

NORTH YORKSHIRE  
LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

17 August 2006

Rights of Way Improvement Plan  
Progress Report

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide a progress report with regard to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for North Yorkshire.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Local access forums are required to provide input into the production of Rights of Way Improvement Plans (RoWIPs). There are three local access forums in North Yorkshire, one for North Yorkshire outside the National Park Authority areas and one each for both the North York Moors National Park and Yorkshire Dales National Park.
- 2.2 One Rights of Way Improvement Plan is being prepared for the whole of the County which will be gradually merged into the Local Transport Plan for North Yorkshire. This is a progress report regarding the preparation of the RoWIP.

3.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 The technical team (composed of officers from North Yorkshire County Council, the North York Moors National Park and the Yorkshire Dales National Park) meets each month to review progress with regard to the preparation of the RoWIP. The last technical meeting reviewed an amended project plan with regard to preparing and completing the RoWIP by the statutory deadline of November 2007. The project plan is tight. It only allows for 2 months slippage Key dates which are now being aimed for are:

<b>Key task</b>	<b>Target date</b>
Draft RoWIP (no appendix and skeleton statement of action)	End August 2006
Statement of Action prepared – lead by Project Development Officer	September 2006 – April 2007
Internal NYCC and National Park circulation of draft	September 2006
RoWIP Appendices prepared	September 2006
CD with plan to all LAF members	October 2006
Joint meeting of 3 Local Access Forums	October 2006
RoWIP steering group meeting	November 2006
Comments into draft	November/December 2006
Draft plan to members of county council	December 2006

before public consultation	
Public consultation on draft including appendices	January – April 2007 (minimum 12 weeks)
RoWIP steering group meeting re consultation results and final statement of action	April/May 07
Comments into plan	May – July 07
Plan to members of the county council and National Park Authority	August/September 07
RoWIP steering group meeting	September 07
Statutory deadline	21 <sup>st</sup> November 2007

- 3.2 The plan is that all members of the local access forums in North Yorkshire will receive a CD containing the draft RoWIP in October 2006. By this time, some appendices may have been written and included on the CD. It is hoped at this stage to organise a joint meeting of the three Local Access Forums in North Yorkshire to consider the draft. Members will be provided with a feedback form to complete and return their comments to their relevant LAF members who sit on the RoWIP steering group. The RoWIP steering group is to meet in November 2006 to review the draft plan before it goes to members of the county council before a major public consultation exercise is launched.
- 3.3 As a reminder, RoWIP steering group representatives included two members from each local access forum in the county which included the chairperson. It is appreciated that there are both new members of the local access forums and new chair and vice chair persons. LAF's may therefore wish to review who is sitting on the RoWIP steering group and where necessary elect new representatives.
- 3.4 In parallel with the process of preparing the RoWIP, the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the RoWIP is also being completed. The SEA is produced in two distinct parts, a Scoping Report which corresponds with the production of the draft RoWIP and an Environmental Report which is produced with the final RoWIP. The SEA is also consulted upon at the same time as the draft plan and published with the final plan.
- 3.5 The SEA is important as it will be measuring the ongoing environmental impact of the RoWIP by monitoring implementation through a series of relevant targets and indicators. It also considers appropriate mitigation measures. Should readers wish to get a taste of the SEA process they are referred to the best practise website of the ODPM at [www.odpm.gov.uk/pub/290/APracticalGuidetotheStrategicEnvironmentalAssessmentDirectivePDF776Kb\\_id1143290.pdf](http://www.odpm.gov.uk/pub/290/APracticalGuidetotheStrategicEnvironmentalAssessmentDirectivePDF776Kb_id1143290.pdf) or simply by typing Strategic Environmental Assessment into a search engine such as google.

- 3.6 Following technical group discussion, it has been decided that the RoWIP will now also be produced on CD. This enables people to navigate easily around a document which could be around 400/500 pages long. The length reflects the size of North Yorkshire, being the largest county in England consequently with the longest rights of way network. Hot links mean that people can find information relatively easily on a CD by a maximum of around three clicks of the mouse. The CD will be cheaper to produce and easier to distribute however some hard copies will still be produced of the full plan.
- 3.7 A user friendly RoWIP booklet which contains the main objectives of the plan is still going to be produced. This will be a brochure of around 20 pages in length containing lots of pictures and the main objectives of the plan. It will also have a reply slip at the end of it in order for people to obtain a CD or comment on the brochure.
- 3.8 Progress with the preparation of the draft plan for the August deadline is as follows:

Executive summary	needs slight tweaking
Chapter 1 Origins, context & scope	complete
Chapter 2 Plan area & access demand	complete
Chapter 3 Stakeholder requirements	in progress
Chapter 4 Assessment methods for the RoWIP	complete
Chapter 5 Overall improvement priorities in North Yorkshire	In progress
Chapter 6 Local priorities	complete
Chapter 7 Scheme prioritisation	in progress
Chapter 8 Targets & indicators	in progress
Chapter 9 Statement of Action	to start
Tables	In progress
Maps	to tweak
Pictures	cover shot priority
Glossary of terms	to start
Acknowledgements	not priority
References	to start
Appendices	to start

- 3.9 A photographer has been commissioned to take pictures for RoWIP. Apart from the cover shot, these will appear in the final RoWIP which is to be produced in full colour.
- 3.10 Grant funding is available towards the implementation of the RoWIP however this is only to a maximum of 50% of the total value of schemes. Before funding is made available the highway authority is required to produce a RoWIP at least to draft stage. As the draft was incomplete when the letter regarding grant funding was distributed in September 2005, initial discussions between the Countryside Agency and technical team focussed on looking at projects to maximise awareness about what the RoWIP is and gain political and other support. Discussions revealed that the maximum available funding for implementation which is available

for the whole of the county is around £20k. The technical team therefore looked at a doorstep walks initiative.

- 3.11 The doorstep walks initiative aims to test the theory that some people do not know what is available from their doorsteps and to encourage low users, potential users and non-users to come and try the local network out. The aim of the project is much wider than simply using rights of way and other access. Its about getting older people out for example to meet other people, perhaps put them in touch with local walking groups such as walking the way to health and get them to spend at the local tea shop. It thus shows clear links to health, economy and social inclusion. The project will be particularly targeted at people with different abilities, older people, young families, children and people who are marginalised in other ways. Children might be given a badge for completing a route and rewards or motivators will be used. The project will also establish what would make people walk more in the future with questions like:

Did you know about the walk before?

Would you use it again?

Are you going to recommend it to others and neighbours?

- 3.12 Local volunteers will be sought to help lead walks and with other aspects of the project such as the local postman/woman who knows his or her patch and the local shop keeper who knows the local community and can spread the word. The travel awareness team at Highways North Yorkshire have also expressed their support for the project. The pilot communities for the project are:

Richmond

Easingwold

West Ayton nr Scarborough

Sherburn in Elmet

Cononley/ Sutton in Craven/ Crosshills.

- 3.13 The post of Project Development Officer is currently being advertised.

#### 4.0 RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

- a) This report is received for information.
- b) That the Local Access Forum elects two representatives to sit on the RoWIP steering group.

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