

# Progress on Right of Way Improvement Plans 9

## 9.1 Introduction

### Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs) in Greater Manchester

Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) requires Local Authorities to publish Public Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIPs) by November 2007. Statutory guidance on the development of ROWIPs was produced by DEFRA in November 2002.

Each ROWIP will contain details of how the current rights of way network is likely to meet current and future needs, as well as a 10 year plan of future actions to improve the accessibility of the network with regards to different end user groups including pedestrians, cyclists, horse riders, people with disabilities and users of powered vehicles etc. The ROWIPS will also complement the developing Transport Asset Management Plans.

### Links to the GMLTP

Walking and cycling are recognised as key modes of transport for shorter distance journeys and the following objectives in the GMLTP reflect this:

- To support increased levels of activity in the Regional Centre, town and district centres and key employment areas; and to improve their environment, attractiveness and accessibility
- To minimise the environmental damage caused by transport, particularly in terms of air quality, thereby improving the quality of life and health of the population.
- To improve accessibility by ensuring that the county's transport system meets the needs of all sections of the community, promotes social inclusion and widens choice

Maintenance of the existing network is also a key issue and is reflected in the following objective:

- To maintain, improve and make best use of the existing transport infrastructure and to ensure that all schemes offer long term value for money

The ROWIPS can assist in tackling the Shared Priorities of the GMLTP and so help realise GMLTP objectives:

#### Through:

Encourage the use of non-motorised transportation by identifying network improvements that will increase the usability of the network for different trips.

Better integration of the ROW network with the road system offers opportunity for segregated use where appropriate

#### Resulting in:

Management and reduction of congestion

Improvement of air quality

Improved road safety

Segregated uses and hence reduced conflict between modes

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### Through:

improvements to infrastructure to improve levels of accessibility to the ROW network.

Improvements to the network to increase the facilities that are accessible through it improving opportunities for people with limited transport options.

### Resulting in:

Improved safety of all users

Promotes inclusion

Increased quality of life

The GMLTP's Walking Strategy and Cycling Strategy also encourage walking/ cycling and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan will complement these strategies.

The Rights of Way network provides routes which are used both for recreational pursuits and utilitarian purposes eg walking/cycling routes to schools, work, local facilities and public transport. Since such improvements have already been identified and carried out as part of the first GMLTP. The development of ROWIPs will assist in the continuation of this process in GMLTP2.

The completed ROWIPs will also be viewed as an integral part of the LTP process, and measures contained within them will complement the priorities of the 2<sup>nd</sup> LTP.

This Annex contains the common policy principles for Greater Manchester Authorities for the development of their ROWIPs and which were agreed in November 2004 followed by progress reports from the individual authorities in Greater Manchester regarding the preparation of their ROWIPs.

### 9.2 Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan Policy Principles for Greater Manchester Authorities' Rights of Way Improvement Plans

The stages of preparation of a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) will involve:

#### 1. Establishment of guiding principles

Integration of the ROWIP into the LTP will offer new opportunities to maximise the contribution of the Rights of Way (ROW) network to the delivery of transport and wider quality of life issues. The common policy principles for each Greater Manchester authority, were developed to assist them in drafting their subsequent programme of actions, which may then be eligible for LTP funding. There may also be additional required improvements to the network which are not relevant to transport priorities but support other local policies, and which may be funded from other sources. Further guiding principles may be required for this type of work.

#### 2. Assessment of ROW network and future needs

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This stage involves an assessment of the extent to which the ROW network meets the current and likely future needs of users; the condition of the network and Definitive Map and Statement, opportunities provided by ROW, and the accessibility of the network. It will be informed, amongst other things, by the LTP 'segment analysis' of local travel patterns and future demand.

### 3. Statement of Action

This will be based on the assessment, and will set out a 10-year plan of action for the management and improvement of the ROW network. This will, in practice, follow an indicative work programme included in the 2005 GMLTP.

#### LTP Objectives for ROW improvements

It is proposed that the following guiding principles will guide the approach of all Greater Manchester authorities in improving the rights of way networks. The guiding principles will inform the future assessments of ROW networks and future needs and programmes. They have also provided guidance to Districts in drafting their LTP2 work programmes.

	Objective for ROW improvements	Examples of practical implication for assessment and work programmes
1	To improve the accessibility, environment, attractiveness and safety of the regional centre, town and district centres and employment areas	Creation and improvement of pedestrian and cycle routes between town and district centres and local residential areas
2	To improve road and community safety	Lighting improvements along routes well used at night-time  Design of routes to minimise crime  Alleygating where this does not sever strategic routes
3	To minimise environmental damage caused by transport, thereby improving the quality of life and health of the population	Use of high quality, sympathetic and recycled materials where possible.  Maximise proportion of trips by 'active' modes (see also 4)
4	To increase the proportion of trips by non-car modes	Creation of pedestrian and cycle routes, particularly where there is a demand which results in short trips (for example to schools), or to public transport stops.

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	Objective for ROW improvements	Examples of practical implication for assessment and work programmes
		Ensuring new development does not sever important routes of way and can be served by them
5	To improve accessibility by ensuring the ROW network meets the needs of all sections of the community and the rural economy, promotes social inclusion and widens choice	Making routes safe and accessible for people with mobility problems and vulnerable users
6	To improve links with the rest of the country	Ensuring ROW support the National Cycle Network and other long distance paths, and develop links to them, where this meets an identified travel need.
7	To maintain, improve and make best use of existing ROW, and ensure all schemes offer long-term value for money	Prioritise upgrading of existing ROW where these meet a locally identified travel need (for example in conjunction with a school or workplace travel plan)
8	To assist in improving health, the local economy and recreational opportunities	Links from residential areas to the countryside

### 9.3 Rights of Way Improvement Plans in Greater Manchester - Progress Reports

#### 9.3.1 Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council

##### Introduction

Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council is currently working towards the production of a Rights of Way Improvement Plan in accordance with the statutory obligations contained within Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The production of the plan is being progressed with regard to the guidance provided by DEFRA in 2002.

##### Aims and objectives

The draft objectives for Rights of Way Improvements, which were previously agreed upon by all the GMADE authorities, will act as steering principles in the production of our plan.

	Objective for RoW Improvements	Examples of practical implication for assessment and work programmes
1	To improve the accessibility, environment, attractiveness and safety of the regional centre, town and district centres and employment areas	Creation and upgrading of pedestrian and cycle routes between town and district centres and local residential areas
2	To improve road and community safety	Lighting improvements along routes well used at night-time  Design of routes to minimise crime
3	To minimise environmental damage caused by transport, thereby improving the quality of life and health of the population	Use of high quality, sympathetic and recycled materials where possible.  Maximise proportion of trips by 'active' modes  (see also 4)
4	To increase the proportion of trips by non car modes	Creation of pedestrian and cycle routes, particularly where there is a demand in short trips (for example to schools), or to public transport stops.

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Objective for RoW Improvements	Examples of practical implication for assessment and work programmes
	Ensuring new development does not sever important rights of way and can be served by them.
5 To improve accessibility by ensuring the RoW network meets the needs of all sections of the community and the rural economy, promotes social inclusion and widens choice	Making routes safe and accessible for disabled people and vulnerable users.
6 To improve links with the rest of the country	Ensuring RoW support the National Cycle Network and other long distance paths, and develop links to them, where this meets an identified travel need.  Review provision of bridleways and improve links to the wider strategic network
7 To maintain, improve and make best use of existing RoW, and ensure all schemes offer long term value for money	Review the existing Rights of Way network and propose enhancements where there is a locally identified (for example in conjunction with a school or workplace travel plan)
8 To assist in improving health, the local economy and recreational opportunities	Work in conjunction with outside bodies such as regional health authority to promote links from residential areas to the countryside.

### Timescales

Procedures have been put in place which will enable us to produce the Plan by the target deadline of November 2007. It is anticipated that the Plan will be produced in advance of this date. The following timetable of activities has been identified.

Preparation and information gathering	November 2005
Assessment and analysis	Nov 2005 to April 2006
Final evaluation and statement of action	April 2006 to July 2006
Publication and consultation on the draft plan	July 2006 to Dec 2006
Publication of the final plan	March 2007

### Current position

The scale of the responses we have had has led us to put the timescales of each of the above elements of the plan back by two months. We are still confident that the final plan will be published well in advance of the November 2007 deadline.

Following on from the success of the widespread consultation with the public of Bolton, we have consulted with a wide variety of groups who represent people with special requirements. 16 groups representing horse riders, cyclists, carriage drivers, walking groups etc have been consulted. Additionally 13 groups which represent people with sight/mobility or other physical ability problems have been consulted. We have received a good response from these groups and have taken the opportunity to discuss specific issues in more detail.

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Recent meetings with Officer's who attend the West Pennine Moors Access Group have resulted in the formulation of the West Pennine Moors Draft Bridleway Strategy, which it is envisaged will be incorporated into our plan. This has been sent to our Local Access Forum for consideration. Further documents relating to the consultation will also be sent in the near future.

### 9.3.2 Bury Metropolitan Borough Council

#### Introduction

The authority is pursuing the publication of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan within the deadline set by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 of November 2007 and the guidelines issued by DEFRA in November 2002.

#### Current position

Background assessments for the Plan have begun and a dedicated member of staff has been nominated to produce the document. Adjoining authorities have been incorporated in the process and the Local Access Forum and user groups are regularly briefed on progress. A Public Rights of Way Liaison Group, which meets on a quarterly basis, was established some time ago to advise the Authority on issues of concern.

#### Goals and Objectives

The Plan will include details and outcomes of extensive consultation with the public and interested parties. In addition, we have begun a full survey of our network to establish a detailed database of its existing condition upon which improvements can be planned. The Authority is to undertake Inventory collection of the basic network infrastructure data, condition appraisal, and valuation to form goals, objectives and policies for the plan.

The completed Plan will contain asset valuation, a detailed programme of works including timetables and estimated costs together with proposals to extend the network to achieve the Councils local priorities. It will review and establish service level objectives, community ambitions and optimise plans to achieve the objectives by utilising the most cost-effective methods.

#### Condition and Targets

Current PI results show that the Rights of Way Network is consistently improving. Local user groups have expressed their approval of the Authority's actions to date. Additional funding and schemes are to be designed to ensure that PI 178 reaches the top quartile by 2010 and thereafter maintained to that as a minimum standard. Target progress will be monitored regularly. Further investigation and redirected funding will be considered if step targets are not achieved.

#### Conclusion

The authority recognises that the whole of the Rights of Way network, Definitive and Non Definitive, is both a significant part of the Borough's heritage and a major recreational resource that can be expanded and consolidated to meet today's leisure and health needs. It offers an opportunity for people to get away from highways shared with increasing volumes and speeds

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of vehicular traffic and on some journeys can allow people to leave their motor vehicles at home and travel on foot or cycle. It is intended that Bury's Rights of Way Improvement Plan will maximise these opportunities for all sections of the community.

### 9.3.3 Manchester City Council

#### Introduction

Manchester City Council has begun the process of drawing up its Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) based upon the DEFRA 'Rights of Way Improvement Plans Statutory Guidance to Local Highway Authorities in England' published in November 2002 and the CROW Act 2000.

The format and content of the report will be broadly in keeping with the DEFRA Statutory Guidance. It is intended that the report be presented in a clear, user-friendly format that is potentially convertible to web format.

The Manchester RoWIP will become an integral part of the transport plan for Manchester and will support Manchester City Council's corporate aims and objectives and will be informed by the objectives outlined in the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan. The focus of the Manchester RoWIP will be on providing safe and desirable off-highway routes to allow the residents of Manchester to access local facilities.

#### Current Position

##### *Existing Network*

Manchester carries out a full annual survey of all its definitive Rights of Way for the purposes of establishing BVPI 178. The Indicator has improved year on year and it is envisaged that a figure in excess of 95% should be achievable by 2010 given modest amounts of capital investment. This will involve not only maintenance works but also updating of the Definitive Map.

Within the last two years the BVPI surveys have been extended to identify dangerous defects and the scope for general improvement of routes over and above the basic BVPI standard. It is proposed to supplement this information with a full accessibility audit to identify potential for upgrading routes to serve people with disabilities. When this is complete it will be possible to establish an action plan based on rational priorities.

##### *Manchester RoWIP - draft Stage One RoWIP*

Following approval at the April 2005 Local Access Forum (LAF), the draft 'Stage 1' RoWIP is now being used as the basis for the production of the full RoWIP by 2007.

The content of the 'Stage 1' RoWIP is viewed as a statement of intent, which sets the scene for the Manchester RoWIP. The Stage 1 document explains why Manchester needs a RoWIP; sets out the information currently available at a national and local level; and gives an indication of what the gaps in provision might be and the type of actions which could be taken to fill them.

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### *Consultation exercise*

The first survey, which includes members of the Manchester Citizens Panel, regarding the development of the RoWIP in Manchester has been completed. The main outcome of this survey was to obtain an indication of the issues that concern the people of Manchester; thus allowing more detailed, informed local consultation at a later stage.

### **Work Programme**

Work has now begun on the preparation of Stage 2 of the RoWIP. The ongoing programme of work includes:

- Formation of officer focus group to assist and inform the development process
- Consultation with owners and other groups e.g. adjacent authorities, LAF, user groups, disabled people, ward co-ordination groups and local residents groups
- Full survey of all the Rights of Way, permissive routes or desire lines, using criteria additional to that required by BVPI 178, including the AGMA COPECAT process
- Investigation into land ownership and responsibilities e.g. canal towpaths and river banks, access land
- Development of design standards for the improvement of footpaths and other features e.g. gates, signposts, including access for the disabled
- Identification of key destinations and key routes – both existing and aspirational
- Identification of area based pilot schemes
- Feasibility study to assess the most efficient method of updating the Definitive Map and converting it to a GIS based format.

On completing the assessment as above, the authority will be in a position to make an informed evaluation of the matters set out in S60 (2) of the CROW Act. This appraisal will form the basis of the Statement of Action. The assessment will as a minimum:

- Describe the existing and future needs of different classes of users and the accessibility to visually impaired or mobility impaired people
- Identify areas where provision for one or more class of user is deficient or likely to be deficient and at what scale
- Specify other shortcomings
- Detail small scale or 'quick-win' improvements which can be implemented at an early stage
- Outline, with budget costs, larger or more complex issues.

### **9.3.4 Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council**

#### **Introduction**

The Authority is pursuing the publication of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan within the statutory deadline set by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 of November 2007 and the guidance issued by DEFRA in November 2002.

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### Current Position

A provisional timeline for Oldham MBC to meet the deadline for the publication of the plan is outlined in the table below.

Timetable established for ROWIP	September 2005
Assessment of network	Summer 2006
Assessment of needs and demands	Summer 2006
Assessment of adequacy of network to meet the needs	Summer 2006
Preparation of Statement of Action	September 2006
Consultation with bodies listed in CROW (Section 61)	November 2006
Production of draft ROWIP	February 2007
Consultation with the public	June 2007
Publication of Final ROWIP	November 2007

A steering/workgroup is in place to implement the above timetable including officers from the following departments:-

- Strategic Planning (Planning Officer for PPG 17 open spaces/recreation)
- Countryside Service (Group Manager Parks and Open Spaces and Head of the Countryside Service)
- Traffic and Transportation (Section Manager and Rights of Way Officer)

Adjoining neighbouring authorities are to be part of the process, and the Local Access Forums will be kept informed of progress as statutory consultees on a regular basis.

### Goals and Objectives

The planning stage is firstly to consider the renaming of the document, which will become known as a "Countryside Access Plan". The reason for this is to incorporate at an early stage the many "permissive paths" on Council owned land in particular those on former landfill sites. From this it is anticipated the following four activities will be developed:

- filling the gaps
- better land management
- tidying up the definitive map
- a better countryside environment

These activities will be refined in response to the consultation feedback. Corresponding guiding principles have been provisionally established and are shown in Appendix 1 at the end of this statement.

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### Conditions and Targets

Current performance indicator results for “ease of use” (BV 178) show that the rights of way network is in need of improvements to its signposting

As a result, financial commitments have been made within LTP2 for this task which is due to be completed by the end of 2006. All future initiatives/ schemes are to be designed to ensure that incremental improvements in performance are maintained. Other monitoring and reviews are to be considered to take better account of:

- higher rights usage (e.g. BOAT, RUPPS and Restricted Byways)
- accessibility for the less able
- definitive map work
- the quality of promoted routes

### Conclusion

Oldham MBC recognises that the whole of the Rights of Way network including definitive and permissive routes is both a means of making essential journeys more conveniently and a recreational resource that can be improved to meet today's leisure and health needs. It offers a choice for people to get away from highways shared with an increasing volume of vehicular traffic and on some journeys provides an opportunity for people to leave their cars and travel on foot or cycle.

### APPENDIX 1

“Countryside access provision should be physically accessible to the widest possible range of people. Management and improvement of the existing Oldham rights of way network should aim to increase that accessibility, while new countryside access provision should generally be planned to avoid imposing restrictions. Where an existing path may not be fully accessible to those with limited mobility due to limits imposed by external constraints, such route limitations should be effectively communicated to users”.

“Countryside access provision should be safe for users. Where significant potential conflict with motor traffic or railways can be demonstrated, then measures to reduce risk will be considered. Where rights of way are subsumed within urban development, then planners will be encouraged to ensure that path design is open and unthreatening. Safety-critical path infrastructure will be regularly inspected”.

“New development should not damage countryside access provision, either directly or indirectly. New settlements should be integrated into the rights of way network and improved provision made for the increased population. Where appropriate, development should contribute to the provision of new links and/or improvement of the existing rights of way network”.

“Up to date, accurate, comprehensive and integrated access information should be made available to all users of countryside access provision”.

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“Management and improvement of countryside access should consider the needs of land management, conservation, heritage and concern about rural crime”.

“The Definitive Map and Statement should be an accurate, comprehensive, up-to-date and accessible record of the public rights of way network in Oldham. Proposals for legal changes to the network should be promptly resolved and cost-effective”.

“The countryside access experience in Oldham should be straightforward, enjoyable and inspiring”.

### 9.3.5 Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council

#### Introduction

The Council is pursuing the publication of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) within the deadline of November 2007 set by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the guidelines issued by DEFRA in November 2002. The Borough has the largest network of PROW (556km) and the largest area of access land (721 hectares) in the county, including two national trails.

#### Current position

Background assessments for the Plan are in progress and a dedicated member of staff has been specifically appointed to produce the document and to deal with CROW Act implementation. The Local Access Forum and the Local User Group have been briefed and are being consulted at key stages. The various Services within the Council have been consulted and their responses are currently being incorporated into the draft ROWIP.

#### Goals and Objectives

The emerging Plan includes details and outcomes of consultation with the public and interested parties. Further more wide-ranging consultation is to take place as the plan is further developed. In addition a full survey of the rights of way network in Rochdale has been completed to establish a detailed database of its existing condition upon which improvements can be planned. The Authority has undertaken an Inventory collection of the basic network infrastructure data, condition appraisal, and valuation to form strategic goals, objectives and policies for the plan.

The completed Plan will contain:

- an asset management plan
- a detailed programme of works including timetables and estimated costs
- proposals to extend the network to achieve the Councils local priorities
- a review and establishment of service level objectives and community ambitions
- optimal plans to achieve the objectives, by utilising the most cost effective methods

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### Condition and Targets

Current Performance Indicator results for BVPI 178 show that the Rights of Way Network is consistently improving as shown in the table below.

Financial Year	Pass rate
2001/2	5%
2002/3	12%
2003/4	30%
2004/5	42%

Local user groups have expressed their support for the Council's endeavours to reduce the poor situation that existed in 2001/2.

Progress will be continuously reviewed and further remedial measures will be considered if step targets are not achieved

### Conclusion

The Council recognises that the whole of the Rights of Way network, Definitive and Non Definitive and Access Land, is both a significant part of the Borough's heritage and a major recreational resource that can be expanded and consolidated to meet today's leisure and health needs. It offers an opportunity for people to get away from highways shared with increasing volumes and speeds of vehicular traffic and on some journeys can allow people to leave their vehicles at home and travel on foot or cycle.

It is intended that Rochdale's Rights of Way Improvement Plan will maximise these opportunities for all sections of the community.

### 9.3.6 Salford City Council

#### Introduction

The authority aims to produce a Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) by November 2007 as set out in the statutory obligations laid out in Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and subsequent guidance published by DEFRA (2002).

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### Current Position

Review of the Definitive Maps on going and it is intended that the latest review will be published within the next 2-3 years. All footpaths and bridleways are now shown on a 'ggp layer' on a computer based geographical information system

During September and October of 2003, two temporary Rights of Way Surveyors were employed to walk and assess all routes and related infrastructure for ease of use, signing, suggested improvements, re-designation, and compliance with Statement and map. From this a programme of works was produced. Maintenance of the network is being addressed through the Transport Asset Management Plan.

A desk based assessment of all documents and strategies relating to Public Rights of Ways and other paths has been prepared. This, in addition to meetings with all internal stakeholders, has been used to produce a schedule of suggested improvements.

A ROWIP questionnaire has been designed and is currently being printed – this will be sent to all public buildings. An online copy of the questionnaire went live on Salford Council's website on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2005.

A Stage One Draft ROWIP has been written and reported to the Local Access Forum.

A 'quick win' project consisting of surface and access control improvements has been implemented on the Tyldesley Loopline in the Ellenbrook area of Salford.

A ten year programme of improvements to the Rights of Way has been drafted and will be submitted to the city council for approval in April 2006

### Next Steps

By November 2007, Salford Council aims to have a completed ROWIP based on extensive consultation within the City, to maximise the use of both definitive and non-definitive Public Rights of Ways. In particular, the plan will identify specific improvements for people with mobility problems, visual impairments and also horse riders and cyclists. The final plan will contain information on specific improvements to footpaths with detailed cost estimates and timetables for implementation.

Overall it is hoped that more short local journeys will be made on footpaths with a corresponding decrease in journeys made by car. Additionally the plan will help accommodate an increase in the use of the network for leisure purposes, thereby improving the health and well-being of residents and visitors to the City.

### 9.3.7 Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council

#### Introduction

Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council aims to produce a Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) by November 2007 as per the statutory obligations laid out in Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and subsequent guidance published by DEFRA (2002).

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The Council recognises the importance of the network of rights of way and has been implementing a programme of improvements to provide access to railway stations, schools and district centres over the last few years.

### Current Position

A review of the Definitive Map is ongoing and it is intended that the latest review of the Map and Statement will be published within the next 2-3 years. Alongside BVPI 178 assessments the Rights of Way team has started work on a survey of all routes and related infrastructure on the definitive map, this should be completed by 2010. This date is related to the completion of the work being undertaken by the 'Lost Ways Project', work within the old Derbyshire boundaries will finish in 2010. Maintenance of the network is being addressed through the Transport Asset Management Plan.

There is also research being done into the current network in all its different forms and its relation to current sites of interest and amenities and possible future developments, current and developing plans and strategies and the desires of the users expressed in previous communications. This information will be combined with the results of the initial consultation process, which is currently being planned and will take place in the next few months, to help formulate the assessment of the current network and the future needs of the network..

### Goals and Objectives

The strategic priorities will be guided by the shared priorities and objectives of the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan, and other Council policies. These priorities will have particular regard to social inclusion and the promotion of modal shift from car usage to walking, and other uses of the Rights of Way network, in urban areas, as well as links to the conurbation from rural areas. There are continuing developments of the recreational network, e.g. the development of the Trans-Pennine Trail, Marple Multi-User Route and the Fred Perry Way. These developments are supported by the relevant policies in the Unitary Development Plan, which will be carried forward to the Local Development Framework.

The completed plan will be informed by consultation with the public and stakeholder organisations, as well as analysis of local travel patterns (contained in the LTP Segment Analysis) in order to determine priorities for investment. Whole life costing principles will be used to ensure that best value is achieved from improvements to the network identified within the completed plan.

In addition the plan will identify strategic access points for people with visual and mobility impairments, continuing the work already being undertaken to meet the obligations of the Disability Discrimination Act.

In developing and enhancing the network, the Council is mindful of its duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act and will continue to work within the Safer Stockport Partnership to address issues of crime and anti-social behaviour on the network.

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The Council has been proactive in seeking development and enhancement of the network through negotiations with developers and the opportunities offered by major developments, e.g. the SEMMMS Relief Road Scheme and the developments of Metrolink and will continue to use such opportunities as they arise.

### Work Programme

The proposed stages of the work programme for the production of the ROWIP are:

- Paper based research of the ROW network
- Initial consultation on user's needs and desires including stakeholder involvement, through the Walking Forum, Cycle User Group, Disability Forum, regular meetings with the Equestrian interests and the Local Access Forum and seeking to develop these as the Improvement Plan develops as well as develop connections with other user groups as they come to light.
- Creation of assessment of Network
- Creation of draft statement of action with input from LAF and other Major Stakeholders
- Creation of Draft plan and consultation

The timetable for the work is:

2005 – Spring 2006	Initial Consultation Programme and paper based research
Summer 2006 – Autumn 2006	Formal Consultation about the scope and objectives of the plan
Winter 2006	Place on deposit
Summer 2007	Adopted Plan

### 9.3.8 Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

#### Introduction

Work is ongoing within Tameside MBC to meet the deadlines for publication of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan set by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and in guidelines from DEFRA of November 2002. The aim is to have the final plan published by November 2007.

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### Current Position

A condition survey of the full Rights of Way Network has been carried out, and remedial works to improve ease of access is ongoing. Additional survey work, concentrating on specific accessibility issues is being undertaken. A desk based assessment of the network using the condition survey, Definitive Map and Statement, and including the update of GIS rights of way records is underway.

Tameside's Rights of Way Forum is kept informed of progress on any rights of way issues in meetings three or four times a year and also provides the Authority with valuable feedback from users.

### Goals and Objectives

The completed Plan will include details of extensive consultation with current and prospective users of the rights of way network, including under-represented sections of the community. The proposed measures to be implemented in response to this consultation will be included within the plan, including timetables for and estimated costs of works. In addition to measures directed at the current network, the completed plan may include proposals to extend the current network to improve connections and accessibility for all.

The plan will incorporate results of consultation undertaken in connection with the *safe routes to school* programme, with the aim of improving identified pedestrian and cycle routes to schools, and the linkage of these routes to the wider network.

### Conditions and Targets

Implementation of the plan will include monitoring to ensure stated targets are achieved.

The BV178 figures have shown a continuous improvement to in excess of 88% in 2004/5 with a target for 2005/6 of 92%. Past results place Tameside within the upper quartile. Future targets are set to maintain this year on year improvement.

### Conclusion

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan will also link to the aims expressed in the Tameside Community Strategy, which was itself developed from wide consultation with the community, regarding improved health and wellbeing within the Borough, and maximise the potential for people to leave their vehicles at home and use the Rights of Way network to travel by foot or bicycle.

### 9.3.9 Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council

#### Background

Trafford MBC aims to meet the deadline for publication of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan set by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and in guidelines from DEFRA of November 2002. The aim is to have the final plan published by November 2007.

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### Current Position

A condition survey of the full Rights of Way Network has been carried out, and an initial programme of remedial works is being drawn up. It is intended that additional survey work, concentrating on specific accessibility issues will also be incorporated in the plan.

Adjoining authorities have been incorporated in the creation of a joint Local Access Forum.

The Plan will include details and outcomes of extensive consultation with the public and interested parties. In addition a full survey in 2004/2005 and a 25km survey in 2005/2006 was undertaken of the authority's network to establish a detailed database of its existing condition upon which improvements can be planned. The Authority is to undertake inventory collection of the basic network infrastructure data, condition appraisal, and valuation to form strategic goals, objectives and policies for the plan.

### Goals and Objectives

The completed Plan will contain asset valuation, a detailed programme of works including timetables and estimated costs together with proposals to extend the network to achieve the Councils local priorities. It will review and establish service level objectives, community ambitions and optimise plans to achieve the objectives by utilising the most cost-effective methods.

The completed Plan will include details of consultation with current and prospective users of the rights of way network. The proposed measures to be implemented in response to this consultation will be included within the plan, including details of timetables and estimated cost of works. In addition to measures directed at the current network, the completed plan may include proposals to extend the current network to improve connections and accessibility to all.

The plan will incorporate results of consultation undertaken in connection with the *safer routes to school* programme, with the aim of improving identified pedestrian and cycle routes to schools, and the linkage of these routes to the wider network.

### Condition and Targets

Additional funding and schemes are to be designed to ensure that BVPI 178 reaches the top quartile by 2010 and thereafter maintained to that as a minimum standard. Target progress will be monitored regularly to ensure that targets are achieved. Further investigation and redirected funding will be considered if step targets are not achieved.

### Conclusion

The authority recognises that the whole of the Rights of Way network, Definitive and Non Definitive, is both a significant part of the Borough's heritage and a major recreational resource that can be expanded and consolidated to meet today's leisure and health needs. It offers an opportunity for people to get away from highways shared with increasing volumes and speeds of vehicular traffic and on some journeys can allow people to leave their motor vehicles at home and travel on foot or cycle.

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It is intended that Trafford's Rights of Way Improvement Plan will maximise these opportunities for all sections of the community.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan will also link to the aims expressed in the Trafford Community Strategy, and the Trafford Local Strategic Partnership – Transport Group. The Community Strategy was itself developed from wide consultation with the community, regarding improved health and wellbeing within the Borough, and intends to maximise the potential for people to leave their vehicles at home and utilise the network to travel by foot or bicycle.

### 9.3.10 Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council

#### Introduction

Wigan Council propose to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) covering all of their area before November 2007 as required by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and subsequent Statutory Guidance in November 2002 from the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

#### Current Position

Wigan was one of the first Authorities to produce a Milestones Statement (MS) and we have now produced our third and most comprehensive review to take account of all the changes and requirements brought about by new legislation, statutory duties and expectations of users of Rights of Way. Our MS is a strategic document approved by the Council which sets out seven main aims and objectives. Aim six deals with the duty on the Highway Authority to publish a ROWIP covering all our area.

The Council has set up a new group known as the Highways User Group (HUG) which comprises members from all the various user groups, land owners and others interested in rights of ways, together with Councillors and officers from the Council. The HUG was consulted on our MS and gave it a very warm welcome. This group together with the Local Access Forum will form part of the broad range of consultation we will undertake, and they will input into the ROWIP and provide advice to the Council on how to improve public access to land for open-air recreation and for the enjoyment of the area.

#### Aims and Objectives

The local rights of way network is a significant part of our heritage and a major recreational resource. It enables people to get away from roads used mainly by motor vehicles and enjoy the beauty and tranquillity of large parts of the countryside to which they would not otherwise have access. The Rights of Way network is becoming more important as increases in the volume and speed of traffic are turning many once quiet country roads into unpleasant and sometimes dangerous places for walkers, cyclists and equestrians. Our MS sets out comprehensively the seven aims and objectives we have set ourselves in respect of the public rights of way network. We have completed a survey of all rights of way together with the furniture, restrictions and the condition including taking photographs. This has been recorded in our rights of way management system, which is an IT based mapping and database programme

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designed specifically for rights of way. This together with our MS has enabled us to identify the action needed for securing an improved network of local rights of way to meet the needs of each type of user. Local rights of way also provide a convenient means of travelling particularly for short journeys, in both rural and urban areas and form part of the safe routes to school initiative. They are important in the daily lives of many people who use them for fresh air and exercise on bicycle, foot or horse, to walk the dog, to improve their fitness, or to visit local shops and other facilities.

As the local highway authority we will consider the needs and circumstances of people with a range of expectations, interests and levels of ability, taking account of both local people and visitors to the area. The assessment will identify what is needed to meet the present and likely future needs of the public and set time scales. The ROWIP is not about rights of way in isolation, it is intended to deliver an integrated network of routes in and between town and country. The ROWIP, in conjunction with our MS, will be the prime means by which we identify the changes to be made, in respect of the management and improvements, to our 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.

### **Action**

Our BVPI 178 result puts us in the top quartile of the Greater Manchester Authorities and we act as Lead Authority on public rights of way for all the Greater Manchester Authorities, representing them at the National Group. The user groups at the HUG meeting have expressed their general approval with the Wigan rights of way section and the progress we have made. With the mix of the group being so varied we are able to get a better overall view and understanding of the needs of the different users.

Further funding for rights of way has been approved and will be available for this financial year. This will enable the aims and objectives identified in the MS to be planned, programmed and monitored. We will be able to have a more proactive approach and expand the work we do with our partners to provide a wider range of services to the users. The support of the department and recognition of the role of rights of way together with the additional funding will enable inroads to be made on problems that have been with us for some time. Work between sections in the department and other departments in the Council will enable a joined up, co-ordinated approach where resources can be pooled to meet the wider needs of the public. Our ROWIP will maximise all these benefits, provide opportunities for all sections of the community and look to provide the services they say they need for public rights of way.

## 9 Progress on Right of Way Improvement Plans