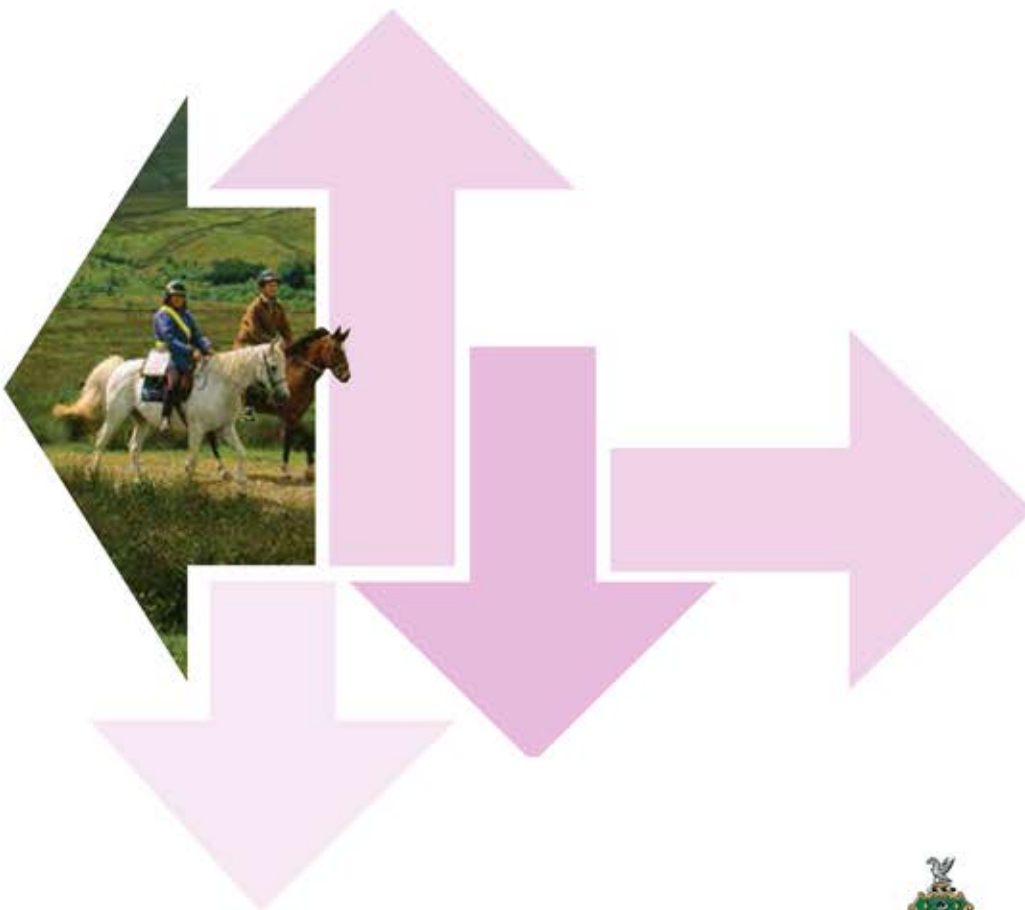




# Lancashire Rights of Way **Improvement Plan** 2015 ~ 2025



Blackpool Council



# Public rights of way and wider access in Lancashire

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n.b. In this document 'Lancashire' refers to the parts of the historical County of Lancashire covered by the administrative areas of Lancashire County Council (LCC), Blackburn with Darwen Council (BwD) and Blackpool Council (BC). This Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) is a joint document of the 3 authorities ~ hence 'our', 'us' or 'we' refers to the 3 authorities.

# Introduction to public rights of way and wider access in Lancashire

## Foreword

We are pleased to introduce this first decennial review of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Lancashire. Since the original Plan in 2005 much has changed: walking the public footpaths is often easier where stiles have been replaced by gates; multiuser paths have been created to make access easier for all, including people with impaired mobility; many local people and visitors now enjoy the Guild Wheel and equestrians explore the Pennine Bridleway and its link routes; mountain bikers enjoy the facilities at Gisburn Forest, Lee Quarry and other sites; work on the England Coast Path has reached Lancashire.

Local government has also changed significantly over that period and as the financial situation has required greater efficiencies, smarter ways of working have been developed. This Plan is not predicated either on continued austerity or on increased resources but is scalable and flexible, defining priorities and principles rather than quantities or specific programmes. It explores ways in which the provision of access, recreational and otherwise, can help deliver the strategic objectives of the three authorities.

This cannot be delivered solely by the three authorities; it is a partnership involving landowners, users, local councils and community groups and also Natural England and DEFRA. From the Blackpool sea-front to the Pennines, from Winter Hill to the Cumbria border the diversity of Lancashire's towns and countryside deserves the access that we plan to deliver with your help.

**Cllr Marcus Johnstone**

Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation  
Lancashire County Council



# Introduction to public rights of way and wider access in Lancashire

I'm delighted to introduce the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) for the next ten years for Lancashire, Blackburn-with Darwen, and Blackpool.

One thing is certain, technology will continue to develop at a rapid pace and it will have impact on many areas of our lives. In the outdoors, electronic mapping, route descriptions and information leaflets are already routinely available and the internet is probably now the first port of call for many of us when researching where to go, how to get there, places of interest - and where the pubs and cafes are to retreat to if the weather forecast is threatening! There are some new activities like geocaching which use the web and which can catch the imagination of young people hunting for hidden caches. There are controversial issues also of course ~ the ready use of the mobile phone to call on emergency services, sometimes for quite trivial reasons. We will need to keep up with the technology and learn to use the benefits and adapt to the challenges.

We should see the completion of the England coastal footpath mid-way through this plan period - work on the Lancashire section is due to commence soon.

It's now over ten years since the open access areas such as Bowland were opened to the public. Some of the signage and furniture is now looking very tired and will need to be replaced or refurbished.

But at the moment, we are in a climate of budget cuts and austerity. Yet I'm optimistic that during the second half of the next ten-year period, we will be able to look to better times.

It is now widely acknowledged that public health and wellbeing are helped considerably if people have ready access to the outdoors, for exercise and enjoyment. The popularity of walking, cycling and riding seems to continue to increase, for people of all ages and abilities. There has been a huge expansion of big organised events.

I am confident that this ROWIP draws together the strands and areas for action by the local authorities and voluntary organisations so that local people and visitors will continue to be able to enjoy our amazing and beautiful countryside.

## **Richard Toon**

Chairman, Lancashire Local Access Forum



# Introduction to public rights of way and wider access in Lancashire

Blackpool's public rights of way (PROWs) are a recognised part of its efforts to provide opportunities for outdoor activities, supporting parks, countryside paths and the iconic Promenade with its range of attractions, public art and breath-taking views across the Irish Sea.

This includes Stanley Park, one of the finest municipal parks on the country, routes for cycling, walking and horse riding around Blackpool Zoo and Heron's Reach golf course and the scientifically important Marton Mere, with its bird and other wildlife.

Other urban routes provide useful connectivity for pedestrians, joining homes with work-places and schools, away from the road network and are particularly useful to children. At the resort boundary, there are opportunities to connect to paths in other council areas, a potential Lancashire-wide resource.

The council is committed to maintaining and improving PROWs, where resources allow and this has been considered within the local transport plan process, which commits the council to improving the walking and cycling environment, not forgetting horse riders. Blackpool Council is seeking to help residents improve their health through regular exercise and what better than a bracing walk or cycle ride?

I am pleased to support this rights of way improvement plan, which provides a strong framework for the council's commitment to PROWs in a regional context and proud that Blackpool Council has been able to contribute to it. I look forward to working with partner councils over the plan's ten year life in pursuit of its objectives.

**Councillor Fred Jackson**



*Fred Jackson*

# Introduction to public rights of way and wider access in Lancashire

Blackburn with Darwen Borough has an amazing network of access and recreation facilities ranging from our town centre paths into parks, woodlands and green spaces to the well worn tracks up into the West Pennine Moors.

Maintaining and improving the connection with our green spaces is critical to the health of our diverse communities and the 500km right of way network within the borough provides the essential links to facilitate this connection.

Over the past 10 years the rights of way network in the borough has seen dramatic change with the introduction of formal systems and procedures to manage statutory case work, as well as ambitious development of right of way improvement projects including the West Pennine Link multiuser route. Many of the projects undertaken have been fantastic examples of partnership working with other organisations including United Utilities, Natural England, The Ramblers Association and local horse riding groups. The partnership model is a template which the new ROWIP must promote to succeed.

Moving forward we must adapt to the changing patterns of use of rights of way, in particular the development and improvement of urban links and shorter walks closer to the centres of population. We must ensure that access for all is a reality and that everyone in the borough can easily and safely access a local path, park or community facility.

Given the uncertain economic situation facing public authorities I am pleased to support an ambitious ROWIP which promotes joint working between authorities across our county landscape and allows for future development opportunities despite the current austerity measures.

**Councillor Phil Riley**



*P. Riley*

## 1.1 Introduction to Public Rights of Way and wider access in Lancashire

Lancashire is blessed with large areas of countryside that can rival that found anywhere else in the country. Much of Lancashire's countryside is criss-crossed by a substantial network of public rights of way (PROW) over which the public has the right to pass. The PROW network comprises public footpaths, which are for pedestrian use only; public bridleways for pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists and public byways which can be used by pedestrians, horse riders, cyclists and vehicles (in the case of Byways Open to All Traffic, motorised vehicles.) There are also permissive routes<sup>1</sup>, mostly for walkers but some for cyclists and equestrians. In addition to these linear routes are local woodland and the country parks, picnic sites, other parks, village greens and public open space managed by the county and unitary councils, district councils and other organisations that provide access to green space in Lancashire. For the more adventurous members of the public there is the Access Land<sup>2</sup> which includes large areas of moorland but also smaller pockets of land, particularly commons. In the coastal areas access to the coastline, shore and promenade routes also provide important access.

The PROW network provides a valuable recreational resource for use by our communities and visitors to Lancashire alike. PROWs also offer a sustainable method of travel by promoting use of alternative modes of transport to cars. They contribute towards health and well-being initiatives and play a part in the economic development of Lancashire by improving quality of life for residents and encouraging tourism. As they are free to access and enjoy, they can also promote social inclusion. In the coastal areas access to the coastline, shore and promenade routes also provide important access.

<sup>1</sup> A permissive, permitted or concessionary path is not a public right of way, but a path whose use is allowed by the landowner.

<sup>2</sup> You can access some land across England and Wales without having to use paths - this land is known as 'open access land' or 'access land'. Access land includes mountains, moors, heaths and downs that are privately owned. It also includes common land registered with the local council. Your right to access this land is called the right, or freedom, to roam.

<sup>3</sup> Local Authorities are required to keep a 'register of Common Land and Village Greens' as well as details of access land for their areas and are referred to as the 'registration authority'.

Our responsibilities in respect of the PROW network include:

- Signposting and waymarking of footpaths, bridleways and byways;
- Keeping up to date the Definitive Map and Statement which is the legal record of public rights of way;
- Maintaining the surface of a public right of way to a standard appropriate for the purpose for which it is used;
- Maintaining bridges over natural river courses;
- Keeping the public rights of way open and available by ensuring that other partners fulfil their responsibilities.

Our responsibilities in respect of our parks, picnic areas, etc. is generally only that of a landowner but they are considered a valuable part of the access to green space provided by the authorities. We have no maintenance responsibility for parks and other open space owned by other organisations or individuals, except where this is specified in an access agreement with the owners, but we are the Registration Authority for commons and town/village greens and Access Authority<sup>3</sup> for access land within our respective areas.

In addition, we are required by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to prepare and publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP), which sets out how we intend to manage and improve our public rights of way network in order to meet the Government's aim of better provision for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and people with mobility problems. The existing guidance 'Rights of Way Improvement Plans: Statutory Guidance to Local Highway Authorities in England' was published in November 2002 and explains the statutory requirement to assess and review Rights of Way Improvement plans not more than 10 years after publication and at intervals of not more than 10 years thereafter.

Defra has confirmed that the existing guidance is still valid and consistent with current objectives. However, authorities have been asked to specifically consider access to woodland as well as other land types when reviewing their plans.

## 1.2 RoWIP Purpose and Scope

This RoWIP consists of a summary of the Assessment as well as a Statement of Action. The assessment sets out the adequacy of the rights of way and wider access network ('the Assessment of Need') and the 'Statement of Action' sets out how we will work with others to address the demands and needs identified in the assessment.

### 1.2.1 The assessment of need:

- The extent to which local rights of way meet present and future needs of the public,
- The opportunities presented by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the authorities' area with particular emphasis on footpaths, cycle tracks, bridleways and restricted byways
- The accessibility of the local rights of way network to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems
- The quality and usability of all rights of way as well as their connectivity as part of a network

### 1.2.2 The statement of actions:

- Manage public rights of way
- Secure an improved network of public rights of way
- Improve wider public access

### 1.2.3 The ROWIP process

Lancashire's first RoWIP was produced in 2005 and was the starting point for the assessment of need when preparing this revised RoWIP. We have analysed the most recent information we have available from relevant condition and user surveys to help us assess the overall condition of the network and the needs of users. We have considered the demand for change to the network indicated by public path orders and definitive map modification orders.

In terms of user need the 2005 RoWIP used evidence from a number of sources including panel discussions with the Lancashire Local Access Forum (LLAF), district councils and all three highways authorities.

There was also information drawn from a number of studies conducted around this time such as 'cycling demand', 'access all areas' and 'assessing demand in relation to countryside access'. Much of this evidence is still valid but has been built on to provide evidence for this revised RoWIP. The key source of evidence utilised is the more recent Natural England Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) study data to provide a valuable insight into current attitudes and trends. We considered the needs of specific users by working closely with the LAF and analysing feedback obtained from cycling and Local Transport Plan (LTP) consultations. In order to assess the accessibility of the network to the blind and partially sighted and people with mobility problems we have consulted widely with user groups such as disabled ramblers and Galloway's blind walking groups. We currently don't know what proportion of the network is currently sufficiently accessible to the majority of disabled users and we are unclear about exact problem areas but overall it appears that there isn't adequate information. Our themes and actions pick this up and aim to address this lack of information.

As well as considering local population projections to help us understand need and demand in the future we have also considered the findings in key research such as the Natural England MENE study and the Rossendale Task and Finish report on PROW as well as local intelligence from our officers.

We also looked at opportunities around wider access via access land, permissive and concessionary routes as well as country parks, parks, picnic sites, woodland and coastal access.

Throughout the RoWIP process we have sought input from the three highway authorities and have encouraged the views of district and parish councils, members of the LAF along with other statutory consultees. A full list is provided in the supporting RoWIP consultation report.



## 1.2.4 The ROWIP in context

The RoWIP is being prepared at a time when councils are experiencing significant reductions in budgets and a refocusing of service priorities. In the case of Lancashire County Council the corporate strategy is being reviewed but it is clear that all councils remain committed to:

- Preparing for the future (promoting healthy lives and good quality environments for people to live)
- Supporting the most vulnerable and;
- boosting the Lancashire economy, both creating and protecting jobs

Implementation of the RoWIP can contribute towards these corporate priorities and also help achieve many of the objectives and goals in the following strategies and plans:

- Local Transport Plans (LTP4)

The RoWIP is a daughter document to the LTPs which define the transport goals and priorities for Lancashire. Each Lancashire highway authority has its own LTP and these suggest improvements to the network that will secure safe and convenient access to services, reduction in congestion, more attractive neighbourhoods and carbon reductions combined with the goal of making walking and cycling more safe, convenient and attractive, particularly in the more disadvantaged areas of Lancashire. Improvements to the rights of way network in key locations may offer a real alternative to using the car as well as improving and enhancing neighbourhoods. Actions identified in this RoWIP aim to build on this with a focus on identifying and improving access in key locations across Lancashire and improving provision for cyclists.

- Asset Management Plans.<sup>4</sup>

The asset management plans set out the maintenance priorities for a range of the authorities' assets including public rights of way. They identify how these assets will be maintained, how resources will be allocated and prioritised. These plans will be key in prioritising investment in the rights of way network in the future.

- Health and Wellbeing

Lancashire has a wide variation in levels of income and wealth with pockets of deprivation found across all parts of the area, however there is also abundant green space that is already enjoyed by many people for leisure and relaxation but can be further exploited for health and wellbeing.

The rights of way network has a valuable role to play by providing a free and safe to use network of accessible routes for walking, cycling and other methods of sustainable travel that will enable healthy behaviours. By prioritising and promoting routes in and around the communities which suffer most from health inequalities and involving communities where possible through volunteering in the development and maintenance of the network the service can fully contribute towards addressing the wider determinants of health.

- Economic development

It is widely accepted that a quality rights of way network and access to green space has influenced tourism and economic development. Where benefits can be realised this RoWIP will continue to promote development of the network to take advantage of opportunities as they arise and as resources permit.

- Environmental

Our environmental priorities are closely aligned to facilitating good health and wellbeing and promoting resilient communities by targeting projects and resources to Lancashire's most vulnerable communities. This RoWIP supports these aims by prioritising our efforts in those communities experiencing health inequalities and by increasing provision within the network for the visually impaired and disabled users.

<sup>4</sup> LCC has a TAMP (Transport Asset Management Plan), BC and BwD have HAMPs (Highways Asset Management Plans).

- Equality, Diversity and Cohesion

A key element of the RoWIP is the requirement to consider the specific needs of partially sighted and disabled users in order to improve provision. We consider that the themes and actions identified in this plan all positively contribute towards making an overall improvement to provision for disabled and visually impaired users and actions respond directly to feedback from users. Actions will also be developed to explore how we can better encourage Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups to use the rights of way network as well as developing a strategy to encourage community involvement through volunteering.



## 1.2.5 The Local Access Forum

Local access forums are independent groups of volunteers established under section 94 of the Countryside and Rights of Way CROW Act 2000. They are statutory bodies advising on improving access on land and to water for recreation and utility (e.g. routes to school, work and other local amenities) purposes and making the links between improved access and the wide benefits that improve overall quality of life such as health, sustainable transport, economy, accessibility, tourism and enhancing landscapes.

Their role is primarily strategic and intended to achieve a consensus view taking into consideration the needs of both land-managers and access users, statutory implications and wider environmental, social and economic factors to influence and develop plans, policy and broader decision making as opposed to focusing on specific locations/paths.

The Lancashire Local Access Forum (LLAF) was established in 2002 and is the joint forum for the area administered by Lancashire County Council, Blackburn with Darwen Council and Blackpool Council. The LLAF has played a key role in providing support and advising on the development of this plan and will continue to do so during its lifetime.

## 1.2.6 Strategic Environmental Assessment

The European Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive EC 2001/42/EC requires that all new strategies are assessed for their environmental impact. This plan has undergone an appraisal process and it was felt that the RoWIP has no negative effect on the environment and quality of life for residents and visitors and in fact has many beneficial effects. As a result a SEA was not considered to be necessary for this plan.

# 2. Assessment of current provision and need

## 2.1 Assessment of Public Rights of Way and Wider Access in Lancashire

### 2.1.1 Lancashire overview

Population projections for Lancashire reveal that the resident population is expected to increase by around 5% over the twenty five year period up to 2037 resulting in a population of 1.539 million. The analysis by age reveals a predicted decrease in almost all age groups between 0-64 years but with a substantial increase in all age groups from 65 years. The oldest age group of 90 years + is predicted to rise by 229% over the 25 year period. What we do know is that the prevalence of disability rises with all age groups. Currently around 6% of children in the UK are disabled compared to 15% of working age adults and 45% of adults over state pension age. A strategy for older people has been developed for Lancashire which highlights the opportunities and challenges of an aging population which seeks to create an environment where older people feel empowered to live their lives in the way they choose and where skills and expertise are valued. One way in which the public rights of way network can help is by providing free and accessible opportunities for people to access and enjoy local green space, to allow people to walk and take physical exercise as well as space for communities to come together to help tackle issues such as social isolation as well as physical illness which may become more of an issue in an aging population.

We know that there are health inequalities across Lancashire, pockets of deprivation where health and social problems are more prevalent. Access to green space along with a quality environment is known to have positive health benefits for communities and a well maintained rights of way network providing links to these can play an important role in promoting health and wellbeing.

**Summary of issues:** There are many factors that impact on health and wellbeing with poor access to green space along with social isolation being amongst them. If managed appropriately the rights of way network can contribute positively to addressing these by providing links to quality green space and by promoting community resilience through engaging communities in the process. Routes with appropriate surfaces and fewer stiles are important to encourage access from an aging population.

**Response:** Promote the rights of way network to new users, particularly older people and those living in deprived communities. Ensure that there are accessible and easy routes suitable for all ages and abilities close to where people live that provide additional infrastructure like benches to make them more attractive to elderly users. Prioritise maintenance and seek to upgrade routes connecting deprived neighbourhoods to green space and where possible involve communities in the design and delivery of services

**Action/s:** 1.0 1.8 2.0 5.0

*“Well-being is what makes you want to get up in the morning”*

~ Dr Atul Gawande, 2014 Reith Lecture

## 2. Assessment of current provision and need

### 2.1.2 The extent of the rights of way network in Lancashire

Lancashire has a network of over 6,000 km of public rights of way including 500 km of bridleways and 30 km of byways. However, these are not evenly spread across the area, especially bridleways and byways and whilst major rivers influenced the connectivity of the network historically the modern effects of much faster traffic on railways and roads and greatly increased flows on the latter have served to sever parts of the network and reduce the confidence of potential users to actually use the PROW. The historical network in the vicinity of new developments is often no longer fit for purpose both in its connections and construction ~ parents taking children to school cannot push a buggy or keep school uniform clean using a footpath over a stile and across an arable field and the footpath may not start from the housing estate. The three highway authorities have a statutory responsibility for these public rights of way. We also have responsibility for the Definitive Map and Statement which is the legal record<sup>5</sup> of public rights of way in Lancashire.

As part of this assessment we have analysed the definitive map along with the numbers of definitive map modification orders (DMMOs)<sup>6</sup> and public path orders (PPOs)<sup>7</sup> over the last five years.

In total we have been dealing with approximately 80 DMMOs which indicates the number of anomalies in the network and suggests that the current network is not sufficient and that there is still a demand for something different. Similarly in the same time period we have been dealing with approximately 160 PPOs. This indicates that there is a demand to alter the current network in order to accommodate the needs of users and landowners. We are aware that there is a backlog of DMMOs which need to be processed by 2026 in order to ensure their inclusion on the definitive map. This is a priority to ensure that valuable routes are not lost.

**Summary of issues:** There is an increasing urgency to process DMMOs in a timely fashion to ensure that valuable routes are not lost past the government cut-off date of 2026<sup>8</sup>. There is a pressing need to process PPOs in order to modernise the network with respect to current land use. Severance by rail and major roads can act as a deterrent to use. New developments should be encouraged to include provision for updating the PROW network in condition and alignment.

**Response:** Improve the efficiency in processing DMMOs to increase the turnaround and prevent loss of routes after 2026. Improve the efficiency in processing PPOs to modernise the network.

**Action/s:** 1.4 1.5 6.0 6.1 6.2

<sup>5</sup>The legal record of 'definitive map' is a map prepared by a surveying authority which is a legal record of the public's rights of way in one of four categories (footpath, bridleway, restricted byway or byway open to all traffic).

<sup>6</sup>A definitive map modification order or DMMO is a way of amending the map and statement to ensure it is correct.

<sup>7</sup>A public path order or PPO can create, extinguish or divert a public footpath or bridleway.

<sup>8</sup>The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 set a cut-off date in 2026 for ancient public rights of way to be added to the Definitive Map and Statement where they are not currently recorded or in use.

# 2. Assessment of current provision and need

## 2.1.3 The condition of the public rights of way network

We have a statutory duty to ensure that all PROW is correctly recorded, signed and available for all legitimate users at all times. We are also required by statute to ensure that all PROW, including the surfaces, are kept free from obstruction and defects. Whilst this is a statutory duty and refers to the entire length of the network it is necessary to prioritise reported defects and issues as they arise to ensure that those which affect the greatest number of people to the greatest extent are dealt with first.

Up until 2008 local authorities were legally required to report on the condition of the network via performance indicator (BVPI 178) and these were compared with those of other English local authorities. BVPI 178 measured the percentage of total length of public rights of way on the Definitive Map that were deemed to be signed and easy to use by members of the public. Signed and easy to use is defined as:-

- signposted or way marked where they leave the road in accordance with the authority's duty under s.27 of the Countryside Act 1968 and to the extent necessary to allow users to follow the path;
- free from unlawful obstructions and other interference, including overhanging vegetation, of the public's right of passage;
- Surface and lawful barriers such as stiles, gates, etc. in a good repair and to a standard necessary to enable the public to use the way without undue inconvenience.

Whilst there was no legal obligation to continue this survey after 2008 many authorities have continued to survey at least 5% (i.e. approx. 280 km) of public rights of way each year since. The information we have regarding network condition in Lancashire since 2008 is shown below:

PROW Condition Surveys 2008/09 ~ 2012/13 PROWs classed as 'easy to use'				
2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/11	2012/13
70%	70%	66%	61%	55%

Our data reveals that overall satisfaction with the rights of way network has declined over the last five years. This is borne out by reports of defects and requests from users via parish councils and various user groups. The poor surface condition and standards of maintenance of routes across the county has been raised consistently as an issue throughout this assessment and this has been picked up in the statement of actions.

**Summary of issues:** Overall satisfaction of the public rights of way network in terms of being classed as 'easy to use' has fallen consistently over the last five years.

**Response:** We need to identify key user routes and prioritise our maintenance in order to secure improvements on the most heavily used, or potentially used, routes.

**Action/s:** 1.2

# 2. Assessment of current provision and need

## 2.2 Wider access opportunities considered as part of this plan:

In addition to the public rights of way network we are also responsible for managing a number of local and long distance promoted routes, conservation areas, access land, parks and other public spaces which all contribute to the overall green space network. The following section provides a summary of the extent, use and condition of these assets along with issues identified.

### 2.2.1 Promoted routes

There are numerous promoted routes across Lancashire which are wholly or partly on public rights of way. Routes are often circular or themed and may be accompanied by a leaflet to promote them to locals and visitors. We recognise the value of some of these routes in terms of tourism generation but we also recognise that many routes are aimed at attracting experienced ramblers and visitors rather than providing utilitarian function to local residents. Promoted routes also raise expectations from users in terms of the quality of the infrastructure and information. Often communities seek grant funding to promote routes to attract tourism and visitors to their area without necessarily improving the infrastructure to support the potential increase in numbers and this can lead to maintenance issues. Despite these issues we recognise the valuable opportunity that promoted routes can provide in bringing together heritage with the benefits of walking and cycling, particularly close to urban areas and in deprived communities.

**Summary of issues:** Promoted routes raise expectations with users and whilst some have educational/economic benefits they tend to be targeted at regular walkers and ramblers and may not provide the desired short walks close to urban areas that are likely to attract the most use and have the greatest health benefits.

**Response:** Rationalise and manage fewer promoted routes and prioritise maintenance on these routes based on health benefits. We encourage anyone thinking of working on a promoted route to work closely with the highway authorities to help to resolve issues and utilise opportunities to secure grants to improve the network for the benefit of all users.

**Action/s:** 1.3 5.0



## 2. Assessment of current provision and need

### 2.2.2 Access land ~ open access

The CRoW Act 2000 established the "Right to Roam" and the Access Authorities' role in managing it. We are the Access Authorities for Lancashire and there are over 40,000ha of access land and over 500 access points (appendix 2, table 1 provides details of access land in Lancashire). Access land provides opportunities for informal access to green space, with some close to urban areas. In 2004 a whole suite of information and map-boards was installed with grant aid from Natural England (NE) to inform the public of restrictions and exclusions and to indicate the boundaries of access land and excepted land<sup>9</sup> with many access points upgraded from stiles to kissing gates at the same time. Access land is shown on LCC's 'Maps and related information online' system referred to as 'MARIO' (see <http://mario.lancashire.gov.uk/agsmario/> ) as well as the Natural England website ~ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/natural-england> where information about restrictions and closures is also hosted.

**Summary of issues:** Access and signage points are not well maintained or recorded; there is insufficient information about access points.

**Response:** Audit and address the existing access signage and points.

**Action/s:** 2.4



<sup>9</sup>There are a number of categories of open country, including common land, to which CRoW does not apply, this is known as excepted land. These exceptions include:

land used by the military under the Military Land Acts, land covered by buildings, land within 20 metres of a livestock building unless this land provides a way to CRoW 'access land', land covered by temporary livestock pens, land used as a golf course or racecourse.

## 2. Assessment of current provision and need

### 2.2.3 Permissive/concessionary routes (including Canal Towpaths)

Over many years permissive routes have been used to secure additional access adding value to the existing rights of way network. Canal Towpaths are an example and provide a valuable resource to users. Whilst not always suitable for all users where appropriate and where access can be agreed tow paths may be identified as a priority within the bridleway network.

We have also entered into concessionary agreements for strategically important routes in a number of instances including parts of the West Pennine Link route to the Pennine Bridleway.

Most such routes do not feature on Ordnance Survey (OS) maps because of the lack of surety that they will be in place for the long term. (OS normally require a greater than 10 year term).

**Summary of issues:** There is a lack of any good quality public information on permissive routes which reduces the opportunities for access.

**Response:** Verify the information held on permissive routes and make it publicly available in the most appropriate way.

**Action/s:** 2.6





## 2. Assessment of current provision and need

### 2.2.4 Coastal access

The Government is committed to expanding access and enjoyment of the English coastline by allowing people access for the first time in some cases. Part 9 of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 aims to improve public access to, and enjoyment of, the English coastline by creating clear and consistent public rights along the coast for open-air recreation on foot. It allows existing coastal access to be secured and improved and new access to be created in places where it did not already exist.

For the first time people will have the right of access around all of England's open coast. This includes ~ where appropriate ~ any land, other than the trail itself, which forms part of the coastal margin and which has public rights of access along the way. This is known as 'spreading room'.

Natural England staff are carrying out this work which is about to start in Lancashire. The Lancashire Coastal Way will form the basis of the trail ~ but there are a number of locations in Lancashire where the new rights will bring significant improvements to coastal access. Jenny Browns Point to Carnforth, Pilling Embankment and the north bank of the Ribble between Lytham and Preston are particular examples.

The Government has recently announced a new timescale for the completion of the Coast Path ~ by 2020

**Summary of issues:** There is demand for the coastal access and the coastal route work to be progressed in Lancashire.

**Response:** Assist and encourage Natural England and other partners on coastal access work in Lancashire.

**Action/s:** 1.5



## 2. Assessment of current provision and need

### 2.2.5 Local parks, open spaces and woodland

There is a wide variety of parks and open space across Lancashire. These range from very large parks with extensive facilities, such as Stanley Park in Blackpool, to the very small scale parks and areas of green space between houses. These tend to be very close to where people live, usually within walking distance and as such are seen as a valuable asset. Most local parks and green spaces are owned or managed by district or unitary councils and the extent of these types of assets across Lancashire is unknown. As well as these sites there are local areas of woodland such as that in Gisburn that provide valuable access and recreation facilities for residents. What we do know from evidence obtained from the Natural England MENE survey is that good quality green space close to where people live is considered to be very important to the residents of Lancashire and ensuring people are aware of what is available and promoting these facilities is key to encouraging use. For older people parks and open spaces with facilities such as toilets and benches are welcome in providing much needed stopping points and reassurance when physical abilities may be reduced. We recognise the value of these public open spaces and would seek to enhance access to them and protect them.

Appendix 1, table 3 provides some information about local parks in Lancashire and an indication of the wide variety on offer across the area.

**Summary of issues:** Lack of facilities at some sites may reduce value for certain sections of the population and as such may be underutilised.

**Response:** Look for opportunities to improve the facilities and condition of parks, open spaces and woodland within communities and connections to them, especially those located in deprived communities/urban areas.

**Action/s:** 1.9



## 2. Assessment of current provision and need

### 2.2.6 Country parks and picnic sites

The purpose of a country park is to provide somewhere for visitors who do not necessarily want to go out into the wider countryside. Visitors can enjoy a public open space with an informal atmosphere, as opposed to a formal park that might be found in an urban area. For this reason country parks are usually found close to or on the edge of built-up areas, and rarely in the countryside proper, although this is not the case in Lancashire. Sites in Lancashire include Beacon Fell, Witton, Wycoller, Scorton, Crook O'Lune, Yarrow Valley and Wyre Estuary.

We have little information about user numbers although there are car counters at Beacon Fell and Crook o'Lune which suggest that visitor numbers to both sites are in excess of 250 000. Conder Green, Spring Wood, Wycoller and Preston Junction are also popular sites. Visitor satisfaction surveys conducted on the key sites over a number of years consistently demonstrated that over 95% of visitors were satisfied or very satisfied with the sites.

Overall there are over 93 sites in Lancashire occupying over 800 Hectares. Appendix 1, table 2 provides a full list. In terms of public rights of way we consider it important that the network provides good quality links to existing green space wherever possible to encourage use of these sites.

**Summary of issues:** Many sites in Lancashire are not well connected to urban areas and as such their benefits are not fully utilised, this may also prohibit access particularly from areas of deprivation. Whilst many larger sites are managed effectively and visitors are satisfied, there are many smaller sites where there are insufficient resources to manage them.

**Response:** Seek opportunities to improve links to sites via the public rights of way network. Encourage more volunteers/residents groups to get involved in routine maintenance and management of small sites.

**Action/s:** 5.1 1.7



## 2. Assessment of current provision and need

### 2.2.7 Roads

(including footways and roadside verges)

Roads, footways and roadside verges may offer opportunities to link up the public rights of way network and provide valuable connective routes for many types of users. However our knowledge of which routes might provide the most benefits to users and the suitability of routes is limited.

**Summary of issues:** Footways and roadside verges are not always accessible to all types of users therefore restricting access.

**Response:** Audit and develop a strategy for verges for equestrian and cyclist routes. (Identify those verges that form a link within the access network and seek appropriate maintenance improvements). Provide information to the public on available routes.

**Action/s:** 1.8



# 2. Assessment of current provision and need

## 2.3 Assessment of User need

### 2.3.1 The Natural England MENE survey 2014

One of the key sources of data used to help assess user demand and need in Lancashire is the National MENE survey conducted by Natural England. This study explores how people use, enjoy and are motivated to protect the natural environment as well as changes in use over time. The key findings of this are shown below:

Since the first MENE annual report was published in 2010, the proportion of people taking at least one visit to the outdoors in the previous week for health and exercise has increased significantly from 34% in 2009 to 2010, to 45% in 2013 to 2014.

Other findings from the fifth annual report include:

- between March 2013 and February 2014, it is estimated that the 42.3 million adults resident in England took a total of 2.93 billion visits to the natural environment
- around a quarter of visits involved some form of expenditure resulting in an estimated spend of £17 billion. Around 54 pence in every pound was spent on food and drink, 14 pence on fuel, 9 pence on admission fees, and 6 pence on gifts and souvenirs
- visiting the natural environment for health or exercise accounted for an estimated 1.3 billion visits to the natural environment between March 2013 to February 2014
- respondents to the survey consistently agreed that being outdoors made them feel 'calm and relaxed' and the proportion agreeing that a visit was 'refreshing and revitalising' was at its highest in the most recent survey
- people who visited natural environments several times a day, every day, or several times a week rated themselves as having greater life satisfaction, more self-worth, more happiness and less anxiety than less regular visitors

- walking was by far the most frequently undertaken activity; almost half of visits were taken to walk a dog
- three-quarters of visits were less than 2 hours in duration, while two-thirds involved walking to the visit destination and almost four-fifths were taken within 2 miles of the visit start point
- 96% of people 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that having green spaces close to where they live is important
- factors relating to lack of time were most likely to be cited as reasons for not visiting the natural environment more often or at all

The survey found that 58% of the population make one leisure visit or more to the outdoors every week and the latest survey report suggests that green spaces near home are an increasingly important part of modern life. There has been an increase in outdoor recreation visits to towns and cities: currently just under half of outdoor recreation visits were taken to a destination within a town or city compared to two-fifths in 2010 to 2011. Visits tend to be taken close to where people live, with two-thirds within 2 miles of home.

**In terms of the levels of use of the countryside access network, the MENE survey found that:**

The proportion of visits to paths, cycleways and bridleways in Lancashire has decreased by 61% between 2012/13 and 2013/14.

In 2013/14 68% of visits were to places within two miles of the respondent's home (74% in Lancashire).

In Lancashire during 2013/14, 91% of respondents said spending time out of doors was an important part of their life and 90% agreed that having open green spaces close to where they live is important.

## 2. Assessment of current provision and need

Type of natural environment that people use ~ 2013/14	England	Lancashire
Path/cycleway/bridleway	16%	9%
Park in a town/city	27%	25%
Another open space in the countryside	10%	11%
A village	5%	3%
Farmland	8%	6%
Woodland	13%	8%
River/lake/canal	9%	11%

Distance people travel to enjoy nature and method of travel to get there ~ 2013/14	England	Lancashire
Less than 1 mile	43%	52%
1-2 miles	25%	23%
3-5 miles	15%	10%
On foot	65%	64%
Car/van	28%	31%
Bicycle	3%	3%

Top 3 motivations for people to access natural space ~ 2013/14	England	Lancashire
Exercise dog	49%	52%
For health or exercise	45%	41%
To relax and unwind	29%	25%

## 2. Assessment of current provision and need



Reason for not visiting the natural environment more often ~ 2013/14	England	Lancashire
Too busy at home	18%	13%
Too busy at work	26%	11%
Poor health	18%	25%
Old age	13%	15%
Physical disability	9%	8%
Not being interested	6%	5%
Lack of public transport	1%	0%
Concerns about where allowed to go	0%	0%
Lack of suitable places or paths	0%	0%
Lack of information	0%	1%

**Summary of issues:** MENE data raises the issue of meeting the demand for accessible green space close to urban areas/where people live along with actions to promote and encourage usage by older people and those suffering from poor health and disabilities.

**Response:** More provision and promotion of easier and more accessible walks close to where people live ~ catering particularly for the elderly and less able.

Action/s: 1.0 2.0

## 2. Assessment of current provision and need

### 2.3.2 Understanding the needs of different types of users

The public rights of way and other types of green and open space across Lancashire provide leisure, recreation and functional use for a wide variety of users. Everything from running, walking and mountain biking, to newer activities such as geocaching are popular with users in Lancashire. We have consulted widely as part of this assessment with local organisations, councils, individuals and user groups to try to understand the range of needs. We aim to ensure that our actions do not impact negatively on particular types of users but instead will enhance the network for everyone, but particularly for the most vulnerable and in the locations that they want.

Even within user groups there are different levels of need and requirements. Cyclists are not a uniform group of users and range from sporting enthusiasts to commuters, leisure users and families with small children on trikes. Similarly the needs of walkers will vary depending upon fitness, age, purpose of journey ~ whether it's for leisure or for day-to-day access to services. Long distance ramblers may not be concerned with footpath surface quality whilst other walkers will be put off if surfaces are not maintained to a good standard and free from mud and vegetation. Runners and dog walkers will all have different needs and requirements, some conflicting. The same applies to the visually impaired and disabled users and also to the needs of the very old and young, male and females. We are aware that many users will require additional provision over and above the authorities' statutory duty in order to make the countryside more accessible and enjoyable. Typically this involves making routes as accessible as possible by reducing the numbers of gates and stiles as well as making sure that information about accessible routes is available.

The users with the highest level of need are typically the visually impaired and disabled who require a well maintained, accessible and well signposted network. Users consulted have placed importance on good quality, level path surfaces which are free from overhanging vegetation and wide enough for wheelchairs and motorised scooters.

Users need fewer gates and more stile-free routes supported by good quality information (e.g. length of routes, facilities available, gradients etc). Any new structures on the network should be designed appropriately to take into account the needs of all users. Most cyclists, equestrians and walkers will also benefit from the provision of routes that cater for the widest range of users. Whilst we recognise that sharing routes with faster moving cyclists and riders can cause issues, it is necessary to balance the different needs.

Some of our country parks such as Beacon Fell, Witton and Wycoller host "Tramper" scooters ~ off road mobility vehicles that have proved popular with disabled visitors allowing them to experience Lancashire's countryside for the very first time or to re-visit old haunts after illness or infirmity has reduced their mobility. This service is very important and valued by its users but does not fulfil the need to provide better and accessible routes close to where people live.

The needs of horse riders and carriage drivers were originally considered as part of panel discussions for the first RoWIP and through the Bridleway Strategy for Lancashire. The first RoWIP indicated the need to improve provision for equestrians through identifying missing links and opportunities to complete circuits or networks. This continues to be a priority.

Routes which are suitable for cyclists typically have higher pedestrian use too because they are stile-free and the surfaces tend to be of a higher standard and can be used more easily by walkers and those with mobility issues. The cycle network provides a valuable resource for many different types of user across Lancashire and has a great many benefits.



## 2. Assessment of current provision and need

According to the 2011 Census the BME population accounts for 10% of the population in Lancashire with the majority being Asian/Asian British. In Blackburn with Darwen the BME population is 31% and in Blackpool just 3%. BME groups do not typically travel to the countryside for recreation, but promoting access to local parks and urban green space may increase participation within this group.

**Summary of issues:** Well maintained and signposted multi-user routes are the gold standard for most users. We know from feedback that there are insufficient of these across the county and where they exist may not be adequately connected to the network or adequately accessible from residential areas. We need to address lack of information about routes as well.

**Response:** Overall our aim is to achieve a well maintained network that caters for the widest number of users and with this in mind it is our intention to focus on improving and upgrading specific routes so that they can be enjoyed by even those with the highest level of need. This requires prioritising our improvements on routes that provide the greatest benefit to the widest number of users, typically multi-user routes. The proposal is to audit existing network to identify multi-user routes and prioritise these for upgrade and maintenance.

**Action/s:** 1.0 1.2 2.0 2.3 4.0 4.1 4.2 4.3

### 2.3.3 Information about rights of way and wider access

To a large extent, it does not matter how good the provision of green space is unless members of the public know what is there and understand how they can use it. Traditionally the lack of such information has sustained a situation where most users of PROW and other green space are from a fairly narrow band within the spectrum of Lancashire's residents and visitors. Current users have the access opportunities to themselves and the remainder, many of whom could benefit to a greater extent from such access, do not have the awareness, knowledge, confidence or encouragement to take advantage of this fantastic resource.

We know that how people access information has changed considerably since the last RoWIP and new technologies and online solutions are key to this. One of the major ways that Rights of Way and access information is provided to the public in Lancashire is online and via the MARIO geographical information system. This has proved very successful but some recent changes along with gaps in information reduce its usefulness to users. This may be negatively affecting the promotion and use of the network and wider access. Feedback from users via studies such as the Rossendale Task and Finish report and via officers suggests that good information about the rights of way network (such as the suitability of routes for those with mobility issues or information about closures/obstructions etc) is more important than the condition of the network. People want good information about routes and providing this, using the most appropriate new technology, has many benefits.

## 2. Assessment of current provision and need

It is important to recognise that not all users will access information online and there may still be a need to use alternative methods for attracting and engaging with new or more vulnerable users. Awareness about the rights of way service generally could be improved as many people are not familiar with services and functions.

**Summary of issues:** We need to ensure that information is usable and in the correct format for different types of users. Existing users have expressed concern about the usability and usefulness of MARIO and web-based information and this is important but we also need to encourage new users and inform them of the opportunities that the rights of way network can provide for health and exercise.

**Response:** Identify specific groups we want to target and inform about PROW and wider access and develop appropriate marketing solutions tailored to their specific needs. This includes exploring opportunities for upgrading online systems to meet the needs of users.

**Action/s:** 2.0 2.1 2.2 2.5



### 2.3.4 Volunteering

Communities value their assets and green spaces and often have a wealth of knowledge and ideas as to how they should be managed and developed. Many people already do lots of work through volunteering in their communities and we want to build on this work and encourage further volunteering in helping to develop and manage Lancashire's rights of way network and green space.

Involving communities in the design and delivery of services can be very effective as local people know best about local priorities and issues and resources can be used much more effectively. Volunteering is also known to impact positively on health and wellbeing, from individuals learning new skills, social interaction and feeling connected to their communities. We also recognise that individuals involved in rights of way and access work will need to be coordinated and trained effectively and our themes and actions will explore this further.

**Summary of issues:** Local authorities cannot work alone to make significant improvement to PROW and access in Lancashire but working with communities and volunteers may begin to address this. In communities experiencing health inequalities volunteering may also promote health and wellbeing and affect community resilience.

**Response:** Encourage volunteering as a way of improving and managing the network and promoting community resilience.

**Action/s:** 2.7 5.0 5.1

# 3. Statement of actions

## 3.1 An overview

This statement of actions has been developed following intensive analysis of the assessment of need which has provided the basis of our understanding of what users want. The MENE survey in particular along with feedback from users has been key to this understanding and has significantly influenced the scope and direction of this work.

Actions have been grouped into six themes as follows:

- 1 Condition and connectivity of the wider access network
- 2 Education and information provision
- 3 Twenty to thirty minute walks
- 4 Multi-user routes
- 5 Encouraging community involvement in improving wider access
- 6 The definitive map and other records

In developing our themes and actions we have considered the following:

- Access to and within attractive areas of countryside (e.g. viewpoints, woodlands, etc.)
- Attractive routes to support local tourism, economic regeneration
- Opportunities for cycling, horse riding, driving, walking, other than roads used mainly by motor vehicles.
- Routes from centres of population
- Links which create circular routes and better facilities for users
- Improving routes that provide utilitarian functions ~ e.g. routes to schools, work etc.

## 3.2 Delivering our themes and actions

Whilst local authorities are responsible for producing their RoWIPs, there is no specific requirement to implement it, nor funding available to do so. In practice the statement of actions incorporated in this RoWIP will require further detailed action plans being developed that will identify specific sites and activities in order to deliver the proposed schemes and projects. This plan does not seek to identify priorities or funding sources for actions and these will be needed to enable actions to be delivered.

We anticipate that there will be a number of organisations and individuals who are likely to be involved in the delivery of this plan. Typically the planning and delivery of the actions will include the county, unitary, district, parish and town councils working with land managers, local residents and user groups where appropriate.

### 3.2.1 Principles we will apply when delivering our themes and actions:

- We will consider the needs of reduced mobility, dexterity and sight impaired when delivering themes
- We will seek opportunities to involve communities and volunteers in designing and delivering actions
- We will prioritise our activities to favour those actions that have the greatest health outcomes (e.g. target deprived and vulnerable communities)

# 3. Statement of actions

## Theme 1:

### Condition and connectivity of the wider access network

**Overview:** This theme explores how we can improve the overall condition and connectivity of the wider access network for the benefit of all users. Concerns about the condition of the rights of way network have been a consistent issue through the assessment and one which is believed to prevent access by a wide range of users, particularly those mobility impaired. Councils have a statutory duty to maintain the whole network but in practice implementing this duty requires prioritisation. This theme explores how we might undertake this as well as take action to secure a better connected network.

**Aims/objectives:** To maintain the public rights of way network and other access by giving priority to those paths identified as being of greatest benefit to the greatest number of people and providing important links in the network.

**Why:** A more usable network is likely to increase walking, cycling and horse riding amongst the section of the public less confident and familiar with public rights of way, with consequent health benefits. It is also better suited to functional not just recreational use and hence will contribute to a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. A core network in good condition can encourage tourism and improve quality of life for residents.



### 3. Statement of actions

Aim	Nº	Action	Timescale
Increase the proportion of the PROW network that is well maintained and appropriate for use by all. (E.g. elderly, disabled and visually impaired users)	1.0	Together with partners identify "stile free" or "easy access" routes (small circuits or linear connections not isolated paths) and promote and prioritise these for maintenance. Pay particular attention to the specific needs of disabled and visually impaired users	2016
Increase the proportion of the PROW network which is unobstructed	1.1	Prioritise enforcement - Continue to address obstructions throughout the network but paying particular attention to identified priority routes	Review annually
Improve maintenance on key promoted routes (those which offer the greatest health benefits to communities)	1.2	Rationalise and manage fewer promoted routes and prioritise maintenance on these routes (based on health benefits)	2017
Ensure more gains and fewer losses through new developments	1.3	Look at existing working practices and identify new processes and procedures to work with planning departments to identify opportunities and threats arising through planning applications	2016
Improve the safety and connectivity of the network where there are road/railway crossings	1.4	Seek to reduce the number of surface crossings of railway lines and roads. Look at ways of improving the network to divert crossings from across railways and major roads	Opportunity Driven
Increase support for coastal access and the coastal routes work in order to progress this	1.5	Assist and encourage Natural England and other partners on coastal access work in Lancashire	2018
Improve facilities on the network such as benches and toilets to encourage use by the elderly, very young or disabled	1.6	Look for opportunities to improve facilities and the condition of parks and green spaces within communities (e.g. additional benches, toilets)	Opportunity Driven
Connect green spaces better with communities and urban areas	1.7	Seek opportunities to improve links via the public rights of way network	Opportunity Driven
Improve the condition of footways and roadside verges to make them more accessible	1.8	Audit and develop a strategy for verges for pedestrian, equestrian and cyclists' routes.  Link with: provide information to the public on available routes	2018/19

# 3. Statement of actions

## Theme 2:

### Education and information provision

**Overview:** We recognise that there are many residents of Lancashire and beyond who do not currently use, or may lack awareness of, public rights of way and other access. We know from our assessment that there are key groups that we may wish to target. They include BME, young people in urban areas, the elderly and disabled as well as the visually impaired. We want to raise awareness and encourage new users with the associated benefits of health and wellbeing. The actions under this theme aim to target these individuals by looking for new ways to provide information and engage with potential users.

**Aims and objectives:** To improve and promote the understanding and use of the network, particularly to new users. To raise awareness of opportunities for access to green space in relevant and appropriate ways that meet the needs of potential users.

### Why:

- To help improve overall health and wellbeing and particularly to address health inequalities by encouraging exercise by people whose mental and physical health is most likely to benefit and who do not currently access their green space, including young people and those from a background which does not include enjoyment of the countryside.
- To promote sustainable transport by encouraging and enabling non-recreational journeys without a car.
- To improve quality of life by reducing conflict and improving the experience of using Lancashire's countryside.
- To increase the economic benefits from tourism.



### 3. Statement of actions

Aim	Nº	Action	Timescale
Attract new users to enjoy the PROW network and green space by providing better information which is targeted to the needs of specific groups	2.0	<p>Actively market access to green space</p> <p>Improve public provision of information particularly to new and vulnerable users</p> <p>Identify the specific groups we want to target and explore how we can provide better information tailored to their needs as well as create opportunities for them to get involved</p> <p>E.g. through schools, youth clubs, community groups via health walks etc. (targeting those who do not normally use the network such as ethnic minorities and deprived communities) and by working better with other council services such as education, health and libraries</p>	2016
Utilise web and new technology wherever appropriate to provide better and more accessible information and to target young users	2.1	<p>Explore opportunities for upgrading online systems to meet the needs of users</p> <p>Improve information provided to the public by exploring the use of new technology such as apps, smart phones, facebook, internet</p>	2017
Make people aware of who to contact regarding the management of the PROW network to ensure that issues are identified and dealt with effectively	2.2	Promote the rights of way service wherever possible through our day to day activities to ensure that members of public are better informed about who deals with issues and how to get in touch	2017
Help users to have confidence in finding and being on PROWs	2.3	Continue to deliver the programme of improving signposting and way-marking including working through local partner groups	2017
Improve information about access land and signage points	2.4	Audit and improve information about access land, signage and access points. Improve information about access land	2017
Raise awareness of the types of access available in Lancashire	2.5	Improve information available about wider access as well as PROWs (including unclassified roads)	2018
Improve information about concessionary routes	2.6	Verify the information held on concessionary routes and make it publicly available in the most appropriate way	2018
Ensure that people contacting officers involved in PROW and wider access are given appropriate, accurate, understandable information	2.7	Prepare a good practice/training guide for anyone involved in public rights of way and wider access work. (including understanding the specific needs of mobility impaired users)	2019

# 3. Statement of actions

## Theme 3:

### Twenty to thirty minute walks

**Overview:** We know from evidence obtained from the MENE study that people want short walks, approximately 1-2 miles from their homes where they can access green space for leisure and health, often with a dog. The Public Rights of Way network can often provide this but the condition of routes or availability of information about them can reduce this potential. We also know that there are certain communities across Lancashire that suffer health inequalities and these are typically in the inner urban areas. We want to target these communities and explore opportunities for enhancing the rights of way network in and near these areas for the benefit of these communities.

**Aims and objectives:** To improve the opportunities for access to green space for the purpose of exercise and short walks in and around Lancashire's urban areas with the emphasis on short walks by foot.

**Why:** To encourage exercise particularly by people whose mental and physical health is most likely to benefit and who do not currently use the network, especially but not exclusively in and near communities experiencing health inequalities to encourage the habit of walking.

Aim	Nº	Action	Timescale
Expand the number of good quality short walks in and from residential areas	3.0	Identify the potential for short easy access walks from where people live, particularly those communities experiencing health inequalities  Identify missing links or additional links to create new accessible walks	2018
Encourage more people to take short walks in and around the places they live	3.1	Identify and support local walking groups who are delivering health walks and programmes, particularly in and around residential areas e.g work with GPs and commissioning groups	2020



# 3. Statement of actions

Theme 4:  
Multi-user routes

**Overview:** This theme and actions responds to the need to create better provision for disabled and visually impaired users as well as horse riders and cyclists. Multi-user routes cater for all users but need to be accompanied by measures to alleviate some of the issues faced by disabled people.

**Aims and objectives:** Provide and protect a more connected network that provides for the requirements of all users. Create and promote multi-user routes wherever possible as these have the most benefits to a wide range of users. Shared routes do pose specific problems for disabled, deaf and visually impaired users and this needs to be considered (e.g. markings on routes, can't hear approaching cyclists, overhanging vegetation)

**Why:** to encourage exercise particularly by people whose health, disability, lack of confidence or other factors precludes use of the general footpath network. Multi-user routes all provide recreational and non-recreational opportunities for cyclists and equestrians for exercise and have the additional benefit of attracting visitors to Lancashire to enjoy good off-road facilities often bringing the benefits associated with tourism.

**Expected outcomes:** Improved quality of life, reduction in transport emissions, improved physical and mental health.

Aim	Nº	Action	Timescale
Improve the overall level of provision of multi-user routes	4.0	Identify opportunities to influence provision in new developments and improve existing routes by working better with local planning departments	On-going
Improve connectivity of bridleway network	4.1	Identify missing links and opportunities to provide bridleway links to complete circuits	2017
Improve the multi-user network by seeking external funding for projects	4.2	Work with and support communities/partners to seek external funding to extend and improve the network wherever possible for the benefit of multi-users (routes that support walking, cycling and horse riding - consider 'share with care' issues)	On-going
Design any new structures on the network to take into account the needs of multi-users	4.3	Work better with engineering and design teams to ensure that all new structures on routes are designed appropriately	2016

# 3. Statement of actions

**Theme 5:**  
Encouraging community involvement in improving wider access

**Overview:** The councils have a statutory duty to maintain and promote the public rights of way network for the benefit for all users and recognise the importance of promoting access to green space generally but we cannot do this on our own. With limited resources available we have to prioritise how we do this and look for new ways of working, one way in which we can do this is to involve local people and partner organisations wherever we can in the development and delivery of services. Involving communities and volunteers in this way increases our ability to deliver relevant improvements to the network and is accompanied by social and physical benefits which impact on individuals including a positive impact on health and wellbeing and develops a sense of ownership.

**Aims and objectives:** To increase the overall level of community involvement in the design and delivery of services and to encourage volunteering for the purpose of improving the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities.

**Why:** Involving communities in decisions about local service provision increases our ability to deliver relevant improvements to the network and can also result in improved community resilience and its associated health benefits.

Aim	N°	Action	Timescale
Involve and work with local communities and volunteers to deliver the RoWIP where appropriate	5.0	Develop the Local Delivery Scheme, including a volunteer strategy, with the aim of increasing community involvement whilst supporting the maintenance and improvement of the network	2017
Improve the management and maintenance of sites across Lancashire by encouraging and involving volunteers	5.1	Encourage more volunteers/residents groups to get involved in routine maintenance and management of small sites e.g. by supporting the development of local residents' groups to do this	On-going

# 3. Statement of actions

## Theme 6:

### The Definitive Map and other records

**Overview:** This theme seeks to improve the overall quality and accessibility of information relating to public rights of way and wider access as well as ensuring that valuable routes are not lost in the 2026 cut off<sup>10</sup>. The rights of way service is responsible for investigating and processing definitive map modification orders where there is evidence that the definitive map and statement is incorrect, this is a statutory duty. This theme builds on this duty and identifies actions that seek to improve the overall quality and speed of the service and improve the information available to the public. Other records covered in this theme include Commons & Town and village greens, list of streets, commons register.

**Aims/objectives:** To provide an up-to-date and publicly available Definitive Map and Statement for each authority and to improve the overall quality of access information. To keep up-to-date the Definitive Map and Statement of Public Rights of Way, List of Maintained Streets, Commons Register and lists of other green space and improve the way the information is made available to the public.

#### Why:

- To provide certainty for public and land managers
- To avoid loss of valuable access.
- To improve the coherency of the PROW network.
- To assist the management of the public rights of way.

Aim	Nº	Action	Timescale
Avoid loss of key routes on the network	6.0	Assist with the Local Access Forum's 'Discovering Lancashire Ways' project to make useful additions to the record	2026
Avoid loss of key routes on the network	6.1	Identify anomalies and omissions to be saved from the cut-off date once the regulations are published	2026
Use a system of priorities for processing DMMO's to prevent loss of valuable routes after 2026	6.2	Continue to seek opportunities to improve the process for applications for definitive map modification orders to correct the record (statutory duty) in an order prioritised by potential benefit to the public, mitigate liability, assist land management. (Review internal processes for dealing with application, process not necessarily in chronological order)	On-going
Improve the quality of other records maintained by the councils including towns & village greens	6.3	Improve the process for dealing with towns & village greens. Improve the completeness and accuracy of information of other green space	2018

<sup>10</sup>The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 set a cut-off date in 2026 for ancient public rights of way to be added to the Definitive Map and Statement where they are not currently recorded nor in use.

# 3. Statement of actions

## 3.2.2 Implementing the RoWIP

The production of the RoWIP is the start of the process to improve the rights of way and access network in Lancashire. Many of the actions identified in this plan will require further planning along with the production of full and detailed action plans to achieve effective delivery. No additional financial commitment has been made by the councils to deliver any of the actions in this plan and it is anticipated that any resources that may be required will be met from existing service budgets where available. Implementation will be coordinated and monitored by the councils' officers but will involve input from a variety of individuals and organisations. Some attempt has been made to prioritise actions and this is indicated by the timescales shown. However priorities will be determined by resources available and seizing opportunities as they arise.

Annual progress reports will be prepared by the three councils and presented to the LLAF. The LLAF will give an independent view on progress and priorities to implement RoWIP actions.

Measures will be put in place to monitor improvement work and annual reports will detail and review progress made during the previous year and outline targets for the year ahead where appropriate. Reports should describe and evaluate work completed and highlight lessons learnt such as best practice or key legislative, corporate and processes changes important to the delivery of the RoWIP.

# Appendix 1 ~ Wider access

Table 1: Access Land in Lancashire

District	Area (ha)	N° of Recorded Access Points
Burnley	2,761	60
Chorley	1,780	37
Fylde	-	-
Hyndburn	350	25
Lancaster	11,600	50
Pendle	2,600	50
Preston	46	2
Ribble Valley	11,250	150
Rosendale	3,424	200
South Ribble	38	-
West Lancashire	-	-
Wyre	1,868	50
Blackburn with Darwen	3,608	-
Blackpool	-	-
Lancashire total	39,325	624

# Appendix 1 ~ Wider access

Table 2: Country Parks and Woodland Sites Managed by Lancashire County Council (Hectares)

## Burnley

Hameldon Hill I	(13.55 ha)
Hameldon Hill II	(6.11 ha)
New Laithe, Dunnockshaw	(13.06 ha)
Chatham Hill	(5.48 ha)
Thursden	(5.11 ha)
Molly Wood Lane	(0.31 ha)
Townley	(12.85 ha)
Widow Green Wood	(9.51 ha)
Rowley I & II	(12.36 ha)
Houghton's Farm	(0.68 ha)
Parish Wood	(0.82 ha)
Jinny Spring Wood	(1.00 ha)

## Chorley

Houghton House (Transport Ltd)	(2.73 ha)
Healey Nab	(14.03 ha)
Chisnall Hall	(14.81 ha)
Welch Whittle	(13.19 ha)
Adlington	(0.38 ha)
Walton Summit	
Albany Academy	
Withnell Fold	(5.36 ha)

## Hyndburn

The Hollins	(3.40 ha)
Warcocks Green	(2.94 ha)
Rushton House Farm	(1.83 ha)
Brocklehurst	(0.70 ha)
Plantation Mill	(2.63 ha)
The Coppice	(9.58 ha)
Abbot Clough	(1.98 ha)
Huncoat I	(5.75 ha)
Huncoat II	(4.50 ha)
Boundary Wood	(3.80 ha)
Whinney Hill I	(8.61 ha)
Whinney Hill II	(6.50 ha)
Fox Hill Bank	
Accrington Baxenden	(25.00 ha)
Martholme	
Heys Lane	

## Lancaster

Highfield	(0.81 ha)
Stockabank Wood	(1.85 ha)
Cinderbarrow (Yealand)	
Warton Crag	(6.60 ha)
Crook O' Lune/Caton Trail	(8.85 ha)
Conder Green/Costal Path	(10.61 ha)
Little Crag	(3.60 ha)
Birk Bank	(0.80 ha)
Jubilee Tower	(0.80 ha)
Levens Drive	
Cloughton Quarry	(4.50 ha)

## Pendle

Barley Bank	(5.37 ha)
Catlow	(8.37 ha)
Wycoller	(142.00 ha)
Raven Rock	(7.03 ha)
Turnhole Clough	(3.70 ha)
Copy House	(0.44 ha)
Bank House	(0.92 ha)
Trawden Road	(1.30 ha)
Crank	(1.94 ha)
Brierfield	(2.68 ha)
Clogger Copse	(1.16 ha)
College Copse	(0.43 ha)
Whitewalls	(0.73 ha)
Winewalls Mill	(1.20 ha)
Quarry Hill Nature Reserve	

## Preston

Beacon Fell	(72.65 ha)
Country Park	
Lea Gate	(1.21 ha)
Oxford Street/Avenham Park	

# Appendix 1 ~ Wider access

Table 2: Country Parks and Woodland Sites Managed by Lancashire County Council (Hectares)

<b>Ribble Valley</b>		<b>South Ribble</b>	
Billington Moor	(10.01 ha)	Vow Brook (Holehouse Farm)	(1.77 ha)
Blackhill	(12.45 ha)	Hennel Lane/Carr Wood	(2.01 ha)
Spring Wood	(16.20 ha)	Preston Junction	(6.00 ha)
Marles Wood	(0.55 ha)		
Jeffrey Hill		<b>West Lancashire</b>	
Barker Brow	(0.60 ha)	Bickerstaffe	(4.80 ha)
		Mere Brow ~ Holmeswood	
<b>Rossendale</b>		<b>Wyre</b>	
Greenfold	(2.61 ha)	Scorton	(12.14 ha)
Sunnybank	(1.99 ha)	Fleetwood	(17.50 ha)
Bottomley Bank	(2.50 ha)		
Horncliffe	(5.70 ha)		
Hall Carr	(1.38 ha)		
Staghills	(5.17 ha)		
Hightown (aka Height Top)	(0.99 ha)		
Thorn Bank	(3.37 ha)		
Scar End Hey	(2.23 ha)		
Facit Quarries	(20.06 ha)		
Shore End	(0.47 ha)		
Old Lane	(2.47 ha)		
Hareholme I & II	(1.64 ha)		
Longholmde I & II	(4.46 ha)		
Tom Lane	(2.35 ha)		
Crow Wood	(2.41 ha)		
Sis Clough	(1.72 ha)		
Greave Clough	(5.86 ha)		
Brandwood	(12.12 ha)		
Bacup Fearn	(1.98 ha)		
Clough Head Quarry	(2.96 ha)		
Landgate Moss			
Helmshore Disused Railway Line	(11.03 ha)		
Troy Quarry			
Lee Quarry	(50.00 ha)		

# Appendix 1 ~ Wider access

Table 3: Local Parks and Green Spaces in Lancashire (Hectares)

The following list is not exhaustive but offers an indication of the extent of local parks across Lancashire. District Council websites often provide details of parks they manage and may be able to provide more information about local sites and facilities.

## Blackburn with Darwen

Ashton Park	(2.21 ha)
Bold Venture Park	
Corporation Park	(18 ha)
Queens Park	(13.35 ha)
River Darwen Parkway & Higher Croft Woods	(55 ha)
Roe Lee Park	(6.88 ha)
Sunnyhurst Woods	(34.40 ha)
Whitehall Park	(6.47 ha)
Witton Country Park	(194.25 ha)

## Blackpool

Marton Mere Local Nature Reserve	
Stanley Park	(157.82 ha)
Anchorsholme Park	
Bancroft Park	
Bispham Cliff Tops	
Bispham Recreation Ground	
Boundary Park	
Carr Road	
Cavendish Road Recreation Ground	
Champagne Close Park	
Claremont Park	
Corrib Road Park	
Devonshire Road Rock Gardens	
Doreen Holt Park	
Fylde Memorial Arboretum	
Grange Park	
Highfield Road Park	
Kincraig Fun Zone	
Kingscote Park	
Layton Recreation	
Louie Horrocks Park	
Luton Road Park	
Mereside Park	
Moor Park	
Revoe Park	
Vicarage Road Park	
Watson Road Park	

## Burnley

Forest of Burnley	(500 ha)
Inghtenhill Park	
Padiham Memorial Park	
Queens Park	(11.2 ha)
Scott Park	
Thompson park	
Towneley Park	(180 ha)
Byerden Holme Linear Park	
Rowley Lake & Woodland	
Healey Heights	
Grove Lane Wood	
Cemetery Wood	

## Chorley

Astley Park	(43 ha)
Blainscough Wood Nature Reserve	
Coronation Recreation Ground	
Duxbury park ~ Yarrow Valley Country Park	(85 ha)
Hic Bibi, Coppull	(8 ha)
Withnell Local Nature Reserve	(4.7 ha)
Settlement Tanks ~ Yarrow Valley Country Park (No access to the public)	
Top Lodge ~ Yarrow Valley Country Park	
Yarrow Valley Country Park	(700 ha)

## Fylde

Ashton Gardens	(4 ha)
Fairhaven Lake & Gardens	(19.5 ha)
Lowther Gardens	(5.65 ha)
Pomenade Gardens	



# Appendix 1 ~ Wider access

Table 3: Local Parks and Green Spaces in Lancashire (Hectares)

<p><b>Hyndburn</b></p> <p>Oak Hill Park, Accrington (8.7 ha)</p> <p>Haworth Park</p> <p>Gatty Park, Church (3 ha)</p> <p>Milnshaw Park, Accrington (2.5 ha)</p> <p>Peel Park &amp; Coppice, Accrington</p> <p>Bullough Park, Accrington (16.7 ha)</p> <p>Mercer Park, Clayton-Le-Moors</p> <p>Memorial Park, Great Harwood (9.6 ha)</p> <p>Lowerfold Park, Great Harwood (2.3 ha)</p> <p>Cutwood Park, Rishton (9 ha)</p> <p>Rhyddings Park, Oswaldtwistle</p>	<p><b>Ribble Valley</b></p> <p>John Smiths Park, Longridge</p>
<p><b>Lancaster</b></p> <p>Douglas Park, Heysham Village</p> <p>Happy Mount Park, Morecambe</p> <p>Regent Park</p> <p>Ryelands Park</p> <p>Palatine Avenue Recreation Ground</p> <p>Williamson Park (21.85 ha)</p>	<p><b>Rossendale</b></p> <p>Irwell Sculpture Trail</p> <p>Edgeside Park</p> <p>Greenfield Memorial Gardens</p> <p>Whitaker Park</p> <p>Helmshore Park</p> <p>Stubbylea Park</p> <p>Victoria Park</p>
<p><b>Pendle</b></p> <p>Alkincoats Park, Colne</p> <p>Ball Grove Park, Trawden (7 ha)</p> <p>Local Nature Reserve</p> <p>Barrowford Park, Barrowford</p> <p>Heyhead Park, Brierfield</p> <p>Letcliffe Park, Barnoldswick</p> <p>Marsden Park</p> <p>Sough Park</p> <p>Valley Gardens, Barnoldswick</p> <p>Victoria Park, Nelson</p> <p>Victory Park, Barnoldswick</p> <p>Walverden Park</p>	<p><b>South Ribble</b></p> <p>Worden Park (60 ha)</p> <p>Withy Grove Park</p> <p>Longton Brickcroft Nature Reserve</p> <p>Hurst Grange Park</p>
<p><b>Preston</b></p> <p>Ashton Park</p> <p>Avenham &amp; Miller Parks</p> <p>Haslam park</p> <p>Moor Park</p> <p>Grange Park</p> <p>Ribbleton park</p> <p>Boilton Wood</p> <p>Fishwick Local Nature Reserve &amp; Recreation Ground (26 ha)</p> <p>Grange Valley Nature Reserve</p>	<p><b>West Lancashire</b></p> <p>Beacon Country Park (121.40 ha)</p> <p>Coronation Park, Ormskirk (8.09 ha)</p> <p>Ruff Wood, Ormskirk (7.69 ha)</p> <p>Stanley Coronation Park, Skelmersdale</p> <p>Tawd Valley Park, Skelmersdale</p> <p>Abbey Lakes, Up Holland</p> <p>Chequer Lane Fishing Lake, Up Holland</p> <p>Cheshire Lines Path</p> <p>Dean Wood, Up Holland</p> <p>Fairy Glen, Appley Bridge</p> <p>Hunters Hill, Hilldale</p> <p>Platts Lane Lake, Burscough</p> <p>Richmond Park, Burscough (2.50 ha)</p>
<p><b>Wyre</b></p> <p>Cottam Hall Playing Fields, Poulton-le-Fylde</p> <p>Jean Stansfield Memorial Park, Poulton-le-Fylde</p> <p>North Drive Park, Thornton Cleveleys</p> <p>Tithebarn Park, Poulton-le-Fylde</p> <p>Jubilee Gardens, Thornton Cleveleys</p> <p>Rossall Picnic Site, Fleetwood</p> <p>Wyre Estuary Country Park</p> <p>Hawthorne Park, Thornton Cleveleys</p> <p>Kepple Lane Park, Garstang</p> <p>The Mount, Fleetwood</p>	