



Leicester  
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED  
ALL WARDS**

## **FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:**

**Cabinet  
Council**

**1<sup>st</sup> October 2007  
4<sup>th</sup> October 2007**

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## **LEICESTER CITY'S PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2007- 2017**

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### **Report of the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Culture**

#### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present Leicester City's Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan ("the Plan") for approval.

#### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires Highway Authorities to prepare and adopt a Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) by November 2007. The Plan will be used by officers, partners, consultants and developers to ensure a consistent approach to the delivery of improvements to the network of Rights of Way across the City. This is a living document that will develop and change over time.

- 2.2 The Plan specifically supports three of the Council's emerging priorities of;

- safe, clean, green
- quality regeneration in the built environment
- health and well-being

through developing the rights of way network to improve accessibility, improving maintenance of the network and hence safety and cleanliness, and promoting the network for leisure use.

- 2.3 The Plan is an integral part of the Central Leicestershire Local Transport Plan 2006 to 2011 and it sets out our intentions for how the network of Rights of Way will contribute to the wider transport strategies of improving accessibility (primarily to employment and education facilities) and leisure opportunities.

The Plan links in to the five themes in the Local Transport Plan of:

- Tackling Congestion
- Delivering Accessibility

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- Safer Roads
- Better Air Quality
- Better (Road), Pavement and Cycle Route Condition

2.4 The 'Plan' has been put together in close co-operation with the County Council as the City's network of paths abuts those in the County at the City boundary. It is crucial that good dialogue is maintained in order to properly manage these paths. We also consulted with the County over the content of the works programme.

2.5 The 'Plan' contains a 'Statement of Action'. It sets out the actions that the authority proposes to take in order to better manage the Public Rights of Way by securing and improving the network.

2.6 This report proposes delivering the strategies of the Plan using both revenue and capital monies. The Draft Works Programme for 2007 – 2017 is shown in Appendix Two consisting of specific 'planned work items' and general 'annual work items'.

2.7 Drafts of the Plan will be forwarded to Members prior to the Cabinet and Council meetings. Work is on going making detailed text alterations as feedback is received but the strategies will remain unchanged. Copies of the final draft of the Plan will be made available in the political group rooms prior to the Council meeting.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 **Cabinet** is asked to recommend to Council:

- a) the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007 - 2017,
- b) the Works Programme for 2007 – 2017 as set out in Appendix Two of the RoWIP.
- c) that the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Culture be given delegated power to implement the programme, including the letting of contracts, provided that expenditure on the programmes does not exceed the budgets available.

3.2 **Council** is recommended to:

- a) approve the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007 – 2017
- b) approve the programmes of works for 2007 - 2017 as set out in Appendix Two of the RoWIP;
- c) give the Corporate Director of Regeneration and Culture delegated power to implement the programme, including the letting of contracts, provided that expenditure on the programmes does not exceed the budgets available

### 4. REPORT

4.1 The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 placed a duty on the City Council to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) by November 2007. The Plan sets out a 10 year plan for improving the Rights of Way network in Leicester, it also assess:

- the extent that Rights of Way meet the present and future needs of the public
- the opportunities provided by Rights of Way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation

- the accessibility of Rights of Way to blind or partially sighted people and others with mobility problems

- 4.2 The Plan is an integral part of the Central Leicestershire Local Transport Plan 2006 to 2011 and it sets out our intentions for how the network of Rights of Way will contribute to the wider transport strategies of improving accessibility (primarily to employment and education facilities) and leisure opportunities. The first draft of the plan was included as Annexes in the Central Leicestershire Local Transport Plan adopted by full Council in March 2006.
- 4.3 This is the first issue of the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- 4.4 The City Council has set up a Local Access Forum as required under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The Forum is an independent advisory body that advises the Council on the improvement of access to local amenities and land within the City for the purpose of open-air recreation and enjoyment, in ways which address social, economic, environmental interests and personal health and security issues. The Forum is a voluntary body with twelve members which may include elected City Councillors. The members represent various classes of users and other interests including general transportation, mobility issues and industrial heritage. The Leicester City Local Access Forum members were appointed in November 2004. The Forum publishes a report once a year and this years report, published in June 2007, will be made available to members under separate cover.
- 4.5 The 'Plan' has been put together in co-operation with the County Council as the City's network of paths abuts those in the County at the City boundary. It is crucial that good dialogue is maintained in order to properly manage these paths. We also consulted with the county over the content of the works programme.
- 4.6 It also contains a 'Statement of Action' that the authority proposes to take for the management of Rights of Way, and for securing and improving the network.
- 4.7 The City of Leicester is a compact, densely populated urban area. The City's metalled highway network comprises about 790km of carriageways and 1500km of footways. The extent of the City's Public Rights of Way currently recorded is 21.6km. However, a survey, carried out between July and October 2006, which was undertaken to determine the overall condition of the paths forming the whole network which the plan covers, recorded around 170km of off-road footways, bridleways and cycle tracks.
- 4.8 There is no 'access land' as defined in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, in the City, but there are currently 2,000 acres of parks and open spaces which are free for all to enjoy.
- 4.9 The Plan reinforces the main aim of the Draft Corporate Plan 2007 – 2011 which is to make Leicester 'Britain's most sustainable City' by supporting alternatives to motorised transport such as walking and cycling. The Plan also helps deliver some of the main priorities in the Draft Corporate Plan 2007 – 2011 such as improving access for all, tackling climate change by maintaining a network that supports alternatives to motorised transport such as walking and cycling, improving the Health and Well being of the

community by encouraging walking and cycling and free and easy access to the countryside. The Plan sets out the strategy for the future investment in the Rights of Way across the City for the next 10 years, thus establishing a strategy - led budget, which is a priority for the Draft Corporate Plan.

- 4.10 Approximately 20% of peak time traffic is generated by the 'school run'. The Plan can help to contribute to traffic reduction by encouraging the use of off-road routes referred to in school travel plans, promoting the network to individual schools and reducing the real and perceived barriers to using certain routes.
- 4.11 The Plan contributes to the aims of the public health strategy for the East midlands by promoting cycling and walking routes which generate increased activity and healthier lifestyles through walking and cycling for people who work, live and visit Leicester.
- 4.12 Many of the paths across the city contribute to Leicester's biodiversity by preserving wildlife corridors, green space and wildlife sites in the heart of the city and the wider countryside around the city, making Leicester more attractive for its citizens and visitors to enjoy.
- 4.13 The policy is summed up as 'Leicester City Council aims to improve its local Rights of Way network, within and around the city, to facilitate non-motorised safe access to services and to provide leisure and recreational opportunities to all residents and visitors to the city'.
- 4.14 There are five high level objectives to deliver the plan and guide its development along with the programme of schemes as well as aligning it with the Local Transport Plan, these are:
- Reducing congestion and improving air quality by facilitating more walking and cycling trips on the Rights of Way network.
  - Improving access to everyday services, places of work, schools, healthcare and shopping by improving and promoting the Rights of Way network to improve links from residential areas to such services.
  - Reducing the number of people killed or hurt on the road network by attracting proportionally more walking and cycling trips on the Rights of Way network.
  - Improving the condition of our Rights of Way network and make it easier to use by improving our inspection and maintenance regimes.
  - Taking every possible opportunity to improve, extend and promote our Rights of Way network through the land use and transport planning process to provide the highest possible quality leisure facilities for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and disabled users.
- 4.15 Maintenance standards are included in Appendix 1 of the 'Plan' which provides guidance to those involved in designing and maintaining Leicester City's Rights of Way network. They include written guidance on Rights of Way Hierarchies, organisations involved, routine surveys and inspections, maintenance standards and construction details.

4.16 Progress will be managed and monitored through our established programme and project management arrangements using our emerging quality management system. Progress will be reported to the Local Access Forum on a regular basis. As the 'plan' is integrated with the Local Transport Plan progress will be reported to the Department for Transport in accordance with their reporting requirements.

## 5. FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

### 5.1 *Financial Implications*

The Works Programme 2007 – 2017 (Appendix Two of the Plan) will be funded from existing Local Transport Plan capital allocations and the existing Highway Maintenance revenue budget. The programme consists of specific planned works and a list of work to be covered on an annual basis to maintain the public rights of way over the next ten years. The estimated cost of the works programme over the nine years is £785,000 (£860,000 over ten years).

*Paresh Radia, Deputy Head of Finance, R. & C. (2526507)*

### 5.2 *Legal Implications*

The Plan has been prepared by officers in accordance with the provisions of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the specific guidance issued by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) on the 21<sup>st</sup> November 2002. The Authority must carry out its functions so as to implement this Plan.

*Alison Mapp, Team Leader/Senior Solicitor (2527059)*

## 6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph References Within the report
Equal Opportunities	YES	The Plan has been prepared with due regard to Equality in service provision
Policy	YES	The Plan supports the national, regional and local policies as outlined in the report.
Sustainable and Environmental	YES	The Plan has and is being informed by the Strategic Environmental Assessment and supports the Council's environmental policies
Crime and Disorder	YES	The Plan supports the Crime and Disorder Strategy
Human Rights Act	NO	
Elderly/People on Low Income	YES	The Plan Accessibility strategy aims to improve access for the elderly and people on low income

## 7. RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Risk	Likelihood L/M/H	Severity Impact L/M/H	Control Actions (if necessary/appropriate)
1 Failure to approve the Plan	L	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation with the Local Access Forum</li> <li>• Meetings with the County Council</li> <li>• Member level briefings</li> </ul>
2 One of the programmes of schemes significantly overspends	L	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of experienced programme managers</li> <li>• Generally low project costs in relation to rest of LTP</li> <li>• Review the programme</li> </ul>
3 One of the programmes significantly underspends	L	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use experienced programme managers</li> <li>• Generally low project costs in relation to rest of LTP</li> <li>• Review programme</li> </ul>
4 Lack of Staff Resources	H	H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocate staff and prioritise work.</li> </ul>

L – Low  
M – Medium  
H - High

L – Low  
M – Medium  
H - High

## 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS – LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

- Full Guidance on Local Transport Plans – December 2004
- Central Leicestershire Local Transport Plan 2006 to 2011
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- Guidance on the production of Rights of Way Improvement Plans produced by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2002.

## 9. CONSULTATIONS

The date for which the final comments on the Report were to be received was the 23rd July 2007. The organisations which were consulted were as follows:-

Local Access Forum (LAF), Auto Cycle Union, Leicestershire Centre for Integrated Living, Blaby District Council, British Waterways, Charnwood Borough Council, Council for the Protection of Rural England, Countryside Agency, Cyclists Touring Club, Leicester City West Primary Care Trust, English Nature, East Midlands Development Agency, EMTAR, English Heritage, ENVIRON, Environment Agency, Friends of the Earth, Harborough District Council, Hinkley & Bosworth Borough Council, Leicester City Access Group, Leicestershire Chamber of Commerce, MOSAIC, Oadby & Wigston Borough, Vista Society for the Blind, Pedestrians association, Physical and Sensory Disability, Rutland County Council, Sustrans, Transport 2000, Age Concern, British Horse Society, Federation of Sikh Organisations, Centre for Deaf People, Gujarat Hindu Association, Leicester City Access Forum, National Farmers Union, Leicester Shire

Promotions, Leicestershire Rural Community, Various Tenants Associations, Old Asian People's Association, Leicestershire and Rutland Bridleways Association, Leicestershire Footpaths Association, Ramblers Association.

Leicestershire County Council

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**10. REPORT AUTHOR**

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**DECISION STATUS**

<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Reason</b>	Budget and Policy Framework
<b>Appeared in Forward Plan</b>	Yes
<b>Executive or Council Decision</b>	Council