
Wigan Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Final ROWIP



Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Foreword by Wigan Council's cabinet member for the environment.

Since the advent of the 'Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000', the public's demand and perception of the countryside has altered phenomenally. The expectation of the public has risen in terms of the increased open access, and what they call for in terms of the quality of service and facilities they anticipate.

Wigan's Rights of Way Improvement Plan came about through the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. It is intended to be a means of integrating existing access provision for cyclists, horse riders, walkers and other interested parties in both urban and rural locations, with the provision of new facilities to accommodate the individual requirements of the respective users. Consideration has and will be given to the needs and circumstances of people with a range of expectations, interests and levels of ability, as well as addressing the desires of local people and visitors to the area alike.

This Rights of Way Improvement Plan has undergone extensive public consultation. It compliments wider objectives, such as sustainable transport, healthy communities, a quality environment and economic gain. Significantly the Rights of Way Improvement Plan is linked directly to the Local Transport Plan which operates a five year capital programme of works and so some funding for schemes is already committed.

This Plan is seen by Wigan Council as a significant opportunity to improve access provision within the borough. By working in partnership with all interested bodies, and specifically with Wigan's Local Access Forum, we are committed to the ongoing development and implementation of Wigan's live and evolving Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

However you use our borough's great outdoors, please do so with care and respect for the environment and community - and enjoy our network of rights of way.



Cllr David Molyneux, November 2007



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15 November 2007

Dear Ms Redfearn,

Wigan Rights of Way Improvement Plan

As you will know, each Highway Authority has been asked to draw up a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) to cover its area. This has resulted in a considerably increased workload for Rights of Way staff over the last few months (the deadline being the end of November). There has been wide-ranging consultation, in which the Wigan Local Access Forum (Wigan LAF) has also been involved, monitoring of ROWIP progress being one of the LAF's remits.

As chairman of the Wigan LAF I am pleased to be able to report that Wigan was the first GMC authority actually to complete the process by producing the final version of its Rights of Way Improvement Plan. It has been endorsed by the Local Access Forum at its most recent meeting, and I have been asked to convey to you the very positive view taken by LAF members of the final version. Inevitably, the ROWIP remains a work in progress, and there will always be scope for reconciling even more effectively the aspirations of the various Rights of Way user groups. But this is an excellent start, and Wigan is leading the way.

Yours sincerely
Dr Edgar Ernstbrunner
Chair of Wigan Local Access Forum

A handwritten signature in red ink, appearing to read 'Edgar Ernstbrunner', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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1 Introduction

Background

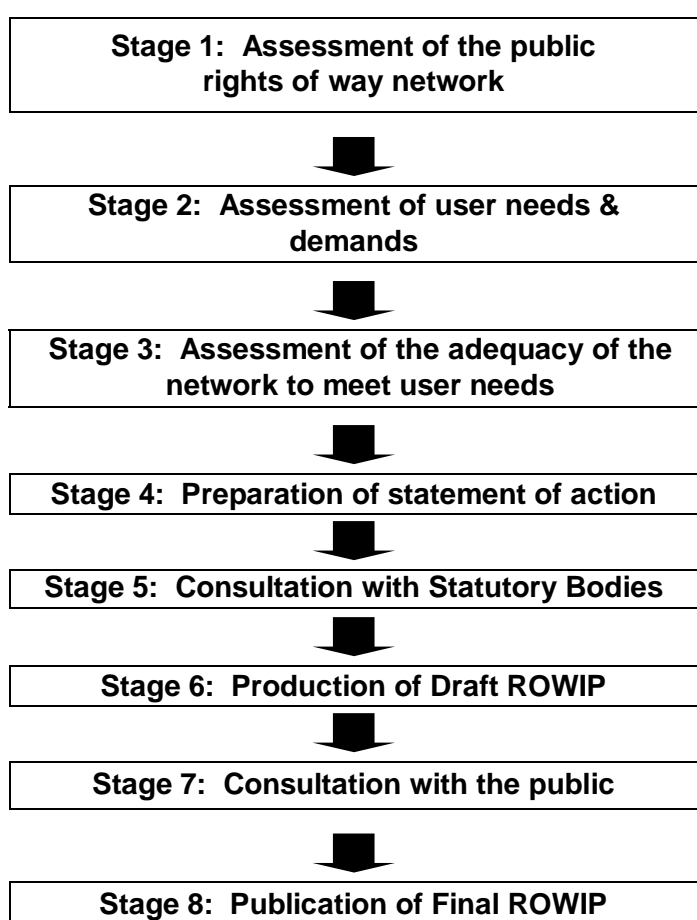
- 1.1 JMP Consulting (JMP) was appointed by Wigan Council in May 2006 to assist in producing their Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). Since the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000, this is a statutory obligation for every highway authority in England and Wales.
- 1.2 The term “Rights of Way” is a legal one and is defined in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) as:
- (a) *the footpaths, cycle tracks, bridleways and restricted byways within the authority's area, and*
 - (b) *the ways within the authority's area which are shown in a definitive map and statement as restricted byways or byways open to all traffic.*
- 1.3 Wigan Borough contains an extensive Rights of Way network, with 1126 individually recorded rights of way, totalling approximately 470km in length. 92% of this network is footpaths, with the remainder (35km) being bridleways. This indicates a strong need for more bridleways across the Borough in order to make the network more accessible to horse-riders and cyclists. In addition to this network, there are several areas of “open access” land, owned by the Woodland Trust and Forestry Commission. A strong reminder of Wigan’s industrial heritage is the prominence of canals, with the Leeds & Liverpool Canal and Bridgewater Canal cutting across the Borough, and linking the country parks at Haigh and Pennington Flash. Wigan also has a range of wetland habitats for wildlife, such as the Wigan Flashes Nature Reserve.
- 1.4 The Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) ROWIP guidance provided to Highway Authorities (*‘Rights of Way Improvement Plans – Statutory Guidance to Local Highway Authorities in England, Defra, November 2002*) states how Rights of Way Improvement Plans are intended to be the prime means by which local highway authorities will identify changes to be made, in respect of the managements and improvements, to their local rights of way network in order to meet the Government’s aim of better provision for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and people with mobility problems.
- 1.5 As stated in the Defra guidance, the ROWIP is related to numerous other themes including healthy living, leisure, recreation, sport, tourism, transport and community strategies. The Plan has been and should continue to be developed in the context of these and other relevant plans and strategies.
- 1.6 The overall vision for the Wigan ROWIP, as detailed in Chapter 3, is as follows:

‘For Wigan Borough to have a well connected, safe and inclusive Rights of Way Network which improves accessibility and is well used for leisure, tourist and utilitarian journeys and supports a healthy and sustainable community and a dynamic economy.’

- 1.7 This vision has been developed in accordance with relevant policy documents and ten overarching ROWIP objectives which are detailed in Chapter 3.

Methodology Overview

- 1.8 Our methodology for preparing the ROWIP has been designed around eight key stages, as follows:



- 1.9 The baseline report focused on Stages 1, 2 and 3. It summarised the information we had collected, our analysis of the issues, and how we planned on moving forward to the subsequent stages of our methodology. Subsequently, Stage 4, the Statement of Action report, was produced and consultation on this was undertaken with various statutory bodies (Stage 5). Stage 6, preparation of a Draft ROWIP was completed and consultation on this with the public occurred (i.e. Stage 7). We have now prepared this Final ROWIP document (i.e. Stage 8) and have hence completed the ROWIP process.

- 1.10 During the period May – September 2006, a data collection exercise was undertaken to ascertain both the supply of, and needs for Rights of Way (as specified in the Defra ROWIP guidance). This involved undertaking a thorough assessment of the current public rights of way network and holding a number of consultation exercises with network users and key stakeholders to understand their needs and demands, in addition to exercises that provided members of the general public with the opportunity to have their say. The assessments and consultation resulted in the production of a large amount of data, which was analysed and recorded in terms of the key issues and potential improvements that could be made. The findings of this data and analysis can be found in the “Baseline Report”.
- 1.11 Chapter 2 of this report highlights some of the key data from the Baseline Report in order to avoid the need to read two separate reports.
- 1.12 The Statement of Action built upon the Baseline Report, which identified key issues and areas for action. It was prepared to set out a clear strategy on how Wigan Council will manage the local rights of way network, deal with the key issues and secure an improved network for all users. The action plan is intended to cover a 10 year period and was based on the emerging themes and priorities identified through the network assessment and consultation exercises. The Statement of Action consultation was carried out during the period December 2006 – February 2007.
- 1.13 Subsequently, the Draft ROWIP built upon the Statement of Action, incorporating the feedback from the consultation with various statutory bodies (listed at **Appendix A**). This Final ROWIP document incorporates further consultation comments from the public on the content of the Draft ROWIP and is the result of a lengthy ongoing process to ensure that Wigan’s Final ROWIP provides a clear strategy for the effective and successful management on improving and expanding the rights of way network in Wigan.
- 1.14 Everyone who had involvement in or an interest in the ROWIP process had the opportunity to comment on the draft ROWIP through the availability of the document on the Council’s website. All key documents were made available on the Council’s website throughout the ROWIP process.

The Role of the Local Access Forum (LAF)

- 1.15 It is important to emphasise the fact that the ROWIP process will be ongoing and will be managed and monitored in the longer term by a designated ROWIP Officer under the management of the Rights of Way Officer, to be employed by the council from the outset. The ROWIP Officer will work in conjunction with the LAF and other interested parties (such as the Highways User Group – HUG – which was established in February 2004 with representation from various user groups, landowners and relevant parties).

- 1.16 The Defra ROWIP guidance states that it is the function of the LAF to advise on the improvement of public access to land in that area for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area.
- 1.17 Wigan LAF has had continuous involvement in the ROWIP preparation process, and will maintain their involvement in reviewing and advising on the progress of the Plan.

The ROWIP and the Local Transport Plan (LTP)

- 1.18 During the second LTP period, Rights of Way Improvement Plans are to be increasingly incorporated into the local transport plan (i.e. by the next round of the LTP in 2010/2011). This gives authorities a new opportunity to ensure that local transport planning is making the most efficient use of the rights of way network and other route initiatives, in both urban and rural areas – especially in providing improved networks for the benefit of all users – walkers, cyclists and horse riders.
- 1.19 It is therefore very important to ensure that Wigan Council's ROWIP is closely aligned to the Greater Manchester LTP and its overarching objectives.

(It should be noted that LTP monies cannot be used for ongoing maintenance work.)

- 1.20 The Department for Transport states a number of aims for integrating the ROWIP and the LTP, as follows:
- To clearly establish the shared aims and establish a definite link between ROWIPs and LTPs;
 - To ensure that, as public highways, rights of way are embraced by the LTP process and recognised in LTPs as a key ingredient in the development of an integrated transport network that provides choice in a variety of transport modes;
 - To recognise the invaluable role rights of way can play in assisting LTPs to achieve the shared priority and wider quality of life objectives;
 - To strengthen and facilitate the long term sustainability of rights of way; and
 - In the longer term, to reduce the quantity of plans produced by an authority
- 1.21 Full integration of the Plans will take place from 2010 onwards, building on the development of the full ROWIP documents.

Other Relevant Strategies and Organisations

Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust

- 1.22 It is vital that Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust also shares the ROWIP vision to promote culture, sport and tourism and incorporate horse-riders and cyclists when promoting access to Country Parks. Regular communication between the rights of way team/ROWIP Officer and the Trust is therefore essential.

Discovering Lost Ways (Natural England)

- 1.23 The Discovering Lost Ways project aims to research rights of way not currently shown on the definitive map, with the intention to submit the routes, along with evidence, by 2026. The aim is to bring certainty to users of the countryside and landowners and managers about what rights actually exist. The project may help Wigan to identify historic routes never recorded as PROW that could help to fill gaps in the network and provide new opportunities. This will assist in delivering a long-term Government commitment to secure the continuity of public rights of way across England and getting more people enjoying the natural environment more often.

Wigan Bridleway Strategy

- 1.24 The Council is looking to work with partners to improve and increase facilities for horse-riders in the borough and beyond. The Bridleway Strategy outlines a number of policies adopted by the Council in consultation with interested parties and the Highway User Group. It aims to identify the following:

- The current provision for horse-riders;
- The work needed to provide a comprehensive bridleway network throughout the borough;
- How this bridleway network can be achieved;
- What resources will be required to implement the proposals and potential revenue sources; and
- Promote the network.

- 1.25 To support these key aims, the Council has identified five policy objectives. In summary, these involve the following:

- undertaking a review of the existing road and Rights of Way network and off road tracks to assess the potential for route development and practical horse-riding friendly measures;
- wherever possible, implementing measures to make existing roads and bridleways safer and more convenient to use;
- setting up a strategy for identifying opportunities for securing the network;
- seeking resources to develop and implement programmes of work for each of the objectives outlined; and

- including a sustained programme of publicity when implementing the strategy.

Wagonways

- 1.26 Old wagonways are a feature for rights of way in Tyne & Wear, where the recent 'Liveability' (ODPM) award of £2million funded a comprehensive scheme of improvements, wardening and community involvement. This is called the 'Wagonways Project'. In Newcastle, most of the old colliery wagonways had been used informally by the public since closure of the pits in the 1950's and 60's, and were subsequently acquired by the Council. Much of the former East - West railway through Newcastle was acquired from British Rail by the Development Corporation in the 1990's, then transferred to the City. It now carries the Hadrian's Wall Path, National Trail & Hadrian's Way Footpath/Cycleway. South of the Tyne, there are other major routes, such as the Bowes Railway and Sunderland - Consett, plus local routes similar to those in Newcastle. Funding for reclamation and access has been secured from a variety of sources, both internal and external to the Highway Authorities.
- 1.27 The 'Wagonways Project' is a best practice example when considering the use of potential new routes within Wigan.

2 Key Issues and Priorities Identified in the Baseline Report

Introduction

- 2.1 In order to get a representative sample of both users of the Rights of Way network and the population in general, on which to base our assessment, a number of different methods were used to assess user needs and demands, as follows:
- Four evening focus groups held with network users;
 - An afternoon conference held with stakeholders;
 - An online questionnaire (also available in paper format at various public buildings across the borough);
 - Analysis of a Citizens' Panel Survey on Rights of Way; and
 - A presentation and discussion with the Local Access Forum.
- 2.2 There were two main groups of people it was considered necessary to consult with to assess user needs and demand, as follows:
- members of the general public who regularly use the paths, taking account of the range of different user groups; and
 - representatives of official groups having an interest in the Rights of Way network
- 2.3 The Public Rights of Way Officer and other council officers provided a list of useful contacts for gaining suitable invitees for the focus groups. These tended to be contacts at specific organisations that would be aware of users of the network. Other contacts were identified through defined location and subject internet searches.
- 2.4 Stakeholder contacts representing specific user groups were invited to the Conference, but in addition to their invitation for the Conference, we included several invitations to the focus group (relevant to their user group), and asked them to pass these to known users of the network who may be interested in attending. The contacted groups forwarded the invitations to identified members on our behalf.
- 2.5 A list of invitees to the stakeholder conference is provided in **Appendix B**. In addition, a list of actual organisations who attended at the conference is provided.
- 2.6 An overview of the main issues and potential solutions highlighted by the different network users is included overleaf (note: issues and solutions are listed randomly based on the consultation results).

Walkers

Problems Identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Motorcycles using paths illegally ▪ Lack of resources - claims dealt with very slowly ▪ Lack of information ▪ Maintenance – rubbish a problem ▪ Farmers try to deter people – through signs and loose dogs ▪ Access is a problem in urban areas ▪ Poor design of stiles ▪ Lack of strategic routes between boroughs ▪ Horses churn up paths
Solutions for Various Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are mainly interested in existing paths being upgraded and maintained – cheaper than paying for new ones to be developed – more cost effective ▪ Publicise leaflets / better information provision ▪ Improve access – review all entrances to footpaths to make sure they are properly signed – a good starting point ▪ Improve design of stiles for those with limited abilities – would open up access for more people ▪ Need good access from roads, good way marking and easy access gates/stiles ▪ Improved maintenance ▪ Need to work quicker on list of claims ▪ If upgrading, would welcome some separation of bridleways from footpaths if possible
Specific Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ramblers Association – have a ‘Footpath Guardian System’ which log faults and monitor complaints and see what local authorities do about them. This has just started and is on a national basis. ▪ Also wanting anyone who walks on footpaths to choose a sq km and walk all paths within it and report any problems –would be excellent if could do this in Wigan Borough.

Equestrians

Problems Identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access difficult from stables – lack of links from local stables to network ▪ Lack of updates/information on bridleways ▪ Poor maintenance – vegetation ▪ Poor surfacing ▪ Poor perceptions of safety on walking/cycling routes adjacent to bridleways ▪ User conflicts – people using bridleways for other uses ▪ Inconsistency in how council deal with complaints ▪ Lack of signage ▪ Lack of mounted patrols ▪ Fly tipping ▪ Lack of resources ▪ Lack of bridleways ▪ Routes do not link together ▪ Busy roads ▪ No definitive map ▪ Problems with barriers – gates etc. ▪ Backlog of Definitive Map Modification applications
Solutions for Various Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creation of new routes to provide a network of bridleways ▪ Provision of long, continuous routes and shorter circular routes ▪ Better information provision – leaflets, dedicated newsletter, internet etc. ▪ Improved maintenance ▪ Improved surfaces e.g. ‘crusher run’, natural surfaces (grass). ▪ Better communication between council and users and within council departments ▪ Transparent complaints system ▪ Consultation with equestrians regarding new stiles/gates and other obstructions ▪ Utilise disused railways ▪ Use Groundwork / probation service for maintenance

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educate users on how to share routes courteously ▪ Better signage ▪ Dedicated officer for Definitive Map Modification applications
Specific Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential to use electronic key fobs to open gates ▪ Sliding gates that open both ways and a suitable latch mechanism should be considered ▪ Choose right materials - reduces long term maintenance costs ▪ Use zig-zag paths to combat gradients ▪ Surfaces should match gradient of the slope ▪ Provide borough-wide maps with suitable routes for different user types ▪ Policing of the network ▪ Some Definitive Map Modification routes provide good routes to schools and will provide funding opportunities

Cyclists

Problems Identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Barriers a big problem – vulnerability associated with having to start/stop (particularly for women) ▪ Maintenance – overgrown vegetation a major barrier ▪ Ownership issues ▪ Lack of cross boundary routes ▪ No definitive map (for the former county borough) ▪ Lack of promotion and awareness of routes ▪ Lack of signage
Solutions for Various Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider alternatives to barriers currently used ▪ Volunteers could adopt sections of paths and flag up problems to RoW officer ▪ Former railways in the borough should be used as routes ▪ Extend footpaths to multi-use ▪ Better awareness and promotion of routes ▪ Better signage in an appropriate position (not set back in the trees) ▪ Better maintenance ▪ Provide different grades of route – indicated on a map ▪ Better links to key facilities and public transport provision
Specific Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A potential cycle route runs parallel to A572 – provides a spine through borough (Sustrans route 55) and links to many towns and schools etc. – this should be a top priority route to create/improve ▪ Use of former railways as a link to key destinations

Disabled Users

Problems Identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Would like to see an 'all inclusive' RoW network ▪ Stiles are an issue ▪ Height of dropped kerbs is an issue for accessing the network ▪ Obstructions also affect access ▪ Maintenance - some tactile surface materials can be dangerous in wet weather ▪ Surfacing an issue in terms of quality and maintenance, issue with surfacing which have steep gradients – slippage of wheelchairs/buggies ▪ Only popular routes are signposted well ▪ Lack of information on the RoW network ▪ Haigh Hall cannot accommodate wheelchairs ▪ Lack of toilet facilities ▪ Vandalism
Solutions for Various Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Potential to use electronic key fobs to open gates ▪ Sliding gates that open outwards should be considered ▪ Choose right materials - reduces long term maintenance costs ▪ Use zig-zag paths to combat gradients ▪ Surfaces should match gradient of the slope ▪ Provide borough-wide maps with suitable routes for different user types ▪ Properly designed toilets <p>Policing of the network</p>
Specific Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fully consider Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) across network

All Users (based on the results of the stakeholder conference)

Issues	Potential Solutions / Action Areas
Lack of resources – money and staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More funding needed to recruit staff and provide better information ▪ Making wider linkages in plans and strategies to secure funding ▪ Links to tourism: funding, strategies e.g. potential for horse tourism ▪ British Waterways: funding from government to maintain canals / towpaths ▪ Partnership working is needed ▪ Education of volunteers (skills) and funding to support volunteers ▪ Use British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) / Groundwork volunteers
Poor maintenance, poor network condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve surface conditions for existing RoW as appropriate ▪ Monitor and expand on annual maintenance program as finances allow ▪ Improve quality of bridges ▪ Improved maintenance at regular times ▪ Engaging communities to get involved in their areas
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Better communication between council and RoW user groups / schools ▪ Better cross-boundary communication ▪ Better engagement with non-users
Wrongly defined paths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Remove inconsistencies in definitions
Lack of response to needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prioritise requirements to improve the network through inspection regime and public demand
Lack of information provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Better information provision, including production of clear, concise mapping of all routes for RoW users / potential users ▪ Better produced council information ▪ Improved signage on the network ▪ Information provision at Information centres, civic centres, tenants' associations, libraries, schools, electronic information, easily accessible sections dedicated to RoW on websites ▪ Council members to attend events and promote publicity of the network
Lack of publicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education in schools and among the general public to raise awareness ▪ Guided walks programmes and provision of themed walks to raise people's interest ▪ Promotion of a broad range of walks to include everyone (from short to extensive walks)
Motorised users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education on how to share space ▪ Provision of specific sites to carry out activity (motorbikes / scramblers) ▪ Better and more effective enforcement to tackle unauthorised users
User conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education ▪ Production of a Code of Conduct for space sharing ▪ Enforcement of bylaws – cycle bells, police community support officers, links to education
Connectivity to services / facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use the network to improve non-car based linkages to local facilities / services

Poor linkages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Linking up country parks with footpaths / cycleways ▪ More circular routes / continuous bridleways / multi-use paths
Linkages to wider policies / strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Link the Open Space Study and Green Infrastructure Guide to the ROWIP ▪ Use policies to create multi-purpose routes
Towpaths: wider connections and competing uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Restriction of motorised vehicles ▪ Different gradings ▪ Link into wider networks
Landscape conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure landscape is conserved through development of RoW network
Access issues: surfacing and obstructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure open access for all groups, including disabled and disadvantaged groups ▪ Improved disabled access where appropriate ▪ Faster response rates by Council in dealing with obstructions on paths ▪ Uniform gate style acceptable to all users
Cross-border consistency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Joined-up working to ensure consistency across neighbouring boroughs, and within boroughs
Uncooperative landowners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Communication with landowners: to reduce problems and enhance condition of RoW ▪ Increase footpath diversions (privacy diversions) ▪ Education of landowners in sharing of space ▪ Reporting method for RoW users
Vandalism and anti-social behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage greater use of RoW to reduce bad behaviour ▪ Better policing of network
Neglected paths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consistency in maintenance of paths
Obstructions e.g. padlocked stiles and gates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Removal of obstructions
Continuity of routes / Fragmented Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Upgrade certain sections of RoW ▪ Align the ROWIP to the planning system to ensure ongoing continuity of routes ▪ Conversion of cyclepaths / footpaths to bridleways to reduce fragmentation and increase user groups
Lack of Signage / Unclear signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appropriate classification required ▪ Clear and continuous signage along routes
Reporting of problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Better and clearer way to reporting problems e.g. RoW watch – reporting scheme for faster response to maintenance issues
Definitive map issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consistency across neighbouring boroughs and within boroughs
Lack of facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve local facilities along network for users, including benches and toilets

Questionnaire Survey (available to users and non-users through provision in public buildings)

- 2.7 The results of the questionnaire survey are provided in a separate report included at **Appendix C**. However, some key headline results are listed below:

Using Rights of Way to access local facilities and services:

- Travel to work is the most popular reason for using rights of way once a day or more
- Walking is the most popular way to utilise rights of way (note however, that a significant proportion of survey respondents lived in areas without any bridleways)
- Popular destinations that respondents would like to use but cannot include Pennington Country Park and Three Sisters Country Park. Reasons for not using them include blocked access, heavy/speeding traffic and non-linked bridleways. Identified improvements include traffic calming, tackling landowners regarding blocked access and linking bridleways

Using Rights of Way for leisure journeys:

- The most popular activity is walking
- The private vehicle is the most popular mode used for countryside access
- Canal towpaths are the preferred right of way, followed by the three country parks (Pennington, Haigh and Three Sisters)

Strategic Routes

Potential routes

- 2.8 The consultation exercises have identified a number of potential strategic routes to be explored as part of the ROWIP process, some examples of these are as follows:

- The use of former railway lines to create multi-user routes / bridleways - these could provide a link to key destinations. For example, the Ince – Redrock / Standish line. In addition, use of the old Bolton – Salford railway line would provide an excellent cross boundary link. An existing claim runs along the Leigh guided busway to the Borough boundary and this has been approved as a multi user route. The Bolton – Salford Line can be joined just across the boundary at this point to form a strategic route (the railway line forms a route through to Monton in Salford and a spur off that to Bolton);

- The potential exists for a cycle route to run parallel to the A572 – this would provide a spine through the borough (Sustrans Route 55 runs along here) and links to many towns and schools;
- Strategic routes to cross-border authorities. For example, a bridge was lost over the East Lancashire Road (A580), which provided a direct link into Warrington and to the Culcheth linear path. The potential exists for reintroducing this link;
- Potential to stretch out the Wigan Circular Loop;
- The old Drovers Road between Aintree and Manchester has the potential to create a new addition to the Bridleway network (currently it is heavily overgrown);
- Strategic routes that link into schools and country parks are essential;
- A bridleway link should be considered from Higher Lane Public Bridleway through the lower plantations to Hall Lane. This would be a good asset to the network, linking to the Whelley Loop Greenway, and would provide a safe off road route for all user groups;
- To assist in dealing with the lack of bridleways in the southwest of the borough, consideration should be given to:
 - A horse bridge over the brook behind the Dover Lock pub. This would enable riders from Abram to access Viridor Wood and Three Sisters
 - A link from Crankwood to Park Lane, Abram
 - A link from Crankwood to Barlow's Farm, Bickershaw
 - A link from Low Hall Park to Amberswood
 - An off-road route alongside Slag Lane, Lowton
- Consideration should be given to long distance routes or official trails which have impacts on proposals within Wigan. For example, the Rotary Way and Lancashire Trail.

2.9 These routes will be considered in more detail within later stages of the ROWIP process. The use of such routes will assist in meeting the future strategic needs of network users. Pursuing these routes could provide numerous benefits, for example:

- Also providing a focus for longer distance, cross borough routes that would provide easy access to country parks and other areas of greenspace;
- Contributing to safe routes to schools;
- Providing access to other local service centres;
- Feeding into more 'local' access networks, circular routes and health walks etc.

Cross Boundary Considerations

- 2.10 Consultation on the Statement of Action with cross-boundary authorities has revealed some conflict in the particular strategic routes requested (for example, Salford). On this basis it will be beneficial for Wigan to arrange a meeting to include members of the LAF, particular Salford members and other interested parties. Such meetings should also be held with the other neighbouring authorities.

The Greenway Network

- 2.11 The development of the proposed Greenways network and subsequent dedication of definitive bridleways will facilitate the provision of strategic routes both within the borough and cross boundary. The extent of the proposed Greenway network is illustrated in **Figure 2.2** at **Appendix D**.

The Canal Network

- 2.12 The canal network is an excellent and important opportunity for providing strategic routes. This should be emphasised throughout the ROWIP process and opportunities taken onboard where feasible. A project is being developed along the Bridgewater Canal. This will provide a cross boundary link between Wigan and Salford and is a good opportunity for the ROWIP. The Bridgewater Way will improve and regenerate an important and historic canal route for a 21st Century role as a safe, accessible, multi functional link between communities of the Mersey Belt and the National Cycle and Footpath Network. It is 65km in length, providing access to approximately 5 million people. The canal is well used and maintained but a large amount of the towpath is unattractive and unappealing. The majority of pedestrian access points onto the towpath are unmarked and hidden. Access is very poor for wheelchair and pram users and cycling is not encouraged. In urban areas, the towpath is occasionally badly surfaced, narrow and poorly lit, hence discouraging use. The proposals include a schedule of renewal and regeneration, introducing:

- 130 new and improved access points and new surfaces;
- Focal points, public art and heritage; and
- A safer and more appealing route through provision of lighting, CCTV and natural surveillance.

Definitive Map Modification Orders

- 2.13 There are currently 27 outstanding applications for Definitive Map Modification Orders. The majority of these orders are made where an applicant believes that a particular route should be a legal right of way on the definitive map either because there is historical evidence or through 20 years continuous use. These claims should also be considered as a top priority within the ROWIP process. The outstanding applications are

detailed in **Table 2.1** at **Appendix D** and the majority of locations are demonstrated in **Figure 2.5** at **Appendix D** (note: not all applications will appear in Figure 2.5 due to the scale of the map and the length of the route claimed).

Bridleway Safety Considerations

2.14 The consultation undertaken has revealed the need for a number of safe crossing facilities where bridleways meet busy roads, as follows:

- Bridleways at Astley crossing the A580
- St Helens Road, Pennington (permissive horse route to Bonnywell Road)
- Slag Lane, Lowton (to join two permissive paths)
- Bickershaw Lane (to link permissive path at rear of Simpkin street to the caravan site track)

Priorities

2.15 The consultation process identified a range of priorities to be considered within the ROWIP, these are listed below:

- The creation of new rights of way to enhance existing network and facilitate circular and/or long distance routes.
- Improved maintenance of existing routes (including surfacing) as opposed to providing new routes. Exploiting what is already there.
- Improved signage and way markers.
- More resources (staff and financial).
- Better communication between council and existing / potential users.
- Removal of obstructions.
- Better enforcement of user types on network.
- Closer working and communication with legal officers regarding orders and enforcement.
- Improved promotion and awareness of routes - marketing materials / information (in a range of formats).
- Improved education for all users on shared routes, in order to reduce user conflict.
- Improved access to a wider network through creation of missing links and upgraded links i.e. better route continuity.
- Considering alternatives to barriers to allow good access (e.g. gates rather than stiles).
- Good access to key facilities and public transport.
- Provision for motorcycles to stop illegal use.

Figures

2.16

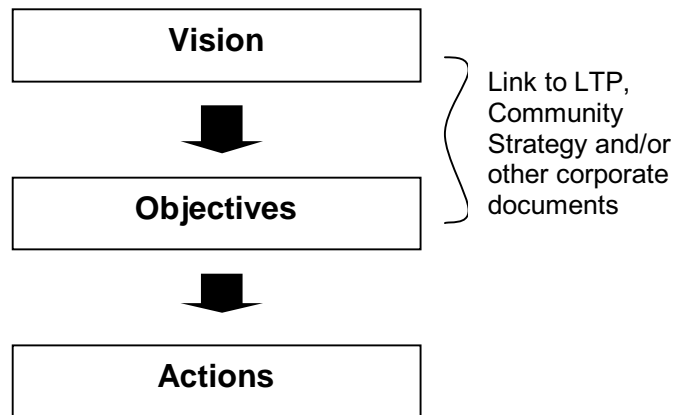
Appendix D includes a number of Figures to illustrate the important factors to be considered as part of the ROWIP process, as follows:

- **Figure 2.1** – provides a map to illustrate the current definitive rights of way network
- **Figure 2.2** – provides a map showing the proposed greenway network
- **Figure 2.3** – this map indicates the land that is accessible to the public in Wigan Borough
- **Figure 2.4** – provides a map of current strategic routes, potential strategic routes and the location of country parks
- **Figure 2.5** – this map demonstrates the locations of the Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMO's).

3 Objective Setting

General Principles

3.1 In order to ensure that Rights Of Way measures and improvements flowed from a clear set of objectives relevant to shared targets within Wigan Borough, we developed the following structure to order the Statement of Action.



3.2 This structure progressively moves from a general vision through to a specific action plan for the Borough.

3.3 Greater Manchester’s Longer Term **Vision** (known as ‘*Sharing the Vision*’) and Integrated Transport Strategy aims that by 2020, Greater Manchester will be:

- A creative and successful European Regional Centre with a strong driven economy
- Recognised as a great place to build a business, to live in and to visit
- A conurbation which is leading the wider north west region to greater levels of prosperity and which is helping to close the gap in prosperity between the north and the south
- A place with a quality environment, both built and natural, second to none.

3.4 This vision is founded on eight key themes that aim to deliver it, as follows:

- Promote a dynamic economy;
- Enhance the regional centre;
- Promote culture, sport and tourism;
- Improve connectivity;
- Raise levels of education and skills;
- Create sustainable communities;
- Reduce crime; and
- Improve health and health services.

3.5 Based on these themes, a vision has been developed for the ROWIP, which is concerned with rights of way and accessibility in the wider sense, as follows:

‘For Wigan Borough to have a well connected, safe and inclusive Rights of Way Network which improves access and is well used for leisure, tourist and utilitarian journeys and supports a healthy and sustainable community and a dynamic economy.’

Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan (GMLTP)

3.6 A ROWIP is viewed as an integral part of the GMLTP2 process, and the measures within it are intended to complement the priorities of the second GMLTP. As such, it is fundamental that the objectives of the GMLTP2 are considered when setting the objectives for the ROWIP.

3.7 A number of objectives in the GMLTP2 reflect the aspirations of the ROWIP. These objectives can be related to specific travel modes. For example, walking is recognised in the GMLTP2 as a key transport mode for shorter journeys and this aspiration is reflected in a number of GMLTP2 objectives. The ROWIP will also complement the GMLTP2 Walking Strategy. The integration of the ROWIP into the GMLTP2 will present new prospects to expand the contribution of the Rights of Way network to the provision of transport and wider quality of life issues.

3.8 The GMLTP2 Objectives for Rights of Way Improvements (taken from Annex 9 of LTP2) are as follows:

- To improve the accessibility, environment, attractiveness and safety of the regional centre, town and district centres and employment areas;
- To improve road and community safety;
- To minimise environmental damage caused by transport, thereby improving the quality of life and health of the population;
- To increase the proportion of trips by non-car modes;
- To improve accessibility by ensuring the rights of way network meets the needs of all sections of the community and the rural economy, promotes social inclusion and widens choice;
- To improve links with the rest of the country;
- To maintain, improve and make best use of existing rights of way, and ensure all schemes offer long-term value for money;
- To assist in improving health, the local economy and recreational opportunities.

3.9 The ROWIP process will continually be aligned with the GMLTP2 objectives and a joint working approach adopted in order to accrue the benefits that a partnership approach can bring.

3.10 The GMLTP has allocated the following amounts for the Wigan ROWIP over the next four financial years:

- 2007/8 £150,000
- 2008/9 £150,000
- 2009/10 £200,000
- 2010/11 £200,000

ROWIP Objectives

3.11 For the ROWIP, we have formulated ten overarching objectives, which were formed in specific response to the existing network problems and emerging themes from our assessment. The key objectives defined for the ROWIP, which are intended to complement other key strategies (such as GMLTP and the Community Plan), are as follows:

- 1) To identify and secure additional staff and financial resources to deliver the ROWIP (incorporating an annual review and continuous monitoring of finances to secure ongoing funding streams for maintenance etc.)**
- 2) To improve network condition**
- 3) To provide a well-defined network**
- 4) To increase the number of bridleways and multi-user routes**
- 5) To create an integrated and continuous network which incorporates both local and long distance routes**
- 6) To improve access onto and within the network and to key facilities for all users**
- 7) To minimise the potential for user conflicts**
- 8) To provide a safe and secure network**
- 9) To improve communication on rights of way issues**
- 10) To provide an effective information and marketing strategy to encourage use of the network**

3.12 It is important to indicate how these overarching ROWIP objectives complement both the long term vision for Greater Manchester and the relevant LTP objectives in addition to other key policy documents. This is indicated in Table 3.1 overleaf:

Table 3.1 Determination of how ROWIP Objectives Complement Other Policy Objectives

ROWIP Objective Number:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GMLTP Objectives										
To improve the accessibility, environment, attractiveness and safety of the regional centre, town and district centres and employment areas	√			√	√	√		√	√	√
To improve road and community safety	√			√				√		
To minimise environmental damage caused by transport, thereby improving the quality of life and health of the population	√			√	√	√				
To increase the proportion of trips by non-car modes	√	√	√	√	√	√		√		√
To improve accessibility by ensuring the rights of way network meets the needs of all sections of the community and the rural economy, promotes social inclusion and widens choice	√			√	√	√		√	√	
To improve links with the rest of the country	√		√	√	√	√			√	
To maintain, improve and make best use of existing rights of way, and ensure all schemes offer long-term value for money	√	√			√				√	
To assist in improving health, the local economy and recreational opportunities	√	√		√	√	√			√	√
Vision Objectives (Greater Manchester's Longer Term Vision (known as 'Sharing the Vision') and Integrated Transport Strategy)										
Promote a dynamic economy	√		√	√	√	√			√	
Enhance the regional centre	√		√			√			√	
Promote culture, sport and tourism	√			√	√	√		√		√
Improve connectivity	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	
Raise levels of education and skills	√			√	√	√				
Create sustainable communities	√		√	√	√	√		√	√	√
Reduce crime	√	√						√		
Improve health and health services	√			√	√	√		√		
UDP Policies										
Provision of accessible open countryside and outdoor leisure and recreation opportunities for the urban population	√			√	√	√			√	
Provision of public transport and footpaths to establish accessible employment locations	√				√	√		√	√	
Creation of a more accessible environment for all including people with a disability, cyclists, walkers, horse riders and vehicle users	√			√	√	√	√		√	
Aiming to provide a more sustainable and accessible transport network and to promote public transport, walking and cycling.	√			√	√	√		√	√	
Accessibility improvements for people with a disability, cyclists, pedestrians, and public transport network improvements	√					√			√	
Greenway Network developments for people with a disability, walkers, cyclists and horse riders, with links to the National Cycle Network, Wigan's Walking and Cycling Strategies, and bridleway improvement initiatives	√			√	√	√			√	
Community Plan Policies										
To get people physically active e.g. walking and cycling short distances	√	√	√	√	√	√		√		√
To encourage visits to parks and open spaces	√	√	√	√	√	√		√		√
To encourage physical activity throughout the borough	√	√	√	√	√	√		√		√
To encourage the use of more environmentally friendly transport alternatives	√	√	√	√	√	√		√	√	√
To improve and manage access to the countryside and open spaces	√	√		√	√	√	√			

4 Statement of Action

Actions

- 4.1 The overarching objectives listed in Chapter 3 encompass a range of key actions that are based on the emerging themes from the assessment of the network and its future needs. Tables 4.1 – 4.10 provide an Action Plan for each objective. In addition, appropriate timescales and key partners have been set out for each action.
- 4.2 The Action Plan tables incorporate a number of headings, as follows:
- Specific rights of way problem
 - Action/s to deal with the problem
 - Reference number for that specific problem and action
 - Timescale (i.e. short medium or long - broad prioritisation may change over time)
 - Lead partner/s – lead team in council to implement the specific action
 - Potential partners – other teams/organisations etc. who may be able to assist in implementing the action
 - Linked actions (i.e. other actions which directly relate to that specific action)
- 4.3 In developing the ROWIP, a prioritisation process will be used to determine how and when the various actions will be taken forward and more specific timescales will be set. This will be undertaken by the ROWIP Officer in conjunction with the Local Access Forum. When setting the priorities and timescales it will be essential to interact with Officers developing the other related Plans and Strategies (i.e. GMLTP, Community Plan, 'Sharing the Vision'). This will ensure good communication between the various council departments and will provide the opportunity for a partnership approach to improving and increasing access within the Borough. A joined-up, co-ordinated approach will allow the pooling of resources to meet the wider needs of the public.
- 4.4 The costing of specific actions will be carried out later within the ROWIP process, in conjunction with the prioritisation process.
- 4.5 For clarification, the action tables should be read in view of the following:
- **The RoW Team** consists of existing staff who will have an ongoing rights of way role with regards to maintenance and statutory duties.

- **The ROWIP Officer**, under the management of the Rights of Way Officer, will oversee the implementation of the specific measures instigated by the actions and objectives identified.

Table 4.1 Objective 1 – To identify and secure additional staff and financial resources to deliver the ROWIP

Problem	Reference	Action to be taken	Timescale	Lead Partner	Potential Partners	Linked Actions
Lack of a staff post to implement the ROWIP	FUND1	Ensure that an Officer in post to oversee the implementation of the ROWIP	Short	RoW Team, Senior Management	LTP	FUND2
Lack of funding and resources	FUND2	Make wider linkages in plans and strategies e.g. explore opportunities to integrate tourism, health, education, employment and economic benefits	Medium – Long	ROWIP Officer	Environmental Planning, British Waterways, Wigan Leisure & Culture Trust (WL & CT), PCT, Education Local Businesses, NWDA As above	FUND1/6, NETW2, COMM1
	FUND3	Partnership working	Medium	ROWIP Officer		FUND5/6/7, COMM1/2
	FUND4	Explore opportunities for educating volunteers (skills) and funding to support them (staff and financial)	Short	ROWIP Officer	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers / Groundwork Volunteers	COND6
Lack of communication to maximise funding opportunities	FUND5	Better communication between council and RoW user groups / schools	Short	ROWIP Officer	Education, Highways User Group, LAF, Customer Services	FUND3/8, COMM1
	FUND6	Set up an internal working group in Council to discuss RoW issues frequently	Short – Medium	ROWIP Officer	Environmental Planning, WL & CT, Education, Wigan Borough Partnership	FUND2/3
	FUND7	Better cross boundary communication	Short	ROWIP Officer	Warrington, St Helens, Bolton, Salford and Lancashire ROWIP Officers	FUND3, NETW3, COMM2/4
Lack of linkages to wider policies / strategies	FUND8	Explore the opportunity to make links to the Wigan Borough Partnership	Short	ROWIP Officer	Wigan Borough Partnership	FUND5
	FUND9	Look at how the Open Space Study and Green Infrastructure Guide can be linked to the ROWIP	Short – Medium	ROWIP Officer	WL & CT, Environmental Planning	
	FUND10	Use policies to create multi-purpose routes	Short – Medium	ROWIP Officer		

Table 4.2 Objective 2 – To improve network condition

Problem	Reference	Action to be taken	Timescale	Lead Partner	Potential Partners	Linked Actions
Poor standard on some existing routes	COND1	Utilise the results of the definitive network conditions survey and inspection regime to identify and prioritise problem areas	Short – Medium – Long	RoW Team		
	COND2	Make improvements to existing routes in conjunction with survey results and inspection regime	Medium – Long	RoW Team	Parks & Open Spaces, Strategic Transport, Greenheart Projects	
Inconsistency in how council deal with complaints	COND3	Transparent complaints system e.g. provide a hotline telephone number	Medium	Wider Council	RoW Team, New centralised complaints system being set up	CONF7
Inconsistency in standard of paths	COND4	Implement the maintenance policy e.g. identify a hierarchy of routes in terms of those that require more regular maintenance (e.g. links to schools)	Short	RoW Team	Highway Maintenance	
	COND5	Improve certain sections of RoW	Short	ROWIP Officer /RoW Team	Landowners, Planning, Highway Maintenance	
Obstructions / overgrown vegetation	COND6	Improved maintenance system - explore potential for volunteers to be responsible for sections of paths	Short	RoW Team	Council Insurance Section / Legal, Groundwork volunteers, Parish Councils, User Groups e.g. Ramblers, Councillors, Rangers, Parish Councils	FUND4
	COND7	Encourage communities to get involved e.g. through leaflets or holding stands at local events	Short	RoW Team	Customer Services	COMM3, INFO6
Poor quality of bridges	COND8	Survey the quality of existing bridges and explore opportunities to improve quality where necessary	Medium – Long	Bridges Section	Bridges Section	

Table 4.3 Objective 3 – To provide a well-defined network

Problem	Reference	Action to be taken	Timescale	Lead Partner	Potential Partners	Linked Actions
Lack of a definitive map for the former county borough	NETW1	Create an initial definitive map (in both a digitised and paper format) and consult with the HUG/LAF for its ongoing development	Short	RoW Team, LAF, HUG	Legal Dept.	
Backlog of Definitive Map Modification Order proposals	NETW2	Explore potential for additional resources to deal with Modification Orders more quickly	Short – Medium	RoW Team & ROWIP Officer	Legal Dept	FUND2
Inconsistencies where rights of way cross borough boundaries	NETW3	Ensure consistency across neighbouring boroughs – better communication e.g. regular meetings between RoW Officers, develop consistent standards on cross-boundary routes and Officers to consult each other on the development of the ROWIP	Long	RoW Team & ROWIP Officer	Warrington, St Helens, Bolton, Salford and Lancashire RoW Officers	FUND7
Wrongly defined paths	NETW4	Analyse current definitions to remove inconsistencies (a system looking at anomalies has already begun)	Short – Medium	RoW Team, HUG working group	HUG and LAF	
Lack of response to needs	NETW5	Prioritise the network based on present needs and demands	Short	ROWIP Officer	HUG and LAF Bridleway, cycling and walking groups / representatives	

Table 4.4 Objective 4 – to increase the number of bridleways and multi-user routes*

Problem	Reference	Action to be taken	Timescale	Lead Partner	Potential Partners	Linked Actions
Lack of bridleways and multi-user routes	BRID1	Upgrade some footpaths to definitive bridleways (including immediate upgrade of appropriate permissive paths on Council land - where feasible)	Short	RoW Team & ROWIP Officer	Landowners, Legal Dept., Strategic Transport, Planning, Leisure	INTEG8, ACCESS3
	BRID2	Upgrade informal riding routes to definitive bridleways	Short – Medium	RoW Team & ROWIP Officer	Landowners, Legal Dept., Strategic Transport	INTEG8
	BRID3	Where possible convert cycle tracks / routes adjacent to or along the highway into multi-user routes	Medium	RoW Team & ROWIP Officer	Landowners, Legal Dept., Cycling Officer, Strategic Transport, HUG and LAF	INTEG7/8/12
	BRID4	Explore use of former travel routes (such as railways and tram roads) as a link to key destinations e.g. the Ince – Redrock / Standish railway line	Short	ROWIP Officer	Strategic Transport, Network Rail, Landowners, HUG and LAF, Bridleway groups, Cycling groups	INTEG2
	BRID5	Explore use of the old Drivers Road which runs partially along the A580 (between Aintree and Manchester)	Short – Medium	ROWIP Officer	Strategic Transport, Landowners	

***Note – although a multi-user route is essentially a bridleway it is included as a separate term due to the fact that it is used and referred to by various council departments and other organisations as opposed to the term bridleway.**

Table 4.5 Objective 5 – to create an integrated and continuous network which incorporates both local and long distance routes

Problem	Reference	Action to be taken	Timescale	Lead Partner	Potential Partners	Linked Actions
Poor connectivity of routes	INTEG1	Identify missing links / gaps that would help improve continuity, create new routes as appropriate	Short	ROWIP Officer	Highways User Group, LAF	
Lack of continuous routes / Routes do not link together	INTEG2	Provision of long, continuous routes – explore potential to use old railway lines e.g. Ince–Redrock / Standish line	Medium – Long	ROWIP Officer	Planning, Network Rail, Landowners	BRID4
	INTEG3	Align ROWIP to planning system i.e. - prevent the loss of routes due to new development, and - explore funding opportunities for RoW as part of new developments	Medium – Long	RoW Team, Development Control, Planning	Landowners	
	INTEG4		Medium – Long	RoW Team, Development Control, Planning	Landowners	
	INTEG5	Avoid alley gating where safety is an issue and consult more widely with the public	Medium – Long	Highways	ROWIP Officer, Community Safety, Police	
Poor linkages	INTEG6	Link country parks with footpaths / bridleways	Medium	ROWIP Officer	Country Parks and Countryside Management, Landowners	BRID3
	INTEG7	More circular routes / continuous bridleways / multi-use routes	Medium – Long	ROWIP Officer	Landowners	
Fragmented network / change of status along routes cause dead ends for some users	INTEG8	Convert cyclepaths / footpaths into bridleways where appropriate to reduce fragmentation and increase the number of user groups using routes	Medium	ROWIP Officer	Parks & OS, Strategic Transport	BRID1/2/3
	INTEG9	Dedicate ‘Green ways’ constructed by Planning Dept. as Definitive RoW/bridleways	Short – Medium	Environmental Planning	RoW Team, Legal Dept.	

Table 4.5 (Continued) Objective 5 – to create an integrated and continuous network which incorporates both local and long distance routes

Problem	Reference	Action to be taken	Timescale	Lead Partner	Potential Partners	Linked Actions
Fragmented network / change of status along routes cause dead ends for some users (Cont)	INTEG10	Where possible, make well-used paths definitive	Short – Medium	ROWIP Officer, Strategic Transport	Landowners	
	INTEG11	Ensure new RoW are properly integrated into network	Medium	ROWIP Officer	Strategic Transport	
Lack of strategic cross-boundary routes between boroughs	INTEG12	Provision of strategic multi-user routes	Long	ROWIP Officer, Strategic Transport	Landowners, Warrington, St Helens, Bolton, Salford and Lancashire ROWIP Officers	BRID3
Busy roads	INTEG13	Provide safe crossing points for all types of user where RoW meet busy roads	Medium – Long	ROWIP Officer, Traffic Section, Strategic Transport, Highways	Landowners, Warrington, St Helens, Bolton, Salford and Lancashire RoW Officers	SEC3
	INTEG14	Use signage to warn motorists of user presence	Medium	ROWIP Officer, RoW Team, Traffic Section, Traffic Management	Community Safety, Landowners, Warrington, St Helens, Bolton, Salford and Lancashire RoW Officers	
Towpaths require wider connections and competing uses	INTEG15	Link towpaths into wider networks and provide different gradings of route	Medium – Long	Peel Holdings (Manchester Ship Canal), British Waterways	Highways User Group, LAF, Strategic Transport, Disability Forum, ROWIP Officer	
Lack of signage	INTEG16	Clear, continuous signage along routes	Medium	RoW Team		ACCESS8

Table 4.6 Objective 6 – To improve access onto and within the network and to key facilities for all users

Problem	Reference	Action to be taken	Timescale	Lead Partner	Potential Partners	Linked Actions
Poor access onto the network from urban areas	ACCESS1	Access improvements on potential routes from urban areas e.g. new footpaths to strategic routes, improved bridleways to local stables	Short - Medium	ROWIP Officer	Highways User Group, LAF, Strategic Transport	
Access currently difficult for the mobility impaired	ACCESS2	Provide a fully inclusive network – fully consider DDA e.g. develop a best practice disabled route (a 1-2km circular route) in consultation with this user group – then roll it out to other routes in the borough	Long	ROWIP Officer	Highways User Group, LAF, Disability Forum, Access Committee	
Lack of links from stables to network – access difficult	ACCESS3	Provision of local bridleways / upgrade footpaths to bridleways	Medium – Long	ROWIP Officer	Strategic Transport, Landowners	BRID1
Barriers are a problem – gates	ACCESS4	Consider alternatives - improve design to open up access for more people	Short – Medium	RoW Team	Landowners, Highways User Group, LAF	
	ACCESS5	Identify gate combinations acceptable to all users	Medium – Long	RoW Team	Landowners, Highways User Group, LAF, Planning, Cross-border Authorities	
	ACCESS6	Use the accessibility standards set in the Council's 'Access for All' document as a best practice guide	Short – Medium	RoW Team	Highways User Group, LAF, Planning	
Obstructions	ACCESS7	Faster response rate by Council in dealing with obstructions on paths	Medium	ROWIP Officer	Legal Dept.	
Lack of signage and way markers	ACCESS8	Provision of clear signage in appropriate positions (e.g. indicate specific destinations, distance to destination and level of walk) and way mark RoW where routes are not clear	Medium	ROWIP Officer	Country Parks and Countryside Management, Traffic Engineers, Environmental Planning	INTEG16

Table 4.6 (Continued) Objective 6 – To improve access onto and within the network and to key facilities for all users

Problem	Reference	Action to be taken	Timescale	Lead Partner	Potential Partners	Linked Actions
Surfacing an issue for disabled users and equestrians	ACCESS9	Improved surfacing where a wide range of users are present e.g. on the most well used routes	Medium – Long	ROWIP Officer	Highways	
Lack of facilities	ACCESS10	Improve and increase the number of convenience facilities such as benches and toilets	Medium	ROWIP Officer	Business Sponsorship, Parish Councils	
Lack of links to key facilities	ACCESS11	Identify specific problems and opportunities for access to key facilities	Short	ROWIP Officer	Highways User Group, LAF	
	ACCESS12	Work with school travel plan coordinator to identify gaps in the network that could be used to encourage use	Medium	ROWIP Officer	Travel Plan Coordinators, Education	INFO4

Table 4.7 Objective 7 – To minimise the potential for user conflicts

Problem	Reference	Action to be taken	Timescale	Lead Partner	Potential Partners	Linked Actions
Illegal motorcycles using paths	CONF1	Provision of legal sites for motorcycles to carry out activity	Long	ROWIP Officer	Police, Planning, Youth Services, Landowners, Leisure	
	CONF2	Targeted police patrols	Medium – Long	Police & Community Protection		SEC4
	CONF3	Better and more effective enforcement	Medium – Long	Police & Community Protection		
	CONF4	Raise awareness of dangers of illegal motorcycle e.g. through working in schools	Short	Police & Community Protection	Community Safety, Environmental Protection	SEC4
	CONF5	Communication with landowners to reduce problems and enhance RoW condition e.g. through provision of leaflets and a telephone hotline	Short	ROWIP Officer	Landowners	
Conflict with landowners	CONF6	Increase footpath and bridleway diversions as appropriate to avoid potential conflicts	Medium	ROWIP Officer	Landowners. Legal Dept	
	CONF7	Reporting method for ROWIP OFFICER users e.g. through provision of a telephone hotline	Short	ROWIP Officer		COND3
	CONF8	Enforcement of bylaws - police community support officers	Medium		Police, Community Safety, Peak & Northern Footpath Society	
People using bridleways for other uses	CONF9	Production of a Code of Conduct for space sharing	Medium		RoW, Rangers	
Insufficient route widths	CONF10	Assess routes to ensure they are sufficiently wide	Medium	RoW Team & ROWIP Officer		

Table 4.8 Objective 8 – To provide a safe and secure network

Problem	Reference	Action to be taken	Timescale	Lead Partner	Potential Partners	Linked Actions
Poor perceptions of safety on walking / cycling routes	SEC1	Work in partnership with police to report incidents	Medium – Long	RoW Team	Police, Community Safety	
Vandalism and anti-social behaviour	SEC2	Promote greater use of RoW to reduce crime	Short – Medium	ROWIP Officer		
Conflict between horseriders and traffic	SEC3	Provide signage on roads warning of horses	Short – Medium	Traffic Engineers, RoW	Highways	INTEG14
Lack of mounted patrols	SEC4	Explore the potential for mounted patrols	Short	Police		CONF2/3
Poor connectivity to services / facilities	SEC5	Improve non-car based linkages to local facilities / services	Medium – Long	LTP, ROWIP Officer	Planning, Highways	

Table 4.9 Objective 9 – To improve communication on rights of way issues

Problem	Reference	Action to be taken	Timescale	Lead Partner	Potential Partners	Linked Actions
Lack of communication within and between authorities and with users	COMM1	Better communication between council and users and within council departments e.g. regular meetings between council officers and a telephone hotline for users	Short	ROWIP Officer, Highways User Group, LAF	Planning, Engineers, Highways, Community Safety, WL & CT, Wigan Borough Partnership,	FUND2/3/5
	COMM2	Better cross-boundary communication e.g. regular meetings for cross-boundary RoW Officers	Short – Medium	ROWIP Officer	Warrington, St Helens, Bolton, Salford and Lancashire RoW Officers	FUND5/7
Lack of communication with non RoW users	COMM3	Better engagement with non-users e.g. through local press, leaflets, stand in local shopping centre	Short – Medium	ROWIP Officer	Community Services	COND7, INFO6
Cross-border inconsistency e.g. in route standard and maintenance	COMM4	Consistency across neighbouring boroughs, and within boroughs e.g. develop a route hierarchy in terms of standard and maintenance required	Long	ROWIP Officer	Warrington, St Helens, Bolton, Salford and Lancashire ROWIP Officers	FUND7
Lack of consultation with users regarding changes	COMM5	Consultation with users regarding changes e.g. new gates / alleygating – consult with LAF	Short	ROWIP Officer	Highways User Group, LAF	

Table 4.10 Objective 10 – To provide an effective information and marketing strategy to encourage use of the network

Problem	Reference	Action to be taken	Timescale	Lead Partner	Potential Partners	Linked Actions
Lack of information / publicity on the RoW network	INFO1	Provide borough-wide clear, concise maps indicating suitable routes for different types of user / potential users	Medium	RoW Team & ROWIP Officer	Customer Services	
	INFO2	Produce and publicise leaflets for riders and walkers (to be available at key locations and via internet)	Medium	RoW Team & ROWIP Officer	Customer Services	
	INFO3	Increased production of information by council and ensure O.S. are advised of legal orders	Short - Medium	RoW Team & ROWIP Officer	Customer Services, General Council Depts.	
Lack of promotion and awareness of routes	INFO4	Education in schools and among general public e.g. provide information in a format suitable for use by teachers	Medium	RoW Team & ROWIP Officer	Customer Services, Education	ACCESS12
	INFO5	Guided walks programmes – themes to raise interest	Medium	RoW Team & ROWIP Officer	WL & CT	
	INFO6	Better engagement with non users e.g. through local press / stand in local shopping centre	Short	RoW Team & ROWIP Officer	Customer Services	COND7, COMM3
	INFO7	Promotion of broad range of walks – for various levels of ability e.g. through leaflets for riding and walking	Short	RoW Team & ROWIP Officer	Customer Services, Rangers, Ramblers Association	
	INFO8	Involve Councillors in promoting routes	Short	ROWIP Officer	Councillors, Parish Councils	
Lack of updates / information on bridleways	INFO9	Dedicated newsletter, internet site	Short – Medium	ROWIP Officer		

5 Current Progress

- 5.1 It is important to indicate that Wigan Borough has already made good progress with its Rights of Way work. It was one of the first authorities to produce a Milestones Statement, which has recently undergone its third detailed review. The Council also has a recently established Highways User Group (HUG), with representation from various user groups, land owners and interested parties, and a Local Access Forum (LAF) has been set up to promote and improve the Borough's rights of way network. Both the LAF and HUG will oversee the implementation of the ROWIP
- 5.2 Wigan Borough has already completed a detailed survey of all rights of way, which has been recorded in their IT-based rights of way management system.
- 5.3 Wigan Borough's excellent progress on rights of way means that the Council now acts as the Lead Authority on public rights of way for all the Greater Manchester Authorities, representing them at the National Group. Wigan Borough is also in the top quartile of Greater Manchester authorities, based on their BVPI178 result (percentage length of rights of way easy to use by the public).
- 5.4 Wigan Council is already proposing ways to promote use of the rights of way network. For example, they have produced a series of ten 'Health Walk' leaflets which are to be distributed via local libraries, country parks, Haigh Hall, Pennington Flash, council buildings, leisure/recreational venues and some schools. They can also be sent out to people on request, free of charge. The ten walks are as follows:

1. **Worthington and Haigh** (Worthington Lakes and Haigh Hall)
2. **Aspull and Hindley** (Top Lock and Borsdane Wood)
3. **Ashton and Golborne** (Ashton Heath to Edge Green and Golborne High to Plank Lane)
4. **Bryn and Abram** (Three Sisters and Viridor Wood)
5. **Billinge and Orrell** (Billinge Hill and Gathurst Station to Dean Wood)
6. **Leigh and Bickershaw** (Pennington Flash and Bickershaw Lane to Park lane via Kingsdown Flash)
7. **Astley** (Astley Green and Marsland Green)
8. **Atherton and Tyldesley** (Howe Bridge and Gin Pit)
9. **Shevington and Standish** (Shevington Vale and Giant's Hall to Elnup Wood)
10. **Wigan** (Pearson's Flash and Bottling Wood)

- 5.5 These leaflets discuss the health benefits of walking and include specific examples of places to visit. For example, the Worthington & Haigh leaflet provides details for a walk at Worthington Lakes and Haigh Country Park. For each walk, the following information is provided:

- The distance of the walk

- The time recommended to allow for undertaking the walk
- If car parking is available and if so, where
- Directions from the nearest bus stop and / or main road
- Directions to follow whilst on route
- An Ordnance Survey map to highlight the route

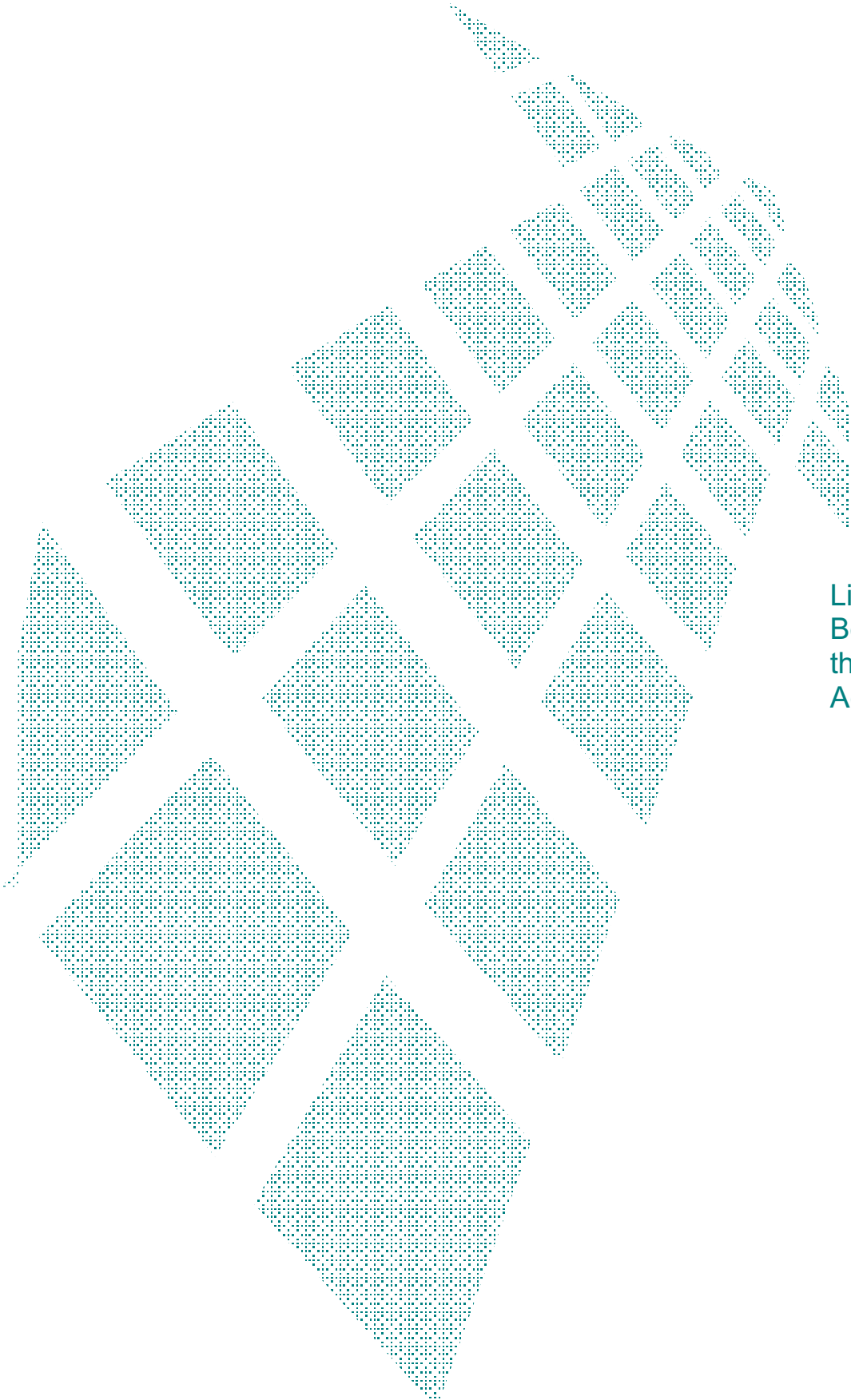
5.6 A copy of the Haigh Country Park walk is included at **Appendix E**.

5.7 The health walks leaflets are fairly new and hence the potential exists to link them to the key findings from the user needs and demands assessment. For example, through focusing rights of way improvements on the destinations people wish to access via rights of way but currently find difficult (for example, Pennington Country Park and Three Sisters Country Park – as revealed by the questionnaire). The potential may also exist in the future to promote the health walks at local health service providers.

5.8 In addition, the rights of way team are working with partners and taking opportunities to provide improved facilities for cyclists and horse riders – through dedication of bridleways and higher specification to new bridges to accommodate bridleway users.

6 The Way Forward

- 6.1 The ROWIP process will be consistently monitored and updated by the ROWIP Officer (in conjunction with the LAF and HUG). This will include a financial review to ensure that funding streams are ongoing. The reviews will be carried out in line with the cycle of the LTP document, in order to ensure the ongoing and essential relationship between the two.
- 6.2 The ROWIP Officer will work with key partners to identify priorities and detailed timescales for the implementation of improvements.
- 6.3 A Rights of Way Maintenance Policy has been set up to ensure that popular rights of way are well maintained. A Rights of Way Safety Inspection Policy and Conditions Survey has also been set up to identify rights of way that need improvements in both the short and longer term. These policies contribute towards an efficient and effective monitoring system.



Appendix A
List of Statutory
Bodies consulted on
the Statement of
Action

Contact List for Statement of Action Consultation

Each Adjoining Local Highway Authority

Public Rights of Way Officer - Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council

Public Rights of Way Officer - Salford Council

Public Rights of Way Officer - Warrington Council

Public Rights of Way Officer - St Helens Council

Public Rights of Way Officer - West Lancashire Council

Public Rights of Way Officer - Lancashire County Council

Countryside Agency

Chairman, Shevington Parish Council

Chairman, Haigh Parish Council

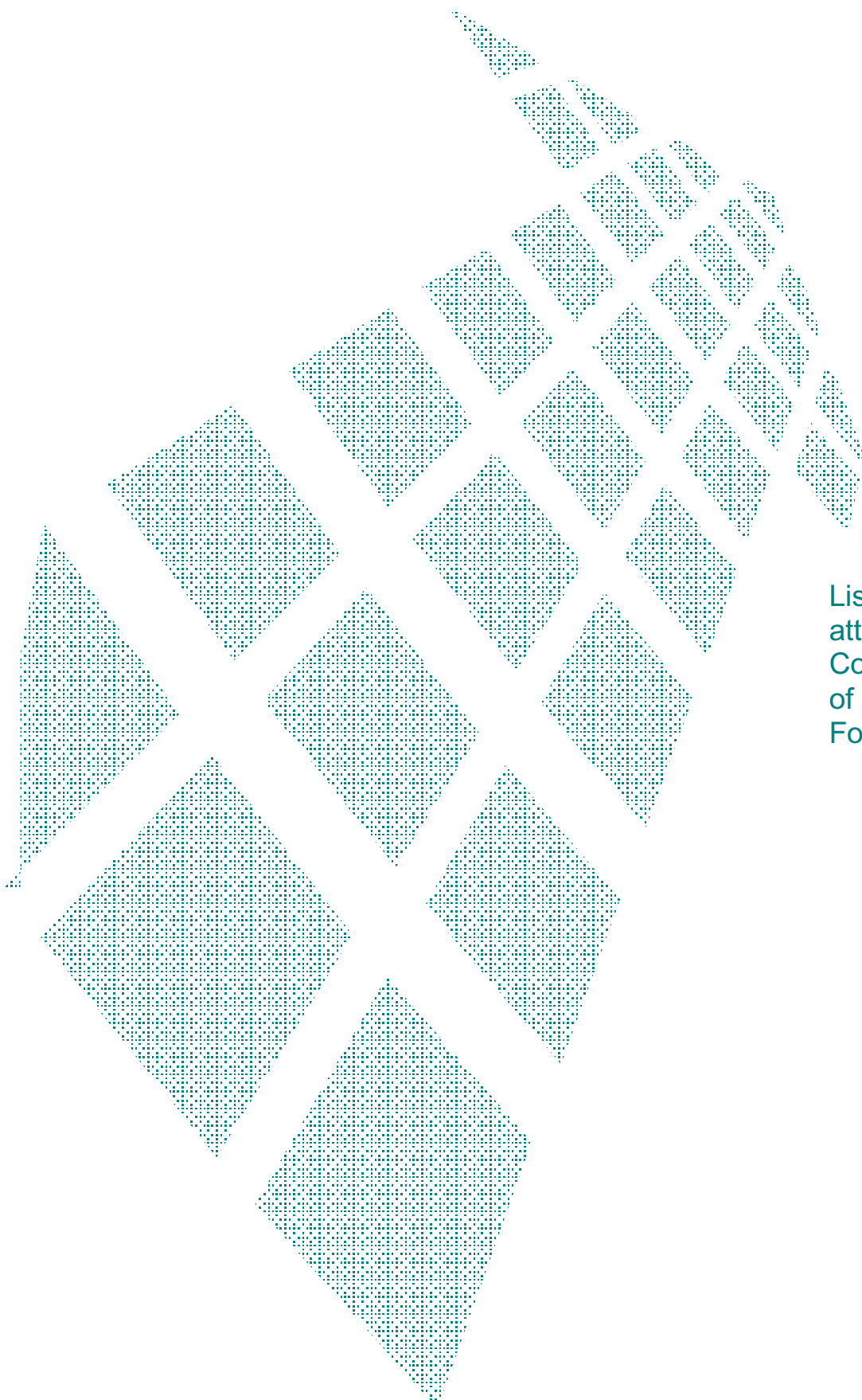
Highways User Group

Local Access Forum

Wigan Councillors

Relevant Directors within Wigan Council

Copy Made available on Wigan Council Website



Appendix B
List of invitees / attendees at the Conference and List of attendees at Focus Groups

WIGAN RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN - CONFERENCE INVITEES

Walking			
Mr	Barry	King	Long Distance Walking Association Peak & Northern Footpath Society Ramblers Association Greater Manchester Pedestrian Association Wigan & District Ramblers Association
Mr	Peter	Burns	
Dr	Edgar	Ernstbrunner	
Ms	Gloria	Gaffney	
Mr	John	Pimblett	
Cycling			
Mr	Trevor	Boardman	Cycle Liaison Group The National Cycling Centre (Manchester Velodrome) British Mountain Bike Federation Cycling Project for the North-West Wigan Wheelers Cycling Club
Mr	Alan	Power	
Motorised Users (Motorcycling/4x4)			
Secretary	Stephanie	Weaver	Owls Motorcycle Club Westhoughton Motorcycle Club Black Diamonds MCC Hindley MCC Trail Riders Fellowship LARA/TRF Development Officer, LARA
Chairman	Ronnie		
Mr	Keith	Westerley	
Mr	Keith	Osborn	
Mr	T	Stevens	
Equestrian			
Ms	Edna	Booth	Leigh, Atherton & Tyldesley Bridleways Group British Horse Society Leigh, Atherton & Tyldesley Bridleways Group Lowton, Crankwood & Abram Bridleways Group Wigan Bridleways Association Standish District Bridleway Group DEANDANE RIDING STABLES HORSE CAMP Douglas Farm Riding School Abram Hall Riding Centre Landlords Farm Riding Centre Parbold Equestrian Centre Wrightington Equestrian Centre Calico Livery Stables
Mrs	Judith	Burton	
Mrs	Brenda	Gaskell	
Mrs	Jacqueline	Roberts	
Ms	Ruth	Killen	
Mrs	Eileen	Rybka	
Mrs	Walley		
	Kim		
Disabled			
Ms	Sandra	Lightfoot	Wigan and Leigh Disability Forum Wigan and Leigh Disability Forum Wigan Disability Sports Forum Wigan & Leigh Disability Forum Wigan, Leigh and District Society for the Blind Leigh and District Deaf Society Disability Forum
Ms	Barbara	Bodie	
Wigan Disability Sports		Co-ordinator	
Mr	A	Heathman	
Ms	Irene	Yates	
Stakeholder			
Mr	Andy	Glover	Forest Enterprise North West Region Legal & Property Services Department Engineering Services Department Engineering Services Department Engineering Services Department Planning Policy Officer Wigan Council Wigan & Leigh College Sustainable Development Co-ordinator GMPT Ashton, Leigh and Wigan Primary Care Trust Ashton, Leigh and Wigan Primary Care Trust Ashton, Leigh and Wigan Primary Care Trust Wigan CVS (Encompass) Boroughwide Youth Council Community Safety Partnership Wigan Leisure and Culture Trust Wigan Leisure and Cultural Trust Carers UK – Wigan & Leigh Branch Wigan & Leigh Pensioners Link Wigan Access Committee Red Rose Forest Standish Community Forum Orrell/Billinge Community Network Boroughwide Community Network Disability and Equality Advisor - Halton, Knowsley, St. Helens, Warrington and Wigan & Leigh National Cycle Network Groundwork Wigan & Chorley Access Officer National Farmers' Union Countryside Agency North West Region Travel Plan Co-ordinator (Wigan) Safe Routes to Schools (Wigan) Walking/Cycling Strategy (Wigan)
Mr	Arthur	Pritchard	
Mr	Glyn	Chadwick	
Ms	Elizabeth	Parry	
Mr	David	Scrivens	
Ms	Alison	Jones	
Mr	Ian	Rowin	
Ms	Gill	Sinnott	
Ms	Joy	Dent	
Mr	Peter	Rowe	
Mr	Glen	Berry	
Ms	Julie	Hotchkiss	
Mr	John	Hutchison	
Mr	Rodney	Hill	
Mr	Nick	Colledge	
Mr	Joe	Healen (Secretary)	
Mr	Nigel	Blandford	
Mr	Micheal	Crosby (Chairman)	
Ms	Katy	Crowson	
Mr	Dave	Thompson MBE	
Ms	Kathryn	Barker	
Mr	Andrew	Rothwell	
Mr	Danny	Moores	
Mr	James	Noakes	
Mr	Andy	Allen	
Mr	Damien	Garner	

Mr	Gary	Hould	Chief Assistant Planning Officer (Wigan)
Mr	Brian	Warren	Countryside Officer
Mr	Graham	Workman	Countryside Services - Wildlife & Countryside Development Manager (Wigan)
Cllr	Peter	Smith	Chair of Wigan Borough Partnership
Mr	David	Eccles	Shopmobility
Mr	Derek	Parke	Forest Enterprise NW Region
Ms	Carol	Hodgson	CLA-NW Regional
Miss	J.	Doran	NFU Group Secretary - National Farmers Union
			British Waterways
	Hazel	Gannaway	United Utilities
			Sports Council
Mr	David	Wagstaff	Public Rights Of Way Officer
Ms	S	Thomasson	Public Rights Of Way Officer
Mr	John	Thorp	Public Rights Of Way Officer
Mr	James	Wiwop	Public Rights Of Way Officer
Mr	Steve	Kent	Public Rights Of Way Officer
	Jackie	Bowley	Environment Agency
Mr	Tony	Mcdonnagh	ROW officer
Mr	Tommy	Charnock	People Voices
Councillor	Barbara	Bourne	
Mrs	Karen	Dempsey	Marsh Green Residents Represenrarive
Mr	Niel	Turner	MP
Ms	Rita	Chapman	Chief Executive for the LIFT company
Mr	Joe	Taylor	Billinge History Society
Mr	Paul	Haunch	Groundwork
Mr	Peter	Guy	BWCN / ETNA / Gin Pit Village Community
Mr	Peter	Wilson	Vice Chairmen Wigan Ramblers
Ms	Gemma	Heaton	Planning and Regeneration
			Township Forums

Organisations who attended the Stakeholder Conference

Cycle Liaison Group
Groundwork
Wigan Planning and Regeneration Department
Ashton, Leigh and Wigan Primary Care Trust
Forest Enterprise North West Region
Long Distance Walking Association
Wigan Travel Plan Co-ordinator
Lowton, Crankwood & Abram Bridleways Group
Warrington Public Rights of Way Officer
Deandane Riding Stables
Standish Community Forum
Councillor Barbara Bourne
Peak & Northern Footpath Society
Marsh Green Residents Representative
BWCN / ETNA / Gin Pit Village Community
Wigan Access Committee
Wigan Bridleways Association
Wigan Legal & Property Services Department
St Helens Public Rights of Way Officer
Red Rose Forest
Ramblers Association
United Utilities
Leigh, Atherton & Tyldesley Bridleways Group
Merseytravel Rights of Way Officer
GMPTE
Standish District Bridleways Group
Vice Chairman Wigan Ramblers
Disability Forum
British Horse Society
Bolton Council Public Rights of Way Officer

Attendees at Focus Groups

Cyclists

Ray Grover Trevor Boardman Alan Bentham Jim Naylor

Walkers

John Pimblett Peter Haslam

Mobility Impaired Users

Barbara Bodie N Strefford Sandra Lightfoot Mike Mills Irene Yates Mike Mills

Equestrian

Ruth Killen Eileen Rybka Edna Booth J Mallon Judith Burton C Kenyon Sarah Woolley Jackie Roberts S Grundy U Campion P Thomas P Finch K Tudor Jill Norris B M Gaskell
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Appendix C
Questionnaire
Report

Wigan Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Questionnaire Analysis



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1 Background

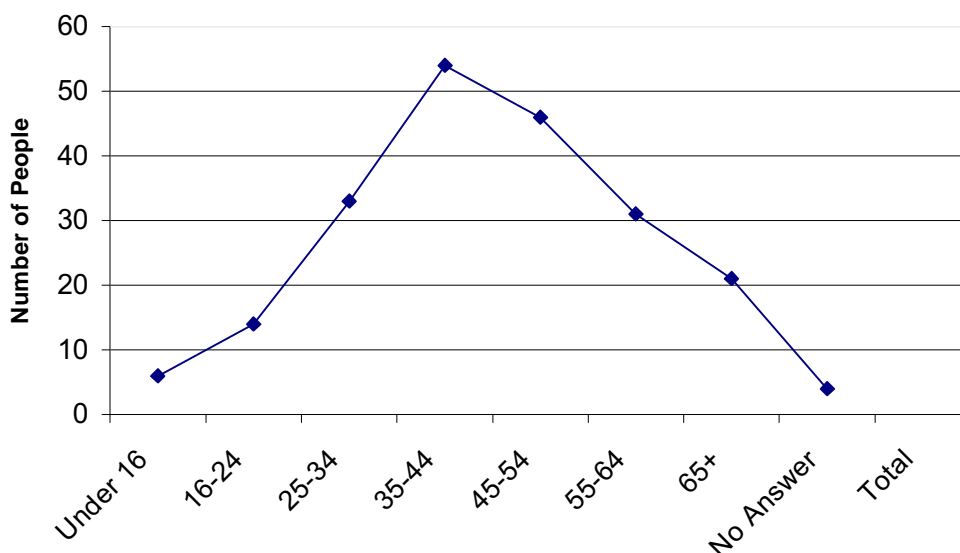
Data Analysis

- 1.1 The questionnaire survey (being available to all members of the general public) was designed in order to collate a wide variety of information and respondent opinion. The design therefore included varying types of question including open questions for respondents to include their own answers and opinion, and multi-answer questions allowing a number of answers to be chosen. A copy of the questionnaire is included at **Appendix A**. It was decided that the statistical analysis tool SPSS would be best used for data analysis due to its ability to handle differing types of data.
- 1.2 The SPSS software allowed detailed analysis of all questions once the data from the questionnaires was input into the system. In setting up SPSS for data analysis it was important to take into account the possibility of respondents choosing not to answer a particular question. As such, each question has its own individual response rate giving an indication of the most, and least popular questions. This can be taken into account when applying individual question results to the wider sample.
- 1.3 Out of the 1250 questionnaires that were distributed, 209 were returned and analysed – a response rate of 17%.

Respondent Background

- 1.4 Of the respondents, 70% were female. The most popular age range of all participants was 35-44 (25.8%), with those in the 45-54-age range following closely at 22%. **Figure 1** below clearly shows the high response rate for those aged 35-54. With regards to disabilities affecting mobility, 6.7% of respondents answered that they did have a disability, whilst 9.6% did not answer the question at all. The remaining 83.7% said they did not have a disability affecting their mobility. With regards to ethnic grouping, the majority of respondents classed themselves as being in the White category (81.8%). The ethnic group Asian accounted for 1% of those questioned, and the groups Chinese and Mixed both accounted for 0.5% respectively. A fairly small proportion chose not to classify themselves (16.3%).

Figure 1 - Age of Respondents



Postcode Areas

- 1.5 All but 7 respondents chose to give their postcodes. **Map 1** below shows the distribution of respondents by postcode area.

Map 1 –Questionnaire Responses across the Borough and Surrounding Areas



- 1.6 The postcode area with the highest number of respondents is clearly WA3, covering the Lowton and Golborne area to the south of the borough. This is followed closely by WN2, covering the centrally located areas of Hindley and Abram. WN6 representing Standish follows in third place. Areas with the lowest response include Leigh (WN7), Atherton (M46) and Ince in Makerfield (WN3).

2 The Questions and Their Findings

Section 1 – Getting to Local Facilities & Services

Question 1

- 2.1 Table 1 below, shows how often Rights of Way are utilised by respondents, and for what activities. This question allowed the respondent to select more than one reason for using Rights of Way.

Table 1 – Proportion of respondents using Rights of Way for specific activities

	Once a day or more	2-3 Times per week	At least once a week	At least once a fortnight	Once a month or less	Do not use ROW's	No Answer	Total
Work	5%	3%	1%	0%	1%	58%	32%	100%
Shops	4%	12%	9%	4%	7%	38%	26%	100%
Health	2%	1%	3%	1%	18%	44%	31%	100%
Leisure	4%	5%	7%	4%	7%	43%	30%	100%
P Transport	3%	3%	4%	1%	9%	47%	33%	100%
Visit Friends	4%	9%	18%	10%	8%	26%	25%	100%
Other	7%	6%	4%	1%	1%	6%	75%	100%

- 2.2 It is clear from Table 1 that work is the most popular reason for using Rights of Way once a day or more, followed by shopping and leisure. When utilising Rights of Way 2-3 times a week, Shopping is the most popular activity. Visiting friends is the most popular reason cited for using Rights of way at least once a week, and at least once a fortnight. Health is the most popular activity for utilising routes once a month or less.
- 2.3 Findings from question one are in line with general expectations. For example, it is more likely that an individual would utilise a route once a day to commute to work (usually a daily activity), rather than to access health facilities (an activity that tends to be more infrequent).
- 2.4 Other destinations/reasons cited for using Rights of Way included school and exercising animals, which usually included horses.

Question 2

- 2.5 Question two asked the respondent to identify how they use footpaths and bridleways (e.g., walk, cycle etc). Again this question allowed for more than one answer to be selected. The majority of respondents answered this question (80.4%), whilst 19.6% did not. Analysis for question two indicates that walking is the most popular way to utilise rights of way, with 57% (141) of participants choosing this method, followed by cycling at 23%. Of the 18% that chose 'Other' methods, all of these respondents apart from one stated that they used rights of way for equestrian activity.

Note: a significant proportion of responses came from people living in areas without any bridleways – which may impact on overall results.

Table 2 – Most popular method for utilising rights of way

Method	Number	Percentage
Walking	141	57%
Cycling	58	23%
Wheelchair	4	2%
Other	46	18%

Question 3

- 2.6 Question three gauged respondent opinion on the quality of rights of way routes. The general consensus amongst questionnaire participants was that the physical condition of routes is average (40.2%). This was followed by 15.8% believing conditions were good, and 13.9% stating conditions were poor. At opposite extremes, 3.3% believe routes to be in excellent condition, whilst 4.8% consider routes to be in a very poor condition. Out of the 209 total survey respondents, 22% chose not to answer this question (46 individuals).

Question 4

- 2.7 It was also deemed necessary to assess why routes weren't being utilised in the borough, and question four addressed this issue. Only 47.8% (100 participants) answered this question, with the main reason for not using the routes being "I don't need to", at 22%. This was closely followed by "Physical Barriers" (such as fences and stiles) at 20% and "Dangerous Crossing Points" at 16%.

Question 5

- 2.8 Question 5 was an open question allowing respondents to identify rights of way that they would like to use, but for various reasons cannot. It asked the respondent to identify the current problems, and give ideas for potential improvements. As this was an open question, the responses were wide ranging, and many locations were identified. The most popular recurring destinations were Pennington Country Park, and Three Sisters Country Park. Popular problems with Rights of Way in these areas included blocked access and heavy/speeding traffic. The problem of non-linked bridleways was also identified, and it was suggested that the Borough should link up existing bridleways through putting new ones into operation. The most common solutions suggested were to implement traffic-calming measures, and proactively tackle landowners in order to redress the problem of blocked access.

Section 2 – Using Rights of Way and Other Routes for Leisure

Question 6

- 2.9 Question six identified nine popular leisure activities and asked the respondent to choose which one of these activities they regularly use rights of ways for (the respondent being allowed to choose more than one). The most popular activity was walking (which is in line with the most popular method of utilising Rights of Way identified in Question 2), with 78% of those surveyed using rights of way for this purpose. This was followed by horse riding and dog walking, with 70% of respondents using rights of way for these activities.

Question 7

- 2.10 Question seven sought to identify the most popular means of travel to the countryside for leisure activities. Unsurprisingly the private vehicle was the most popular mode used for countryside access, with 43.1% of those answering this question choosing car/van. This was followed by horseback (with 19.6% of participants opting for this method). No participants chose private coach as a means of travelling to the countryside, and only 1.4% chose public transport as their method of travel. Table 3 identifies all methods of accessing the countryside, and their percentage share.

Table 3 – Percentage share of methods used to access the countryside

Car/Van	43.1%
Horseback	19.6%
On Foot	12.9%
No Answer	11.5%
Bicycle	10.5%
Public Transport	1.4%
Other	1.0%

- 2.11 Other modes given for preferred method of accessing the countryside included horse and trap, and horsebox, which is concordant with the equestrian activities, identified in question 2.

Question 8

- 2.12 In order to identify which areas of the Borough currently have high, or low utilised rights of way, question eight asked participants to identify up to three areas where they use rights of way routes. A high percentage (90%) of respondents (189) answered this question, with **44%** of these stating that **canal towpaths** were their preferred right of way for leisure activity. Following this was the three main country parks in the borough including **Pennington Country Park** chosen by **40%** of survey participants. The least popular places for rights of way leisure were identified as Winstanley and Cleworth Hall. Table 4 shows all options available for selection in Question 8, and their percentage share of responses.

Table 4 – Locations for Rights of Way activity

Canal Towpaths	44%
Pennington Country Park	40%
Haigh Country Park	21%
Three Sisters	20%
Bickershaw	15%
Standish	15%
Amberswood	11%
Standish Lower Ground	11%
Scotsman Flash/Flashes	10%
Atherton Wood	5%
Worthington Lakes	5%
Borsdane Wood	4%
Edge Green Area	4%
Astley Moss	3%
Winstanley	2%
Cleworth Hall	1%

Question 9

- 2.13 Question nine (assessing the physical condition of routes used for leisure); similar to question number three (assessing the physical condition of routes used to access facilities), also had similar results after analysis. Nearly half of respondents (46.9%) believed the physical condition of routes to be average, followed by 19.6% believing routes to be in a good condition. Those believing routes to be excellent stand at 2.4%, whilst those believing routes to be very poor stand at 7.2%.

Question 10

- 2.14 Question ten asked respondents that do not use rights of way for leisure purposes, why they do not. This question had the lowest response, with only 27% (57) of respondents answering. The main problem affecting the usage of rights of way for over half of these people (53%) was physical barriers stopping them – such as stiles and fences. This was followed by routes being in a poor state of repair (35%), and the routes not feeling safe (23%).

Question 11

- 2.15 The priorities for improving rights of way were discussed in question eleven, and respondents were asked to identify their top three priorities for potential improvement. A high number of participants answered this question (97%), with the top priority identified as “Create new routes in the countryside”. Over half of those surveyed (56%) identified this as the top priority. The second most requested improvement was to “Make surfaces better on existing routes” (39%), closely followed at 38% by “Make safe crossing points” (further emphasising the problem of heavy traffic, as identified in question five).
- 2.16 The most popular answer amongst those that chose ‘Other’ was the request for more bridleways, particularly linked ones, or repairs to existing bridleways and horse friendly

routes. The problem of poor signage was also highlighted, with requests for better signposting and way markers.

Question 12

- 2.17 The last question with regards to rights of way was an open question allowing respondents to add any further comments that may not have been included elsewhere in the questionnaire. Again, as it was an open question comments were wide ranging, varying from identifying local areas of concern, reiterating what was said in previous questions, and further improvement ideas. Recurring comments for rights of way improvement was to convert old railway lines to bridle paths, introduce more linked bridle paths and cycle lanes, and to provide more long distance routes in the Borough. Over half of the respondents answered this question (53%).

3 Summary

- 3.1 Results from the questionnaire show that Rights of Way in the borough are used regularly for commuting to work, and leisure activities, with walking and cycling being the most popular methods for utilising routes. The popular methods for accessing the countryside are private vehicle (car/van) and horseback whilst it would seem that public transport and private coach are not favourable modes of transport for countryside access.
- 3.2 The majority of survey participants believe the quality of existing routes to be of average condition, and when asked for their main priorities in improving rights of way, the main priority cited was to make surfaces better. Other problems with routes included blocked access due to landowners, and speeding traffic. Suggested solutions for these problems included proactively tackling landowners causing obstructions, and various traffic calming measures/safer-crossing points.
- 3.3 When respondents do not use routes in the borough, it would seem the main reason is due to respondents not needing to, although physical barriers such as stiles and fences also deter people from using routes.
- 3.4 Priorities cited for improving rights of way in the borough include developing new routes in the countryside, making surfaces better on existing routes, and safer crossing points. When asked for ideas/comments on future development, a number of respondents suggested the conversion of old railway lines, more bridle paths and more linked routes traversing the borough.

11. The Council will be identifying priorities for improving rights of way and other safe routes in the Borough. What are your top 3 priorities for improvements? (Please tick up to 3)

- Create new off-road routes to link to facilities and services in my local area (e.g. shops, schools)
- Create new routes in the countryside
- Make surfaces better on existing routes
- Provide more information about available routes
- Make barriers such as stiles and gates easier to get through
- Make car parking more secure
- Put on more guided walks/events
- Clean and maintain the routes better than at present
- Provide more lighting on key routes
- Provide more sign posts/way markers
- Develop better public transport links to the countryside
- More safe crossing points e.g. across busy roads, rivers, moss land, railway lines
- Make routes safer and more secure
- Other (Please specify) _____

12. If you have any other comments about rights of way or other routes in the Borough, please use the space provided below. For example, you may wish to identify specific routes that you would like to see improved or created. _____

SECTION 3: ABOUT YOU

So that we can ensure we are speaking to a good cross-section of the community, it would help if you could provide some basic details about yourself. This information will be held securely and will only be used for the purposes of this survey.

13. Are you Male Female

14. How old are you?

- Under 16 16-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+

15. What is your postcode? _____

16. Do you have a disability which affects your mobility? Yes No

17. To which of these ethnic groups do you consider you belong?

- White (British, Irish, any other white background)
- Mixed (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, any other mixed background)
- Asian, or Asian British (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, any other Asian background)
- Chinese
- Black or Black British (Caribbean, African, any other black background)
- Any other ethnic group (Please specify) _____

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Would you like to be kept informed of progress on Wigan Council's ROWIP? Yes No

Would you like to be entered into a **FREE PRIZE DRAW TO WIN £50**? Yes No

If you answered yes to either of these questions, please complete your contact details below.

Name _____ Daytime Contact No _____

Address _____ Email _____

Postcode _____

HAVE YOUR SAY ON RIGHTS OF WAY



Do you want the chance to win £50 just by having your say on how you get around the Borough? Fill in this questionnaire and you will be helping to decide how we improve our Borough AND be entered into the FREE PRIZE DRAW.

If you walk, cycle or horse ride in your spare time or to get around the Borough, the chances are you will have used a public right of way. Or, perhaps you would like to visit the countryside more, but don't know where to go or how to get there. Wigan Council is currently preparing its Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). This is your opportunity to identify improvements and new routes to local facilities, services and the countryside.

The questionnaire asks about your use of the rights of way network. In Wigan Borough, this includes 470km of public footpaths (for foot only) and bridleways (for foot, bicycle and horse), in both urban and rural areas. The questionnaire first asks you about how you might use rights of way and other routes for day-to-day walking and cycling journeys in your local area. It then asks you about visiting the countryside for leisure activities.

By completing this short questionnaire, you will help the Council understand residents' priorities.



Closing date: 17th November 2006

Return your completed form (no stamp required) to:

Service Delivery Unit
 FREEPOST (Licence Number NWW7225A)
 Department of Environmental Services
 Wigan Council
 Civic Buildings
 New Market Street
 Wigan
 WN1 1RP

A copy of this questionnaire can be made available in a number of different languages on request. For further information please contact the Service Delivery Unit on 01942 404369

Arabic	هذا الكتيب بإمكانك تعبئته في اللغة العربية
Cantonese	本小册子提供廣東話版本
Farsi	این کتیبه میتواند به زبان فارسی در اختیار شما قرار گیرد
French	Disponible en français sur demande
Gujarati	આ કૃતિ તમારું માંગણાં મુજબ ગુજરાતીમાં પણ ઉપલબ્ધ છે
Urdu	اس کتبچہ اردو میں بھی دستیاب کیا جاسکتا ہے

All information provided will only be used in relation to the ROWIP and will be held securely in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act. The information will not be passed to any 3rd parties without your consent.

SECTION 1: GETTING TO LOCAL FACILITIES & SERVICES

In this section we want to know how rights of way and other routes away from busy roads in your local area help you to reach local facilities and services (e.g. work, shops, schools and healthcare).

1. Do you use footpaths, bridleways or other off-road routes in your local area to get to the following places? (Please tick all that apply)

	Once a day or more	2-3 times a week	At least once a week	At least once a fortnight	Once a month or less	No
To get to work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To get to the shops/local town or village centre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To get to the doctor's/health centre/hospital	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To get to leisure facilities (e.g. swimming pool, sports centre, cinema etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To get to public transport (e.g. rail station or bus stop)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To visit friends/family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (Please specify) _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you ticked "no" for all these destinations, please skip straight to Question 4.

2. How do you use footpaths, bridleways and other off-road paths or routes for these local journeys? (Please tick all that apply)

- Walk Cycle Wheelchair/mobility scooter Other _____ (Please specify)

3. How do you rate the overall physical condition of the routes you use for these local journeys? (Please tick one only)

- Excellent Good Average Poor Very Poor

Now skip straight to Question 5.

4. If you don't use these routes in your local area for getting to places, why not? (Please tick up to 3)

- There are none in my area
- I don't need to – there are safe, direct routes along roads which I can use
- Physical barriers (such as stiles, gates and other obstructions) stop me using routes
- The routes do not feel safe
- Other users cause problems that put me off
- Dangerous crossing points
- Poor state of repair
- Routes aren't clean enough (e.g. too much litter/dog fouling/graffiti)
- I don't like walking or cycling
- It takes too long to get there
- My health/mobility isn't good enough
- It's more convenient to drive
- Other (Please specify) _____

5. Are there any specific local facilities in the Borough you would like to get to safely using rights of way or other off-road routes but currently cannot? Please tell us where you would like these links/improvements to be.

Destination	Desired Improvement
Current Problems/Barriers	

SECTION 2: USING RIGHTS OF WAY AND OTHER ROUTES FOR LEISURE

Rights of way, including footpaths and bridleways plus other routes such as canal towpaths and disused railways are used by many people for leisure activities. In this section, we would like to know if and how you use them in your spare time so we can identify necessary improvements.

6. Do you use footpaths, bridleways or other routes in the countryside or open space in the Borough for any of the following leisure activities? (Please tick the appropriate box for each type of activity)

	Once a day or more	2-3 times a week	At least once a week	At least once a fortnight	Once a month or less	No
Walking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dog Walking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cycling/Mountain Biking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Jogging/Running	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Horse Riding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fishing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Wheelchair/Mobility scooter	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4x4 Driving or Motorcycling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you ticked "no" to all of these activities, please skip straight to Question 10.

7. How do you usually travel to the countryside for leisure activities? (Please tick one only - for your most regular activity)

- Car/Van Private coach Bicycle Horseback
 Public transport Motorbike On foot Other _____ (Please specify)

8. Where in the Borough do you mainly use public rights of way for leisure? (Please tick up to 3)

- Amberswood Scotsman Flash/Flashes Borsdane Wood
 Canal towpaths Standish Lower Ground Worthington Lakes
 Altherton Wood Pennington Country Park Standish
 Three Sisters Haigh Country Park Winstanley
 Cleworth Hall Astley Moss Other _____ (Please specify)
 Edge Green area Bickershaw

9. How do you rate the overall physical condition of the routes you use for leisure? (Please tick one only)

- Excellent Good Average Poor Very Poor

Now skip straight to Question 11.

10. If you don't use rights of way or other routes in the Borough for leisure purposes, why not? (Please tick up to 3)

- I don't know where to go
- I don't have enough time
- It takes too long to get there
- It's too difficult to reach the countryside/open space (e.g. lack of transport)
- My health/mobility isn't good enough
- I'm not interested
- There's not enough car parking
- There's nowhere I want to go in the Borough
- I have young children, so it's not practical
- Physical barriers (such as stiles and gates) stop me using routes
- The routes do not feel safe
- Other users cause problems that put me off
- Routes are in a poor state of repair
- Routes aren't clean enough (e.g. too much litter/dog fouling/graffiti)
- I don't know
- Other (Please specify) _____