. To make the Public Rights of Way network easier to use for everybody, including disabled people, what should we aim to do?

Tick the 3 most important aims

- ☐ Make a few key circular routes easy to use in each type of landscape (e.g. parkland, woodland, riverside, lakeside, farmland, hill country)
- ☐ Provide information on specific routes that are easy to use
- ☐ Provide information on how easy to use all public rights of way are
- ☐ Make each path easier to use as other works on the path are done

4. Public Rights of Way have a role to play in delivering the following aims.

Tick one box on each row only

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Reducing carbon emissions					
Supporting economic growth					
Promoting equality of opportunity					
Contributing to better safety, security & health					
Improving quality of life & a healthy natural environment					

5. Who should we work with to improve rights of way in your area?

Tick the 3 most important groups for us to work with

- ☐ Local businesses in the leisure service sector e.g. tea shops, bike hire
☐ Public transport providers
☐ Disability and older peoples' action groups
☐ Landowners
☐ Health agencies, to promote walking and riding as healthy activities
☐ Other (please specify)

6. Is there a Public Right of Way in your area between homes and a facility such as a place of work, school, shop or doctors surgery which could be improved?

If so, please provide a description of the location of the route & what improvements could be made.

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.....

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Any other comments:

.....

.....

.....

Contact details (so we can ask for further details about your suggestions if needed)

Contact name:

Contact address

or email:

MEETING : CHESHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM
DATE : 18 JUNE 2010

REPORT OF : Cheshire West and Chester
Contact : Angela Simpson
Officer : Greenspace Manager

**PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY REGULATORY DECISION MAKING & GREENSPACE
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN CHESHIRE WEST AND CHESTER**

Summary:

1. Cheshire West and Chester Council is currently in the process of changing the way in which its Public Rights of Way (PROW) Committee functions. The Committee currently has two main areas of operation:-
 - 1.1 Firstly, the Committee makes regulatory decisions on PROW matters such as Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs), Public Path Orders (PPOs) and Village Green applications.
 - 1.2 Secondly, the Committee provides a forum through which reports on operational PROW policy and budget matters can be received and debated in public leading to the formation of recommendations to the Council's Executive
2. The proposed changes to the regulatory decision making process involve delegating all such matters to officers with provision for certain decisions to be referred up by officers or "called-in" by Members for decision by the Committee where appropriate. The Rights of Way Committee would meet on an ad hoc basis as and when required to determine the matters that have been referred up or called in.
3. As a result, it is anticipated that the Committee will not meet as frequently as it currently does and so the Committee and the Executive Member for Culture and Regeneration are exploring alternative mechanisms through which recommendations to the Executive on PROW policy and budget matters can be debated and formulated.
4. Mindful that the Local Access Forum (LAF) is a statutorily constituted body which already serves such a purpose, which already receives the types of reports currently taken to Committee under 1.2 above, the proposal is to request that the Local Access Forum formally undertake the role currently discharged by the Committee in respect of matters falling under 1.2 above.

5. In practice this will mean that, in regard to Cheshire West and Chester Greenspace policy matters, the views of the Local Access Forum will be sought and formally reported to the Council's Executive.
6. It is understood that no changes will be required to the LAF Terms of Reference, since such matters are already reported to this group. However, under the current arrangements where such matters are brought before the Public Rights of Way Committee there is scope for broad public participation because the Committee's terms of reference permit any member of the public to attend and address the PROW Committee on agenda items.
7. Thus if any transfer in this function to the LAF is to be of an equivalent status there may be a need to allow for wider public participation in LAF meetings on a similar basis by allowing for public attendance in LAF meetings and for questions and observations to be put, at the Chairman's discretion, "from the floor".
8. It is hoped that the LAF will appreciate that there are clear benefits in aligning itself more directly with the Executive advisory function, currently performed by the Council's PROW Committee, and that it will embrace such a role for itself introducing any associated alterations that may be required to increase the scope for public participation at its meetings accordingly.
9. The Forum's view on this proposals, or indeed any other proposal it may have to serve the same purpose, is sought and shall be used to inform the Council's decision making on the executive advisory arrangements that will ultimately be put in place.

For further information:

Officer: Angela Simpson

Tel: 01244 402579 (07818 008361)

Email: angela.simpson@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk