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**Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council  
Rights of Way Improvement Plan  
2008 - 2017**



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## Executive Summary

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council has the responsibility to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. As part of the development of the document, the following has been carried out:

- Surveying a proportion of the Public Rights of Way network;
- An assessment of the extent to which local Rights of Way meet the present and likely future needs of the public;
- Assessment of the opportunities provided by local Rights of Way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and enjoyment of the area;
- Assessment of the accessibility of local Rights of Way to blind or partially sighted persons, and others with mobility problems;
- Review of relevant literature and policy documents;
- A public consultation exercise, involving a range of council officers, public bodies, landowners, user groups, Local Access Forums, Parish Councils and interested individuals; and
- Production of the final RoWIP.

In order to ensure that the RoWIP is consistent with local and national policy documents, a range of policies were reviewed, including the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan, with a vision for Oldham's RoWIP being created in response to the gathered information.

Oldham's Vision for the plan is:

**'To have an accessible Rights of Way network which helps improve the borough's image and supports the local economy. This in turn will help promote tourism, improve the quality of life for those who live, work and play in the region, and provide for a sustainable community. This will be carried out within the context of being a member authority of the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities and part of the Peak Park.'**

Using consultation and surveying assessments carried out in the initial stages of the process, along with the identified vision, a Statement of Action was developed. The Statement of Action is a plan of works to be completed, which serves to shape the direction of the RoWIP by identifying a range of objectives. Each objective has a number of supporting tasks, and within these tasks a range of actions. The delivery of the supporting tasks has been made on the basis of projections of current levels of expenditure

Oldham's RoWIP objectives are:

- Objective 1: Ensure that the existing Public Rights of Way network is open and available for use
- Objective 2: Connected, safe and accessible routes for all users
- Objective 3: Provide an up to date and widely available paper and digital Definitive Map and Statement
- Objective 4: Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network
- Objective 5: Encourage greater involvement in managing local Rights of Way

The plan is intended to provide Oldham's overall Rights of Way strategy for the period 2008-2017, and contains the level of detail recommended by DEFRA. The government's decision not to ring-fence any additional funding for implementation has been expanded upon by further guidance that authorities be aspirational and ambitious in developing the plans, to take account of local ownership and to be proactive and dynamic.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 provides for the Secretary of State to make regulations covering the reporting of performance on Rights of Way functions. These regulations may affect the way the RoWIP is monitored and reported. As an interim measure at the beginning of each financial year, following consultation with Local Access Forums, we will publish an annual progress report.

## **Glossary of Terms**

Access Land - A specific area of land where a new right of access on foot applies, this is often referred to as a right to roam. These areas were designated under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

BVPI 178 (Best Value Performance Indicator) - A national indicator which is used to monitor the ease of use of Public Rights of Way.

CLA - Country Landowner and Business Association, representing the interests of those responsible for land, property and business throughout England and Wales.

Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 – Extends the public's ability to enjoy the countryside whilst also providing safeguards for landowners and occupiers.

Definitive Map and Statement - The legal record of Public Rights of Way, showing their position and status.

Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2005 - Builds on and extends earlier disability discrimination legislation, principally the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The Act makes it unlawful to discriminate against people in respect of their disabilities in relation to employment, the provision of goods and services, education and transport.

DEFRA - Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Discovering Lost Ways - A Natural England project to research Rights of Way not currently shown on the Definitive Map. The aim of the project is to undertake research into Rights of Way missing from the Definitive Map, translated into routes on the ground.

Geographical Information Systems (GIS) – A computerised mapping system.

Local Access Forum (LAF) - This is a statutory body established under the CRoW Act to provide strategic advice on matters connected to outdoor recreation and access.

Local Transport Plan (LTP) - These are strategic documents setting out proposals for managing transport planning. The second round of plans (LTP2) covers the period 2006 -11.

National Farmers Union (NFU) - Represents farmers and growers in England and Wales.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2005 (NERC) - The Act creates a new integrated agency (Natural England) to act as champion for the



natural environment, and formally establish a Commission for Rural Communities, intended to be a national rural adviser, advocate and watchdog to ensure that Government policies are making a difference on the ground in tackling rural disadvantage.

Permissive Path - A path which a landowner has given permission for the public to use. These paths are also sometimes referred to as Concessionary paths.

Peak District National Park Authority (PDNPA) - A public body consisting of members and officers, responsible for setting policies and priorities, ensuring resources are used effectively.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) - An environmental report which shows the impact of proposals within the LTP2 process.

Sustrans – A charity which works on practical projects to help reduce motor traffic, including advising on provision of the National Cycle Network and Safe Routes to Schools.

User Groups - National and local groups representing all the different types of users, examples of which include: Ramblers Association (RA), Peak and Northern Footpaths Society (PNFS), British Horse Society (BHS), Cycle Touring Club (CTC), Sustrans, the Trail Riders Fellowship (TRF).

## Public Rights of Way

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are routes which form part of the highway network, for which the Council is responsible for maintaining. There are different types of PRoW, providing access to different sets of use types, including public footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic (BOATs).

Footpaths - Providing access only to those on foot.

Bridleways- Providing access for those on foot, horse riders, and bicycles (who must give way to those on foot or horseback).

Restricted byways - Carriageways over which the Right of Way is for all types of traffic except mechanically propelled vehicles. Currently most of these are former Roads Used as Public Paths (RUPPs) re-designated by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000.

BOATs - Carriageways over which the Right of Way is on foot, horseback, and for all vehicular traffic (including mechanically propelled vehicles).

## Other types of Public Rights of Way

**Cycleway** - A Right of Way for pedal cycles, and for those on foot, unless the route has segregate cyclist/pedestrian tracks.

**Undefined Public Paths** - routes which are public but are not defined on the Definitive Map

**Open Access Land** - Rights for the public to walk freely on mapped areas of mountain, moor, heath, down and registered land without the need to travel only on marked paths came into effect across England on 31 October 2005. Large areas of Open Access land are available within Oldham.

**Permissive Land** - A range of permissive routes are available to those using Oldham's countryside. Rather than being dedicated public rights of access, permission is given by the landowner, for walking, cycling or riding, as specified and agreed for each section of land.

**Towpaths** – Routes alongside the canals providing access to pedestrians.

**Disused railways** - Some lengths of disused railways have been converted for use as combined bridleways and cycleways, offering traffic and fume-free routes for all users.

**Unclassified Country Road** - Generally accepted as a rural public road for all traffic. They are not classified as A, B or C roads.

**Non-Classified Highway (NCH)** - a minor public highway. Some are unsurfaced and commonly referred to as "green lanes".

**Green Lane** - A generic descriptive term for an unsurfaced track, usually bounded by hedges or walls/fences. Such a route may or may not be a public highway.

**Claimed Path** - A path that may be public but which is as yet unproven. Such a route would normally result from claim forms showing public use for in excess of 20 years being submitted to the Council.

**White Road**: A route between boundaries shown on Ordnance Survey mapping as uncoloured, which may or may not be a public highway.

# 1 Introduction

What is a Rights of Way Improvement Plan?

*To assess “the opportunities provided by local Rights of Way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the authority’s area”  
(CRoW Act 2000)*

Each highway authority in England and Wales is required to publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) for their area, in line with The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000.

RoWIPs are intended to be the prime means by which local highway authorities will identify the changes to be made to their local Rights of Way network, in respect of management and improvements, in order to meet the Government’s aim of better provision for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and people with mobility problems.

In drawing up the plan, the following have been assessed in line with the DEFRA CRoW guidance:

- The extent to which local Rights of Way meet the present and likely future needs of the public;
- The opportunities provided by local Rights of Way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of their area; and
- The accessibility of local Rights of Way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems.

The Oldham RoWIP contains actions to cover a ten-year period, with a range of short, medium and long term, or aspirational, targets and milestones.

Which paths and routes are covered by this plan?

Oldham’s network covers a wide range of routes not all classified as ‘Rights of Way’.

Those covered in this plan are:

- Public Rights of Way
- Open Access land
- Permissive or concessionary paths
- Towpaths
- Disused railways

Definitions for these classifications can be found in the Glossary section at the start of this document.

Further detail on the range of routes is included in the Local Context section of this document.

## Outcomes of an Improved Rights Of Way Network

An improved Rights of Way network will result in a number of benefits, in particular:

- A more accessible borough (better permeability within the borough, and between the borough and neighbouring areas);
- Improved (safer, more attractive, and 'greener') routes to services, areas of employment, schools etc.;
- Creation of and improved access to 'common ground' – spaces where communities can meet and interact;
- More easily and efficiently maintained Rights of Way network;
- Improving connectivity of, and links to, the borough's/sub-region's/region's green space network/infrastructure. For example, by creating 'corridors to the countryside';
- Reduction in the number of road accidents (particularly reducing accidents involving pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders);
- Reduction in the number of (short to medium) journeys made by car, with resulting improvements to air quality and reductions in carbon emissions;
- Increase in the number and range of people/communities using the Rights of Way network;
- Increase in the number and range of people/communities engaging in formal and informal Rights of Way-associated recreational activity (e.g. walking, cycling, horse riding);
- Supporting improved health (mental and physical) within local communities, through provision of a 'no-cost' exercise facility and access to green spaces;
- Supporting the development of sustainable tourism (particularly in the 'rural' areas).

There can also be disadvantages to an improved Rights of Way network, particularly if use of the network is not carried out in a responsible manner.

Issues arising from additional use of network include:

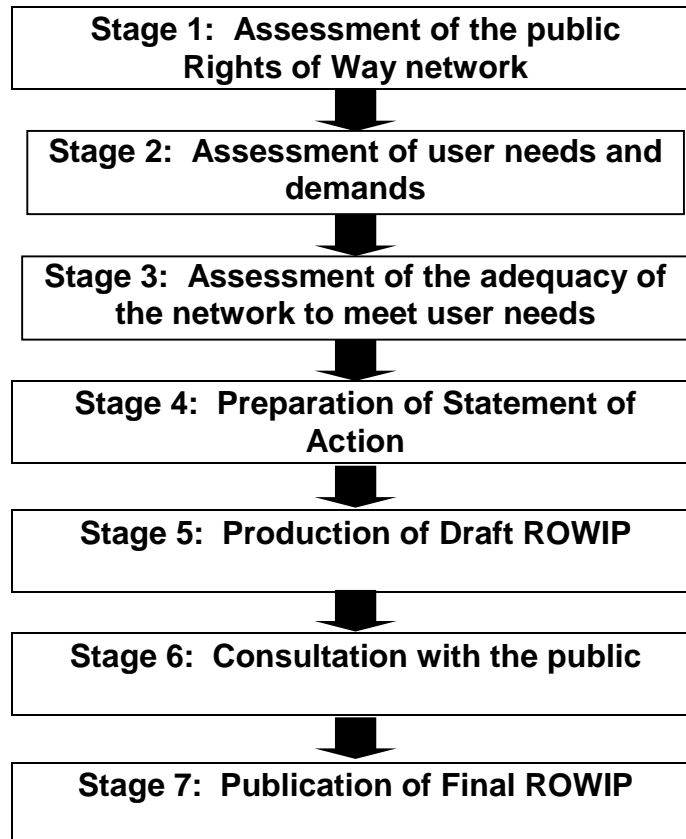
- Heavier human traffic along routes, leading to potential issues for landowners and local residents;
- Ecological issues for the local environment;
- Increased management and maintenance of particular favoured areas; and
- Increased requirement for policing and enforcement regarding use of off-road two wheelers.

The above issues can arise if areas become too popular or overused, or if the extra use of the network is not carried out in a responsible manner.

All of these factors have also been taken on board in the production of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, with a strong emphasis being placed on encouraging sustainable and responsible use of the network.

## The process of creating the plan

The figure below shows the stages of the RoWIP development. Further details on the methodology are included in Appendix A:



## What constitutes an improvement?

Improvement will be shown through the achievement of targets set in the Statement of Action and reported through the mechanisms outlined in chapter 6. Most targets follow the SMART principles (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time based); this ensures that the targets laid down in the Statement of Action are appropriate, and are set up in such a way as to allow monitoring of progress, to demonstrate improvement.

## Structure of the Document

The rest of this report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 looks at the current local characteristics of Oldham and the Rights of Way Network
- Chapter 3 outlines the policy documents reviewed for the RoWIP
- Chapter 4 identifies the Key Themes linked to the Local Transport Plan and other overarching policies that guide the RoWIP objectives
- Chapter 5 is the Statement of Action and identifies the objectives for the RoWIP and the actions that have been identified for implementation.
- Chapter 6 gives details of the partners who will be involved in delivery of the actions.
- Chapter 7 outlines how the plan will be implemented, work monitored, reviewed and reported on.

## **2 Local Context**

### **Introduction to Oldham**

The Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council area covers approximately 55 square miles and is located to the northeast of the city of Manchester, within the county of Greater Manchester. Oldham is bordered by Rochdale to the north, Tameside to the south, Manchester to the west and the Peak Park and Kirklees to the east.

### **Landscape Character**

The borough's geography is extremely diverse and ranges from the urban areas around Oldham town centre, through to outlying villages and remote rural areas, including moorland and the Pennines. Hence, access to the Rights of Way network varies significantly across the borough, with some areas being isolated and difficult to access and navigate, and other areas being very well catered for, for all users.

### **Population**

The most recent census data (2001) shows the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham as having a population of 217,273.

### **Transport**

Oldham is approximately 4 miles from the M62 motorway, and is linked to it by the M60 and A627 (M). Central Oldham has one main railway station, Oldham Mumps, and two smaller edge-of-town stations, Oldham Werneth and Derker. Oldham also has smaller out-of-town stations, such as Shaw and Crompton, and Greenfield, which provide access to the nearby open space.

It is planned to link Oldham to the Manchester Metrolink tram network by converting the existing rail line to Metrolink operation. Funding for this link was approved in July 2006. Oldham has a newly built central bus station with frequent services to other parts of Greater Manchester and limited services to West Yorkshire.

### **Public Rights of Way in Oldham**

To provide an overview of the current status of the network, a general summary of the existing information held about the network as a whole is included here, along with further detailed information on the condition of the network and perceived strengths and weaknesses, resulting both from the surveys and from consultation with the general public and users of the network.

The Rights of Way network in Oldham comprises 805 individually numbered paths, totalling 430km. A breakdown of the types of route is shown below in Table 1. Approximately 90% of the network is footpaths; of the remainder, around 37km is bridleways, along with a small number of routes that can be used by vehicles. The network is concentrated outside the urban area, to the east of the borough. The only real concentration of bridleways is in the Strines area, to the North-East of Oldham, along with permissive routes around Daisy Nook Country Park. Much of the remainder of the bridleway network is fragmented, and is bisected by major roads.

Two long-distance national trails run through the borough, the Pennine Way and the Pennine Bridleway. A “feeder route” for the bridleway is to be opened in 2007 in the northeast of the borough, linked to the Dark Peak. There also exist a number of locally promoted routes including the Oldham Way, Medlock Valley Way, Standedge Trail and the Crompton Circuit.

The borough has some extremely attractive countryside accommodating walking routes, with approximately 22% of the land area being within the Peak District National Park. There are also several areas of moorland where walkers have benefited from the Right to Roam legislation.

**Table 1: Public Rights of Way in Oldham**

Type of Route	Available to	No. of Routes	Length (km)	% of Oldham's network (by length)	Comparable figures for England (%)
Public Footpath (FP)	Pedestrians	753	388.3	90.4	78
Public Bridleway (BW)	Pedestrians, equestrians and cyclists	48	37.4	8.71	17
Restricted Byway (RB) - these have now replaced RUPPs	Pedestrians, equestrians, cyclists and horse-drawn vehicles	2	1.4	0.33	3
Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT)	Pedestrians, equestrians, cyclists, horse-drawn vehicles and motor vehicles	2	2.4	0.56	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>805</b>	<b>429.5</b>		



## **Network Condition**

Consultation was carried out with the Public Rights of Way Officer and other relevant Oldham Council personnel, along with members of the public and local interest groups, to identify a sample of frequently used routes, those with particular issues, and aspirational routes. Paths that had previously been identified for upgrade or modification were also included. Resulting from this work, a total of 20.5km of route was surveyed. Details of the paths surveyed can be seen in Appendix B.

Through the surveying work carried out, a range of network strengths and weaknesses were identified. These include:

### **Strengths**

- Good condition and suitability of majority of path furniture;
- Underlying geology of Oldham comprised mainly of harder rocks, making path surfacing a strength along many routes;
- Grassland rather than arable along many lowland routes reduces drainage issues;
- Provision of Rights of Way signage improving on main highways; and
- Opportunities to upgrade sections of network in order to provide longer circular and linear routes for equestrians.

### **Weaknesses**

- Large surface rocks along some routes, restricting access for equestrians, cyclists and mobility and sight impaired users;
- Vegetation encroachment narrows, restricts and in some areas, blocks routes, creating access issues, particularly in river valleys;
- Variable width of some paths;
- Steep gradients create access issues for equestrians and mobility and sight impaired users;
- Rough terrain in certain locations; and
- Lack of waymarking once on the Rights of Way network.

## **Best Value Performance Indicators (ease of use)**

Definition – The indicator is the total length of Rights of Way, which were easy to use, as a percentage of the total length of all Rights of Way. Rights of Way appear on the definitive map of Public Rights of Way for the highway authority area and are numbered. ‘Easy to use’ means:

1. Signposted or waymarked where they leave the road in accordance with the Authority’s duty under s.27 of the Countryside Act 1968 and to the extent necessary to allow users to follow the path (a Public Right of Way wholly within a built up area and with a hard surface provided along its complete length and with a clearly defined route may be excluded from this measurement);
2. Free from unlawful obstructions and other interference, (including overhanging vegetation) to the public’s right of passage;
3. Surface and lawful barriers (e.g. stiles, gates) in good repair and to a standard necessary to enable the public to use the way without undue inconvenience:

‘Easy to use’ means to follow the definitive line as it appears on the definitive map without prohibitive interference. The paths should be signposted (s.27 of the Countryside Act 1968) where they leave the road. The signposts should show the correct status, be clearly visible and be pointing in the right direction.

### **Exemptions:**

A public right of way wholly within a built up-area and with a hard surface provided along its complete length and with a clearly defined route may be excluded from the signage measurement

What defines a built-up area?

‘Built-up area’ means a path within a built-up area (e.g. a built environment) with a hard surface (e.g. tarmac, paving, stone) and with a clearly defined route (e.g. the path does not split in two)

### **Automatic Failures:**

- Any furniture on the path where immediate repair or replacement is required, would fail the path
- Any point obstructions that cause the surveyor to deviate from the definitive line
- Any diversions from the definitive line, except where a diversion order has been created
- Any linear obstructions that cause the surveyor to deviate from the definitive line
- Any surface conditions that cause the surveyor to deviate from the definitive line
- Any sign or notice that deters use of the path

- Any beast or human deterring the use of the path
- No way marker where the route is unclear or a path changes status (e.g. footpath to bridleway)

An external body surveys a randomly selected sample of routes twice a year in spring and autumn. The lengths or paths passing or failing are then added together to provide the Best Value Performance Indicator 178 score. Table 2 below shows the yearly trends.

**Table 2: Condition of the Rights of Way Network in Oldham: Best Value Performance Indicator BVPI 178**

Year	% of Paths "Easy to Use" by Length			
	Spring Survey	Autumn Survey	Overall Pass Rate	Target
2003	44	44	44	55
2004	69	40	46.5	47
2005	48.20	59.00	53.93	60
2006	69.62	83.28	76.12	60
2007	35.60	42.80	37.20	65

**Further explanatory note:**

"In October, as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), the Government announced a new single set of 198 national indicators for English local authorities and local authority partnerships. A list of these indicators, which flow from the priorities identified in Public Service Agreements and Departmental Strategic Objectives announced in the CSR, was published on 11 October.

This document is Annex 1 to the consultation document National Indicators for Local Authorities and Local Authority Partnerships: *Handbook of Definitions Draft for Consultation* which seeks views on the Government's proposed detailed definitions for the 198 national indicators which will be included in the final handbook of definitions to be published in February 2008 for implementation from April 2008".

## 3 Policy Context

### Introduction

Government guidance recommends that RoWIPs are developed within the context of other plans and strategies relevant to the Council, particularly with reference to healthy living, leisure, recreation, sport, tourism, transport and community strategies.

RoWIPs, in turn, should also influence these areas of responsibility, particularly where they are relevant to the economic, social and well-being aspect of community strategies. By doing so this will ensure a joined up approach to implementation, and will additionally provide potential for gaining access to additional funding streams.

The policies and strategies reviewed can be found in Appendix C, with a list below showing which policies are included:

- Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan 2006-2010 (July 2006) (GMLTP2)
- Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (RSS)
- The Rural Development Programme for England 2007-2013
- Oldham Metropolitan Borough Unitary Development Plan (adopted July 2006)
- Local Development Framework
- Oldham Community Strategy – Planning for Sustainable Communities 2005-2020 (April 2004)
- Oldham Local Agenda 21 Plan: 1999 onwards (1999)
- Peak District National Park: Local Plan (Adopted 2001)
- Oldham Beyond
- A Vision for the Borough of Oldham - the 'Common Ground'
- The Heart of Oldham
- Local Needs Assessment and Audit
- Cycle Strategy
- Pennine Edge Forest Business Plan 2004 – 2013

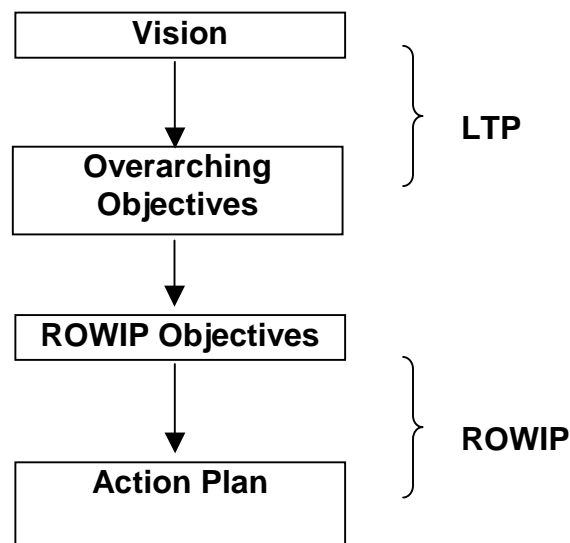
It should be noted that the Local Transport Plan (LTP) is particularly identified as being of relevance in terms of linkages, with the two documents due to progressively merge into one document by 2010/2011; Oldham Council's RoWIP has therefore been formulated to be closely aligned to the Greater Manchester LTP and its overarching objectives. Due to this close alignment of the documents, further information on relevant LTP aims and objectives can be found in the Key Themes and Statement of Action sections of this report.

In order to ensure that the main policy objectives have been met, the objectives formulated for the RoWIP (see the Statement of Action section) have been compared to several of the key policies identified above to understand how well the objectives align; this comparison can be seen on Table 3, also in the Statement of Action section of this report.

## 4 Key Themes

The key themes outline the overarching objectives, which inform the direction that the RoWIP will take.

To ensure that the key themes align with the broader policy framework, as well as to take into account matters arising from the network assessment and consultation, a broad structure has been developed which allows progression from the overview (vision and overarching objectives) to the specific (RoWIP objectives and action plan). The structure consists of:



### The Vision

The Oldham vision is based on the Greater Manchester vision outlined below. By looking first at the vision for the wider area, the vision for the Oldham RoWIP is put into context.

Greater Manchester's vision aims that by 2020, Greater Manchester will be:

- A creative and successful European Regional Centre with a strong driven economy;
- Recognized 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; and
- A place with a quality of environment, both built and natural, second to none.

The vision is founded on eight key themes:

- Promotion of a dynamic economy
- Enhancement of the regional centre;
- Promotion of culture, sport and tourism;
- Improved connectivity;

- Raised levels of education and skills;
- Creation of sustainable communities;
- A reduction in crime; and
- An improvement in health and healthcare services.

Based on these themes, a vision for the Oldham RoWIP has been developed:

**‘To have an accessible Rights of Way network which helps improve the borough’s image and supports the local economy. This in turn will help promote tourism, improve the quality of life for those who live, work and play in the region, and provide for a sustainable community. This will be carried out within the context of being a member authority of the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities and part of the Peak Park.’**

## Overarching Aims and Objectives

The policy review identified the central overarching aims of the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan as:

- Tackling congestion;
- Delivering accessibility;
- Safer roads;
- Better air quality; and
- Improved quality of life.

Relevant objectives (taken from the GMLTP2 Appendix) also include:

- LTP Objective 1: To improve the accessibility, environment, attractiveness and safety of the regional centre, town and district centres, and employment areas;
- LTP Objective 2: To improve road and community safety;
- LTP Objective 3: To minimize environmental damage caused by transport, thereby improving the quality of life and health of the population;
- LTP Objective 4: To increase the proportion of trips by non-car modes;
- LTP Objective 5: 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;
- LTP Objective 6: To improve links with the rest of the country;
- LTP Objective 7: To maintain, improve and make best use of existing Rights of Way, and ensure all schemes offer long-term value for money;
- LTP Objective 8: To assist in improving health, the local economy and recreational opportunities.

These overarching aims and objectives form the basis of Oldham RoWIP’s objectives, which are outlined in the following chapter.

It is important to indicate how the overarching RoWIP objectives complement both the long-term vision for Greater Manchester, and the relevant LTP objectives, in addition to other key policy documents. A comparison can be seen on Table 3 in the next section of the document.

## 5 Statement of Action

*“A Statement of Action for the management of local Rights of Way, and for securing an improved network for local Rights of Way, with particular regard to the matters dealt with in the assessment” (CRoW Act 2000)*

The Statement of Action, along with the assessment work upon which this is based, forms the basis of Oldham’s Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

The Vision and Overarching Objectives are taken from the Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan (2006–2011); the RoWIP Objectives and Action Plan have been produced using data resulting from the consultation and network assessments, along with the working group’s knowledge.

Many of the actions are relevant to more than one of the outcomes; therefore several of the actions will also help to meet more than one of the overarching objectives.

### RoWIP Objectives

We have formulated our own objectives for the RoWIP, to ensure that it meets the needs and demands of existing and future users, and improves the physical network of routes. The objectives have additionally been formulated with the LTP objectives in mind, to ensure that the two documents are closely aligned, which will enable achievement of the overarching objectives. We have also considered similar RoWIPs from neighbouring Local Authorities to identify harmonies and ensure continuity of the network across boundaries.

- Objective 1: Ensure that the existing Public Rights of Way network is open and available for use;
- Objective 2: Connected, safe and accessible routes for all users;
- Objective 3: Provide an up to date and widely available paper and digital Definitive Map and Statement;
- Objective 4: Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network;
- Objective 5: Encourage greater involvement in managing local Rights of Way.

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. These can be seen on Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Determination of how RoWIP Objectives Complement Other Policy Objectives**

Policy Objectives	RoWIP Objective Number				
	1	2	3	4	5
<b>GMLTP Objectives (2006 – 2011)</b>					
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	✓	✓	✓		✓
<b>Greater Manchester Vision Objectives</b>					
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	✓	✓		✓	
<b>UDP Policies (2001 – 2016)</b>					
To encourage more sustainable forms of travel	✓	✓	✓	✓	
To provide accessible routes	✓	✓			
To provide a borough-wide network of routes for non-motorised travel, which are identified in Oldham strategies or form part of designated national networks	✓	✓	✓		✓
To increase recreational opportunities for people in the borough by allowing better access to the countryside and green corridors	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Promotion of accessibility through integration of land use and transport; promotion of safe and practical public spaces, roads and footpaths	✓	✓		✓	



To protect canal and rail corridors	✓		✓		
Development only where not to the detriment of the open land corridors or links and potential wildlife, and where access is not restricted as a result	✓		✓		
Development of new open spaces or recreation facilities where adequate provision is made for safe recreational routes for sustainable transport modes, either by diversion or new route creation	✓	✓	✓		
<b>Oldham Community Strategies (2002-2022; 2005-2020)</b>					
To improve and manage access to the countryside and open spaces	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To improve the health and well-being of the population	✓	✓			
To ensure equality of opportunity for the community	✓	✓			✓
To encourage the use of more environmentally friendly transport alternatives	✓	✓		✓	
To maintain and improve transport infrastructure	✓	✓	✓		
To develop high quality living environments	✓	✓	✓		
<b>Open Space Strategy</b>					
To provide easily accessible open space facilities, by a range of users	✓	✓	✓		
<b>Local Agenda 21</b>					
To reduce car use, increase use of sustainable forms of transport (foot, cycle, horse etc.)	✓	✓		✓	
Increased use of canals to support transport system	✓	✓			
To improve health of residents	✓	✓			
To enhance wildlife habitats (parks, green spaces) and the green corridors connecting them	✓	✓			
Conservation of canals	✓	✓	✓		
Ensure fully accessible public spaces	✓	✓	✓		
<b>Oldham Beyond</b>					
Better links between urban and rural parts of the borough, to unite the borough's community	✓	✓	✓		✓
Improve the public realm	✓	✓			
Development of corridors linking town centre and surrounding neighbourhoods	✓	✓			

## Action Plan

The overarching objectives each encompass a range of key actions that are based on the emerging themes from the assessment of the network and its future needs. The following tables provide a delivery plan for each objective. In addition, appropriate timescales and key partners have been included.

### Key to Statement of Action Tables

In order to simplify the Action Tables, the following key has been provided:

#### Resources

- X Action point can be achieved within funding and staffing resources equivalent to those allocated for 2006/07
- XX Action point could be achieved with a slight re-prioritisation of resources or where additional resources are required but are likely to be successfully sourced. Where funding could be achieved through LTP2 or other committed sums this is indicated.
- XXX Actions that would require additional resources to be allocated or require external funding to be sought before they can be progressed

#### Estimated costs

It is difficult to give precise figures for all action points. Instead, the following symbols have been used to cover potential revenue/ capital costs. If delivery is primarily a staffing issue then no symbol is recorded. If a potential or actual funding source is already known then this is stated.

- £ Where it is estimated that the action will cost less than £5,000 per year.
- ££ Where it is estimated that the action will cost between £5,000 and £20,000 per year.
- £££ Where it is estimated that the action will cost more than £20,000 per year.

## Abbreviations for tables

PDNPA	-	Peak District National Park Authority
GMTU	-	Greater Manchester Transportation Unit
DDA	-	Disability Discrimination Act 2005
LAF	-	Local Access Forum
NFU	-	National Farmers Union
CLA	-	Country Landowners Association
OMBC	-	Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
BWB	-	British Waterways Board
TIC	-	Travel Information Centre
PCT	-	Primary Care Trust
LTP	-	Local Transport Plan
BTCV	-	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers
GSS	-	Green Space Strategy
LDF	-	Local Development Frameworks
TAMP	-	Transport Asset Management Plan
BVPI	-	Best Value Performance Indicator
S106	-	Section 106 Agreement
PRoW/ RoW	-	Public Rights of Way / Rights of Way
PNFS	-	Peak and Northern Footpath Society

## **Statement of Action Summary**

### **Objective 1: Ensure that the existing Public Rights of Way network is open and available for use**

Supporting Task: 1a) Improve the surface condition and drainage of routes

Supporting Task: 1b) Strengthen enforcement procedures to deal with the removal of unlawful obstructions

Supporting Task: 1c) Increase the investment in Public Rights of Way

Supporting Task: 1d) To improve the overall BVPI 178 pass rate (as a percentage of Rights of Way that are easy to use by the general public).

Supporting Task: 1e) Review the annual surface vegetation clearance programme

### **Objective 2: Provide a more connected, safe and accessible network for all users**

Supporting Task: 2a) Improve the provision of routes for bridleway users.

Supporting Task: 2b) Improve the provision of circular or connected routes

Supporting Task: 2c) Provide a safer network for all users

Supporting Task: 2d) Provide more easy access routes

### **Objective 3: Provide an up to date and widely available paper and digital Definitive Map and Statement**

Supporting Task: 3a) produce and maintain an up to date digital and paper Definitive Map and Statement

Supporting Task: 3b) Improve the availability of information relating to the Definitive Map and Statement

Supporting Task: 3c) Speed up the process for clarifying the legal status of routes

### **Objective 4: Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network**

Supporting Task: 4a) Ensure that path / route signage is consistent across the borough

Supporting Task: 4b) Encourage the production of new promoted routes

Supporting Task: 4c) Maximise existing promoted routes and trails

Supporting Task: 4d) Improve the level and quality of information about the access network

Supporting Task: 4e) Promote routes identified as “easy access” paths

### **Objective 5: Encourage greater involvement in managing local Rights of Way**

Supporting Task: 5a) Promote ways in which the public can report problems on the network

Supporting Task: 5b) Increase involvement of user groups and other local community/volunteer groups in managing local Rights of Way

## **Objective 1: Ensure that the existing Public Rights of Way network is open and available for use**

### **Purpose of objective**

Through the consultation process it was evident that maintenance is a key concern for all Rights of Way users, regardless of the nature of their use. The purpose of this objective is therefore to ensure that the whole of the current Rights of Way network is maintained to a high standard and has no unlawful obstructions.

Funding for Rights of Way improvements has also been raised as an issue for routes within the Oldham area, with additional monies identified through the LTP, in order to make the short, medium and long-term improvements, along with the aspirational modifications identified as being of most benefit to the network.

The following actions show how the plan aims to improve the problem reporting process and ensure positive action when problems occur. The focus is on coordinated removal of vegetation and obstacles to allow ease of access to the Public Rights of Way network, along with improvements to the quality of the surface to ensure that routes can be easily used.

### **Current Relevant Projects**

#### **Roadside Signposts**

The Council has placed a high priority on installing roadside signposts, with approximately 150 signposts installed or replaced since 2004. With the results of the Best Value Performance Indicator from 2007 highlighting the need to continue to target resources in this important area of work.

#### **Funding**

Considerable progress has been made in establishing close links between Rights of Way and the Local Transport Plan process. This is part of the integration of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan into the Second Local Transport Plan (LTP2). Opportunities now exist to incorporate improvements to Rights of Way into the bidding process to acquire extra funding, with indicative monies allocated based on 2006/07 expenditure. The aim is to deliver projects within the Statement of Action that link to the delivery of transport objectives and shared priorities within the LTP.

The Council, through the Rights of Way Officer, works with other groups and organisations to deliver Rights of Way and access work; this includes submitting joint funding of schemes via Groundwork to the Shaw and Crompton Parish Council Environmental subgroup. Including more recently a bid to the Peak and Northern Footpaths Society for a project to replace a number of footbridges currently *out of repair*.

An annual allocation is also made from the Rights of Way revenue budget to contribute to Countryside maintenance staff working on the RoW network. The purpose being to ensure that as many as possible overgrown paths are cleared.

## Objective 1: Ensure that the existing Public Rights of Way network is open and available for use

### Supporting Task: 1a) Improve the surface condition and drainage of routes

	<b>Proposed Actions</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Links to other strategies</b>
i	Produce an annual prioritised list of the paths most in need of improvement or which will benefit the most users (in line with LTP2 targets) to tackle the backlog of identified urgent path repairs. This list will form the basis for bidding for funds through LTP2	XX LTP2 ££	PDNPA LAFs	2008/11	LTP2 - Accessibility
ii	Prepare annual bids to Natural England for the maintenance of National Trails and Dark Peak Feeder Routes	X £	Natural England	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	

## Objective 1: Ensure that the existing Public Rights of Way network is open and available for use

### Supporting Task: 1b) Strengthen enforcement procedures to deal with the removal of unlawful obstructions

	<b>Proposed Actions</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Links to other strategies</b>
i	Resolve all reported problems within 8 weeks by continuing to serve notices and target repeat offenders with prosecution	X	User groups Parish Council's	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	
ii	Liaise with landowners / managers to raise awareness of PRoW responsibilities		Land managers CLA/NFU User Groups LAFs, Parish Council's	2008/09	
iii	Produce a land managers' guide to Rights of Way	X		2009/10	



## Objective 1: Ensure that the existing Public Rights of Way network is open and available for use

### Supporting Task: 1c) Increase investment in Public Rights of Way

	<b>Proposed Actions</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Links to other strategies</b>
i	Quantify the amount of investment required through condition surveys (see key issue 1a) and the Asset Management Plan	XX ££		2008/09	LTP2 Asset Management Plan
ii	Bid for funding through LTP2 to increase amount of investment over life of LTP2/ RoWIP	X £££		2008-12	LTP2
iii	Bid for funding through other external bodies to increase amount of investment over the life of RoWIP	X £££	Funding bodies (private public), PDNPA Stake-Holders User groups Parish Council's	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	

## Objective 1: Ensure that the existing Public Rights of Way network is open and available for use

Supporting Task: 1d) To improve the overall BVPI 178 pass rate (as a percentage of Rights of Way that are easy to use by the general public).

	Proposed Actions	Resources	Key Partners	Timescales	Links to strategies	to other
i	Complete roadside signposting programme, including the surveying and replacement / installation of missing signposts	XX LTP2 ££	User Groups PDNPA	2008-11	BVPI LTP2	
ii	Continue to carry out regular inspections of the 162 bridges situated on the network, and prioritise maintenance of these structures	X	User Groups	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	BVPI	
iii	OMBC to contribute to the costs of upgrading or replacing at least one bridge each year for the next four years	XX LTP2	PNFS	2008-11	BVPI LTP2	
iv	Produce a plan on how to achieve a 100% survey of the network using the BVPI 178 method	X	GMTU	2008/09		
v	Prepare a report on how to deliver a database of reported problems on the network	X		2008/09		

## Objective 1: Ensure that the existing Public Rights of Way network is open and available for use

### Supporting Task: 1e) Review the annual surface vegetation clearance programme

	<b>Proposed Actions</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Links to other strategies</b>
i	Review list of paths where annual vegetation clearance is carried out, including timing and frequency of cut	X ££	LAFs Parks / Countryside Service Groundwork Parish Council's	2008/09	BVPI GSS
ii	Continue to contribute to the cost of seasonal or other Countryside and Parks staff, deployed to remove up-growth from PRoW	X £	Parks/Countryside Service		GSS
iii	Prioritise annual maintenance on routes in and around urban areas and on village links, which will benefit the most users	XX LTP2 ££	User groups, Parish Council's	From 2008	LTP2- Accessibility

## **Objective 2: Provide a more connected, safe and accessible network for all users**

### **Purpose of objective**

Access to the Public Rights of Way Network is vital to ensure continuing use of the network, and to increase the number of people able to use the Public Rights of Way. Through consultation accessibility was identified to be a key concern for mobility and sight-impaired users, along with equestrians.

This objective therefore looks to secure the safety of all groups using the Public Rights of Way network and identifies key priorities to ensure the routes are accessible to all appropriate users.

Through these actions the network can be assessed and opportunities identified to enhance existing routes, improve linkages between routes and investigate the potential for new routes.

Some emphasis has been placed on improving routes for bridleway users to provide better connections with existing routes and develop appropriate new routes. The need for circular routes and improved route continuity is also identified.

### **Current relevant projects**

#### **National Trails**

The Pennine Bridleway is a designated National Trail designed specifically for horse riders, cyclists and walkers. At approximately 350 miles, the trail passes through the Pennine Hills from Derbyshire to Northumberland, a mix of ancient packhorse tracks and newly created bridleways.

The Pennine Bridleway in Oldham opened in 2004 and maintenance of the trail is coordinated by Unity Partnership's Rights of Way Officer. Assistance is provided by the Countryside Service and a designated Pennine Bridleway Ranger.

A section of the Pennine Way also passes through Oldham, with responsibility for the trail split between the Council and the Peak District National Park. For the section managed by the Council, the Rights of Way Officer uses the services of Groundwork to maintain the route, who have been instrumental in the recent improvements carried out, including resurfacing by means of helicopter airlift operations.

The Countryside Service are actively involved in the management and improvement of a number of sites and routes in the borough.

Examples include the following sites:

- Crompton Moor / The Delph Donkey / Leesbrook Nature Area / Glodwick Lows
- Daisy Nook Country Park / Tandlehill Country Park routes
- Oldham Way / Medlock Valley Way / Standedge Trail

## **Access Land**

There are large parcels of newly designated Access Land within Oldham. Approximately 2600 hectares are situated within the Peak District National Park, for which the National Park is the Access Authority. The remainder of the 992 hectares is within the remit of the Council, as Access Authority. Ranger Services in Oldham and the Peak District National Park have carried out a considerable amount of work to sign and improve access to this land.

There are also a number of locally organised activities that promote the use of Rights of Way, including Ramblers Association Events, Oldham Way leaflets, the Leesbrook/ Glodwick Lows newsletter, and Country Park and village trail leaflets.

## **Leesbrook Nature Park**

Much work has taken place in Leesbrook Nature Park to improve accessibility into and around the park, by the installation of directional signs, together with the upgrading of paths, bridleways and cycle routes through the park. Community events and promotion of the park for recreation and leisure uses, as well as a green commuter route and safer routes to school have seen a significant increase in usage of the park. Further work to the remainder of the park is planned.

## **Canal connections**

New directional signs have been installed along both the Rochdale Canal and Huddersfield Narrow Canal towpaths, two key linear routes within the borough. To improve accessibility and route connectivity, the location and content of the signs have been designed to highlight important destinations, link routes and facilities on or near the canals.

## **Green Walk and Beyond**

Building on the 'Common Ground' element of the Oldham Beyond vision, the Council is currently working with developers at both the Old Town Hall and St Mary's sites to make the town centre 'Green Walk' a reality. Linking Oldham Edge to Alexandra Park, this route will form a key link route for both the Rights of Way and green space networks. This will also set the scene for the creation of a larger circular route - a 'Green Loop' - connecting Oldham town centre to key green space sites and Rights of Way routes to the south and east (e.g. Snipe Clough, Leesbrook Nature Park, Strinesdale, etc.) which was proposed as part of Oldham's recent Living Landmarks bid.

## Objective 2: Provide a more connected, safe and accessible network for all users

### Supporting Task: 2a) Improve the provision of routes for bridleway users.

	Proposed Actions	Resources	Key Partners	Timescales	Links to strategies	other
i	Prioritise bridleway claims (upgrades or new routes) or creations and dedications that contribute to or connect up existing bridleways. Report number of orders processed per year	X	User groups Discovering Ways Project	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan		
ii	Identify and map the whole network to which equestrians and cyclists have access, including permissive routes. Identify and map those sections of cycle route that can be upgraded to bridleway, along with new routes that can be identified for both cyclists and equestrians.	XX £	User groups Access Stakeholders Cycling Officer Countryside Service	2009/10	LTP2 Accessibility GSS	
iii	Look for opportunities to make use of existing verges (where practicable) or new routes inside field boundaries to minimise use of roads. Verges are also being looked at in terms of providing cycle tracks	XXX LTP2 ££	PDNPA User groups LAFs Cycling Officer	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	LTP2 Safety of users, Accessibility	vulnerable

## Objective 2: Provide a more connected, safe and accessible network for all users

### Supporting Task: 2a) Improve the provision of routes for bridleway users.

	Proposed Actions	Resources	Key Partners	Timescales	Links to other strategies
iv	Develop a series of circular bridleway links off the Pennine Bridleway and Dark Peak Feeder Route	X ££	PDNPA User groups	2009/10	
v	Improve the existing Horseshoe Trail around Delph	X ££	User groups	2008/10	LTP2
vi	Plan to continue to make use of existing disused railway lines and selected routes across former landfill sites (in council ownership) for equestrians and cyclists	XX ££	Parks and Open Spaces Countryside Service	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	GSS Oldham Strategy Cycling

## Objective 2: Provide a more connected, safe and accessible network for all users

### Supporting Task: 2b) Improve the provision of circular or connected routes

	Proposed Actions	Resources	Key Partners	Timescales	Links to other strategies
i	Integrate RoWIP into the Local Development Framework. Provide for PRow improvement and protection through the Development Control process, including within S106 legal agreements	XX		Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	LDFs
ii	Provide routes that will enhance the existing network and create local circular and other routes. To be achieved through discussion and negotiation with land managers, user groups and public bodies	XX £	Land managers Public bodies Access Stakeholders PDNPA LAFs	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	
iii	Offer to negotiate reduced costs to landowners, as an incentive for those who are willing to create additional links or upgrade routes as part of a legal order package	X £	NFU/CLA Landowners PDNPA	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	
iv	Identify opportunities to improve access to open access land and provide links between Rights of Way and other access land	X £	PDNPA Countryside Service	2008/09	GSS



## Objective 2: Provide a more connected, safe and accessible network for all users

### Supporting Task: 2c) Provide a safer network for all users

	<b>Proposed Actions</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Links to other strategies</b>
i	Undertake safety audits at all road crossings on the network	X LTP2 £		2008-11	LTP2- Accessibility
ii	Prioritise with reference to (i) the signing of road crossing points for managed trails, to warn motorists of presence of vulnerable users	XX LTP2 ££	User Groups LAFs	2008-11	LTP2- Accessibility
iii	Produce an annual programme based on (i) to identify improvements to road crossing points	XX LTP2 £		2008-11	LTP2- Accessibility
iv	Safer routes to schools: Work to identify suitable paths / trails for walking / cycling to school	XX LTP2 Sustrans	OMBC School Travel Adviser, OMBC Cycling Officer, Sustrans	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	LTP2- Accessibility, School Travel Strategy
v	Tackle inappropriate / illegal use of network: - Carry out a review on the management of motorised vehicles in the countryside - Make recommendations for resolution to the issues noted in the review	XX	PDNPA, Countryside Service Police	2008/09	GSS
vi	Ensure that main road crossing points proposed on the Oldham Cycle Network are designed for equestrian use where possible	LTP, planning process and regeneration projects	Cycling Officer	Over the next 20 years	Oldham Cycling Strategy LTP2

## Objective 2: Provide a more connected, safe and accessible network for all users

### Supporting Task: 2d) Provide more easy access routes

	Proposed Actions	Resources	Key Partners	Timescales	Links to other strategies
i	Develop a policy to detail how the council will work to make the PRoW network and countryside sites more accessible to all users	X	Access Groups, LAFs, Countryside Service	2008/09	DDA GSS
ii	Work with groups and organisations to identify existing easy access routes and develop a longer term programme to identify and improve other suitable routes	XX LTP2	LAFs, Health walks groups, BWB	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	DDA LTP2 Accessibility
iii	Develop an annual programme to improve the accessibility of routes through surface drainage works and / or better design of access points	XX LTP2 ££	Countryside Service PDNPA	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	DDA, LTP2, Accessibility, Integrated Transport GSS

## Objective 2: Provide a more connected, safe and accessible network for all users

### Supporting Task: 2d) Provide more easy access routes

	Proposed Actions	Resources	Key Partners	Timescales	Links to other strategies
iv	Adopt a less restrictive option of gaps rather than gates, with stiles as a last resort when authorising these under the Highways Act. Report number of stiles replaced by gates or gaps per year	XX £	Land Owners', User groups, PDNPA	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	DDA
v	Put in place incentives for land managers and landowners to replace stiles with gates, or secure removal of unnecessary barriers no longer required for controlling livestock.	XX	Land manager groups, NFU/CLA, PDNPA	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	DDA
vi	Continue to seek improvements to infrastructure on existing routes promoted by the Council, especially to make routes more accessible	XX LTP2 £	Access Groups, Countryside Service	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	GSS

## **Objective 3: Provide an up to date and widely available paper and digital Definitive Map and Statement**

### **Purpose of objective**

The Definitive Map is a legal record of footpaths, bridleways, restricted bridleways (formally roads used as Public Paths) and byways open to all traffic.

As a “surveying authority”, Oldham MBC is required to produce a Definitive Map and Statement showing the Rights of Way that exist. The Council has a duty to keep this map up to date and investigate any evidence that suggests a Right of Way has been left off the map in error, has been recorded incorrectly, or was included on the map in error. An up to date and widely available Definitive Map has been identified as an important means for improving relations and removing uncertainty on Rights of Way in Oldham.

This objective enhances the opportunity to link with Natural England’s Discovering Lost Ways Project, which aims to establish certainty for landowners and users about what rights exist.

The need to improve the understanding of the Rights of Way network and the need to reduce conflict are both linked to the need to develop and maintain the Definitive Map and Statement. The consultation process highlighted this, with stakeholders identifying it as an important issue for managing Oldham’s network of paths. In order to meet the needs of users and landowners, the legal base of the Definitive Map and Statement will be invaluable.

The development of digitised information will enhance the linkage with other projects, for example the interactive Unitary Development Plan map. Further to this it is consistent with the e-government agenda.

### **Current Relevant Projects**

#### **Digitisation of the Definitive Map and Statement**

With support from the senior land surveyor, work is now underway to accurately digitise the Definitive Map and Statement, which will reflect the legal changes made to the Public Rights of Way network since the maps were originally produced in the 1960s, or were last revised in the 1990s. It is envisaged that digitisation will be complete by 2009. Information in an electronic format can be supplied directly to those who need it and can be kept up to date more easily. To help with this task the Definitive Statements have recently been input into a database.

#### **Register of Applications**

Under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, surveying authorities are required to keep, and make available for public inspection, a register of all

applications received for Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMO's) in electronic and paper forms.

This register aims to help increase knowledge among landowners, users of Rights of Way and the general public, about applications which could result in alterations to the Definitive Map and Statement. It also helps to avoid duplication of work where someone has already made an application in respect of a particular route.

This register is now available on the Council's website under the Public Rights of Way section.

Requirements to set up similar registers for Public Path orders and statutory declarations, which landowners have made in respect of the existence of Public Rights of Way across their land, are expected shortly.

### Objective 3: Provide an up to date and widely available paper and digital Definitive Map and Statement

Supporting Task: 3a) produce and maintain an up to date paper and digital Definitive Map and Statement

	Proposed Actions	Resources	Key Partners	Timescales	Links to other strategies
i	Implement a programme of work to digitally update the Definitive Map and Statement and accurately digitise 100% of the Public Rights of Way network	X		2008/09	TAMP
ii	Review all paths affected by legal events and update the Definitive Statements	X		2008/10	
iii	Maintain an up to date digital and paper working copy of the Definitive Map and Statement. Make further legal changes to the network within 4 working days of receipt	X		From 2009	

### Objective 3: Provide an up to date and widely available paper and digital Definitive Map and Statement

#### Supporting Task: 3b) Improve the availability of information relating to the Definitive Map and Statement

	Proposed Actions	Resources	Key Partners	Timescales	Links to other strategies
i	Deliver access to accurate and up to date digital mapping as it becomes available, in both paper and electronic formats	X	User Groups PDNPA	2008/09	TAMP
ii	Improve availability and quality of information about the Definitive Map and legal orders in leaflet form, and on the council's website	XX £		2009/10	
iii	Continue to maintain the register of applications in electronic and paper form, as required by regulations	X		Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	

### Objective 3: Provide an up to date and widely available paper and digital Definitive Map and Statement

#### Supporting Task: 3c) Speed up the process for clarifying the legal status of routes

	<b>Proposed Actions</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Links to other strategies</b>
i	Review existing OMBC procedures and responsibilities for dealing with Definitive Map Modification Order applications	X	LAFs	2008	
ii	Continue to identify and build database of Definitive Map anomalies Including inconsistencies affecting cross- boundary routes, as digitisation progresses Prioritise and resolve mapping anomalies as part of an annual work programme	X Additional resources would allow better progress	Adjacent Highway Authorities LAFs	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	RoWIPs from adjacent Authorities
iii	Identify those mostly rural unclassified roads which should be added to the Definitive Map as footpaths, bridleways, restricted byways or Byways Open To All Traffic	X ££ Additional resources would allow better progress	LAFs	From 2008	



## **Objective 4: Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network**

### **Purpose of objective**

Targeted information was identified through the consultation process to be an important issue. A range of information in a variety of formats was identified as being required, alongside a code of conduct which would be used for all groups using the network of paths that Oldham offers.

Provision of information pertaining to Rights of Way is vital to maximise the use of the available routes, with targeted information to particular groups being required in order to encourage a well-informed, diverse and harmonious group of users.

Appropriate and consistent signage delivered in an effective manner will assist in improving the understanding of the network and the available routes. It will also provide an opportunity to improve awareness of local attractions, amenities and other identified locations. Information on available routes therefore makes up one of the key elements of this objective.

Information is also needed to develop the use of Public Rights of Way for health and social issues. This aims to increase the number of new users and increase the awareness of health professionals on how the network can assist their work.

To demonstrate how the network links with other facilities, such as public transport, this objective will look at information provision to improve connectivity between the routes and the communities in which they are based.

### **Current relevant Projects.**

#### **Health Walks**

There are a number of Walking for Health groups registered in Oldham, including a Stepping Forward group, funded by the New Deal for Communities programme (NDC) and supported by Groundwork and the Countryside Service.

#### **The South Pennines Walking Festival**

A 9-day event took place between 30 September and 8th October 2006, which was the first time that Oldham had been involved with a large scale walking festival. The event was successful, with 120 walkers taking part.

The event was hosted by Oldham Council and supported by Pennine Prospects, the Countryside Service, the Oldham Ramblers' Association and numerous volunteers.

## **Cycle Maps and Strategy**

Oldham has a cycling strategy that was adopted in 2002; Oldham's Cycling Officer is now responsible for implementing this strategy. The strategy gives direction to the development of cycle routes in the borough and can be viewed on the Council website.

Oldham also produces and provides cycle maps for the locality, which can be downloaded from the Council website or obtained free of charge from libraries. Proposed routes can also be seen on the map.

## **Events Programme**

Each year a series of guided walks is proposed as part of the Countryside Service events programme, with routes graded as easy, medium or hard. Information is available on the Council's website or in leaflet form.

## **Pennine Edge Forest**

The Pennine Edge Forest is a partnership between Oldham, Rochdale, Tameside and Stockport Councils, the Forestry Commission and United Utilities. The aim of the partnership is to deliver community forestry and environmental regeneration.

PEF is developing a number of sites in Oldham to provide new and improved recreational access and green commuting routes. These include routes in Leesbrook Nature Park and the extension to the Delph Donkey route. As well as physical improvements to the paths, work has also included the provision of site and directional signs, interpretation boards and access controls.

## Objective 4: Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network

### Supporting Task: 4a) Ensure that path / route signage is consistent across the borough

	Proposed Actions	Resources	Key Partners	Timescales	Links to other strategies
i	Set parameters on what signage is appropriate in different locations e.g. built-up residential, rural and open country	X	User groups Access Stakeholders, LAFs Countryside Service	2008/10	LTP - Accessibility GSS
ii	Identify suitable locations where further information could be provided, such as destination and distance	X ££	User groups	2008/09	LTP - Accessibility
iii	Target paths where signage could benefit local businesses, tourism destinations or other places of interest	XX £	Local Businesses, Tourism Organisations	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	
iv	Ensure that Access Land is well signed	X £	LAFs Natural England, Land Managers, Countryside Service	2008/09	GSS
v	Establish Oldham Cycle Network Signing Strategy, to sign the cycle network. Link this strategy to other signing strategies to understand potential synergies	X LTP	Cycling Officer	Draft Strategy Implement over next 20 years	Oldham Strategy Cycling

## Objective 4: Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network

### Supporting Task: 4b) Encourage the production of new promoted routes

	Proposed Actions	Resources	Key Partners	Timescales	Links to other strategies
i	Encourage the promotion of routes to schools, support the local economy and increase tourism. Aimed at particular users – up to 5 miles for walkers and 10-15 miles for equestrians and cyclists. This will also provide benefits for health and social inclusion. If routes use sections on roads, ensure proper liaison takes place to consider issue of vulnerable users	XX £	Access Stakeholders, User Groups, Tourism bodies, PDNPA, Countryside Service, GMPTE	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	GSS
ii	Encourage use of sustainable forms of transport to access the network, by ensuring that wherever possible guided and promoted walks / rides are accessible by public transport	XX £	LAFs, Public Transport Providers, GMPTE	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	
iii	Review all publications that focus on opportunities for horse riding in the borough, highlighting the connection with the Pennine Bridleway	XX £	British Horse Society, User groups	2009/10	
iv	Seek to establish mountain bike routes and activities to support the local economy and increase tourism	X	Countryside Service, Mountain bike clubs, Tourism bodies, PDNPA	2008/09	Cycling Strategy, GSS

## Objective 4: Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network

### Supporting Task: 4c) Maximise existing promoted routes and trails

	Proposed Actions	Resources	Key Partners	Timescales	Links to other strategies
i	Regularly survey the existing promoted routes and trails to ensure that these are correctly waymarked / signed, and in good repair. Seek to maintain all existing waymarking. Review the promotion of these routes	X	Volunteers, User Groups, Countryside Service Parish Council's	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	GSS
ii	Carry out a review of routes promoted by partner organisations and seek opportunities for joint promotion and information	X £	All partners with promoted routes	2008/09	
iii	Seek to review and survey the Oldham Cycle Network on a regular basis to check condition of surface, signing and general repair	X LTP	Cycling Officer, Countryside Service, Open Spaces (linear parks), National Cycle Network Rangers, Members of the public reporting problems		Cycling Strategy, GSS
iv	Seek to establish monitoring sites 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 20 locations on the Oldham Cycle Network to monitor cycle use	X LTP	Cycling Officer	20 year period, one site per year	Cycling Strategy, LTP target monitoring

## Objective 4: Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network

### Supporting Task: 4d) Improve the level and quality of information about the access network

	Proposed Actions	Resources	Key Partners	T/scales	Links to other strategies
i	Develop the council's website to provide map-based information about the range of access opportunities	XX £	Countryside Service, Tourism organisations	2008/09	GSS
ii	Promote the Countryside and Moorland codes to encourage more responsible use of the countryside	XX	TICs, LAFs, User groups, PDNPA, Countryside Service	2008/09	GSS
iii	Seek to adopt (for the whole of the borough) the Code of Conduct prepared for use in the Peak District National Park for vehicle users. Raise awareness with land managers and user groups	XX £	Adjacent Authorities	2008/09	
iv	Provide information about the social, environmental and health benefits of walking, riding and cycling, and develop confidence among current non-users through events and support programmes	XX	PCTs, Groundwork, Countryside Service, Natural England	2008/10	GSS
v	Continue to promote the network as a resource that can be used by healthy walking schemes or by health professionals	XX	Groundwork PCTs, Walking for Health Schemes, PDNPA, Countryside Service	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	GSS

## Objective 4: Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network

### Supporting Task: 4d) Improve the level and quality of information about the access network

	<b>Proposed Actions</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Links to other strategies</b>
vi	Improve information to the public about Access Land in the borough, including where they can go, what they can do and what restrictions might be in place	Natural England £	Natural England, LAFs, PDNPA, Countryside Service	2008/09	GSS
vii	Establish pages on relevant websites to show cycle route maps and other information a) OMBC site b) CYLCLEGM site (Greater Manchester cycle website) c) Other	X LTP	Cycling Officer, LTP Cycling Subgroup	Existing and to be updated regularly	Oldham Cycling Strategy, Greater Manchester Cycling Strategy
viii	Publish cycle route maps to promote general cycle routes and mountain bike routes	X LTP	Cycling Officer, LTP Cycling Subgroup, PDNPA, Countryside Service	General cycle route maps existing. Mountain bike routes proposed 2007/08	Oldham Cycling Strategy, Greater Manchester Cycling Strategy, GSS

## Objective 4: Improve the promotion, understanding and use of the network

### Supporting Task: 4e) promote routes identified as “easy access” paths

	Proposed Actions	Resources	Key Partners	Timescales	Links to other strategies
i	Provide targeted information about easy access paths to disabled people's groups	X £	Disability organisations, Fieldfare Trust, PDNPA, Countryside Service	2008/10	GSS
ii	Improve the information provided on the council website, taking into account the needs of people who are blind or partially sighted	XX	Fieldfare Trust, LAFs, Access Groups, PDNPA, Countryside Service	2008/09	GSS



## **Objective 5: Encourage greater involvement in managing local Rights of Way**

### **Purpose of objective**

This objective recognises the important role volunteers have to play in the long-term development of the Public Rights of Way network in Oldham. The community provide a vital role in maintaining and developing the network in a coordinated way, providing a valuable resource through their time and effort to ensure they and others can get full enjoyment out of the network in their area. The volunteer network will provide an important resource for the future development of the entire network and links into the surrounding networks.

The inclusion of community involvement and partnership working as an objective in Oldham's RoWIP will create a structure for volunteers and partners to focus their efforts and report their findings. This will help to ensure people take pride in their community and contribute to the development of a coordinated Public Rights of Way network for Oldham.

Volunteers will not have the same geographical boundaries as the Council so the need for cross-border cooperation will have to be built in to this objective.

### **Current Relevant Projects**

#### **Countryside Service Staff**

Over recent years Oldham's Countryside Service has worked closely with volunteers, both from organised groups and as individuals. Much of the work has been focused on improving access to the countryside, including Public Rights of Way. The Service also acts as a facilitator for the countryside access projects that are community-led.

#### **Work with user groups and other stakeholders**

The Rights of Way Officer is involved in a number of liaison meetings in relation to Public Rights of Way, the most significant being quarterly meetings with representatives of the West Pennine Bridleways Association and Rambling Association. Other partnership working involves improvement work with Oldham and Rochdale Groundwork.

A number of people have also recently come forward offering to help protect and enhance their local network. These individuals are being encouraged in their efforts by means of systematic reporting of problems, together with joint inspection, where necessary.

#### **Oldham Way Survey**

Oldham Ramblers' Association undertake an annual summer inspection of the Oldham Way circular path. The survey pulls together reports and observations from group members over the whole of the route.

## Objective 5: Encourage greater involvement in managing local Rights of Way

### Supporting Task: 5a) Promote ways in which the public can report problems on the network

	Proposed Actions	Resources	Key Partners	Timescales	Links to other strategies
i	Work with appropriate departments and agencies to ensure that the public can easily report incidences of fly tipping, litter, and dog fouling on the network. This includes the use of the Council's on-line webpage facilities for reporting.	X	Environmental Protection	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	
ii	Continue to work jointly with appropriate departments involved in preventative measures, or taking enforcement action when necessary	X	Environmental Protection	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	
iii	Provide means for cyclists using routes to report issues to the Cycling Officer			Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	
iv	Work closely with the Police and Crime Partnerships to reduce illegal motorised use, and antisocial behaviour		Community Safety Unit, Greater Manchester Police, PEF	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	

## Objective 5: Encourage greater involvement in managing local Rights of Way

Supporting Task: 5b) Increase involvement of user groups and other local community / volunteer groups in managing local Rights of Way

	Proposed Actions	Resources	Key Partners	Timescales	Links to other strategies
i	Work with user groups and other local community / volunteer groups to identify ways in which they can contribute to the management of the local Rights of Way network.	X £	User groups, LAFs, Groundwork BTCV, Community Service	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	
ii	Continue to encourage path surveys undertaken by members of user groups	X £	User groups	Throughout the 10 year period of the plan	
iii	The creation of National Cycle Network routes offer the potential to provide rangers, appointed by Sustrans, to monitor the routes	LTP	Cycling Officer	As and when NCN routes are created	Oldham Cycling Strategy, LTP2

## **6 Partnership Working**

Through the process of developing the RoWIP and its associated consultation exercises, it became evident that linking with surrounding authorities is crucial. Rights of Way do not necessarily conform to Council boundaries, more to the environment they are located in. Therefore in order to ensure efficient working, cross-border working will be required, particularly in areas where Rights of Way cross or could cross the boundaries.

Further to this, partnership working within the borough will form one of the main drivers for the plan to implement and monitor the aims and outcomes. The continuing support from partners both from Oldham Council and from outside bodies, volunteers and landowners will give synergy to the work carried out as part of the improvement plan. As part of this, the bodies who may be required to contribute to the plan have been identified. They include:

### **Greater Manchester Pennine Fringe Local Access Forum (GMPFLAF)**

The Greater Manchester Pennine Fringe Local Access Forum (GMPFLAF) has been set up to cover the districts of Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale and Tameside, due to the similar nature of the areas' topography, which includes substantial amounts of countryside rising to the Pennine and West Pennine Moors, green wedges of countryside separating the various towns, and fairly dense networks of Rights of Way. The GMPFLAF comprises representatives of user groups, landowners, Local Authority elected members and other organisations with an interest in access issues in the countryside and towns.

The forum's remit is to consider and advise on access issues affecting the geographical area of the forum. This has included commenting on Draft Regulations, commenting on the Countryside Agency's Draft Maps of Access Land and Registered Common Land, close involvement in the preparation by the individual Local Authorities on Rights of Way Improvement Plans, and other related issues. All meetings are open to the public.

### **Peak District National Park Local Access Forum**

The Peak District National Park Local Access Forum is a similar group to the GMPFLAF, meeting regularly to review and advise the National Park Authority and Derbyshire County Council on improvements to public access in Peak District countryside.

The forum first met in December 2000 following the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and was re-established in 2003 with new members. It usually meets every three months, with occasional additional meetings, as business demands. Its members bring experience of a broad range of interests including walking, climbing and cycling, farming, land management, conservation and local business. All meetings are open to the public.

## **Pennine Edge Forest (PEF)**

PEF is a community forestry partnership consisting of Oldham, Rochdale, Tameside and Stockport Councils, United Utilities, the Forestry Commission and other partners. As well as improving the environmental image and quality of the region to project a positive image, PEF will also improve the overall quality of life for those who live and work in the area, through investment in the landscape and into green infrastructure. Amongst its key targets and objectives, PEF aims to provide 25km of new and improved recreation access and green commuting routes, together with 400 hectares of accessible community woodland, by 2013.

## **Pennine Prospects - Access, Visitor Management and Recreation Group**

Pennine Prospects, the Rural Regeneration Company for the Southern Pennines, coordinates a number of working groups who seek to strengthen the identity of the South Pennines and to attract investment in the environmental and cultural economy of the area.

One such group is the 'Access, Visitor Management and Recreation Group' (commonly known as the 'Access Group'). The group is attended by stakeholders from relevant local authorities, utility companies, the voluntary sector and other interested parties. The group meets at least quarterly to manage the development and delivery of a programme of activities on behalf of Pennine Prospects including:

- Southern Pennines Walking Festival
- Heritage Access and Education Network (HAEN)
- Practitioner workshop/training events
- Integrated access management
- Fire planning

The group support initiatives such as promotion and management of access to the countryside, including to a series of local, regional and national trails, encouraging inward investment, improving sustainability, and establishing a strategic approach to management of the South Pennines.

The groups listed above have all been involved in the development of the RoWIP for Oldham, and are also likely to provide input into the implementation and review processes.

## 7 Implementation, Monitoring and Review

This RoWIP provides the means for cumulative improvement of the existing network of Rights of Way, together with plans for creation or upgrade of new routes, to complement the existing network.

The Statement of Action tables show a project plan of works to be completed within specified timescales. As the document is intended to be a long-term strategy, detailed information regarding timescales has not been provided, with indicative data provided in its place. This enables the plan to remain flexible, so that required works can respond and react to external circumstances.

To ensure that the health and safety of those using Oldham's Rights of Way is not compromised, a hierarchy of priority for implementation of works on the network has been devised:

- Issues compromising the health and safety of network users
- According to level of use
- Number of complaints
- Cost and time in resolving the issue

No dedicated funding has been provided by DEFRA for implementation of the RoWIP. As such, and as the plan is intended to provide short, medium and long term actions, together with aspirational actions, it may be, that after review and investigation, that some of the actions are identified as not being viable within the 10-year period of the plan. As such, a programme of monitoring and review will occur annually over a 10 year period, 2008-2018, alongside the production and publishing of annual reports, which will identify what has been achieved within the existing period, and what is considered likely to be achieved within the next period, taking into account resource and budgetary constraints.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 provides for the Secretary of State to make regulations covering the reporting of performance on Rights of Way functions way functions. The regulations may affect the way we monitor and report on the RoWIP.

Monitoring of progress towards the implementation of the actions will be measured through the annual reporting process, alongside Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) for Public Rights of Way and LTP scheme outputs.

In addition, an annual report will be prepared for the Local Access Forum, detailing the previous year's achievements, with priorities reviewed in order to remain flexible to changing circumstances.

A significant review of the RoWIP and its shared priorities with the LTP will be undertaken in 2010/11, at which time changes to the document and implementation may take place.

## **Appendix A: Methodology**

### **Stage 1 – Assessment of Public Rights of Way Network**

Stage 1 of the project was to undertake a thorough assessment of the current Public Rights of Way network, to ensure a full understanding of all the key issues. To do this, the knowledge and expertise of Council officers was used, alongside the review of relevant data sources, policies and information, and the critical review of other Rights of Way Improvement Plans to identify areas of best practice from elsewhere.

At this stage, information was obtained relating to the condition of the network, including information gathered through audits, relevant mapping data, and information on any public applications for new routes, improvements to existing routes, or requests for the formalisation of Rights of Way.

Using this information and data, an initial assessment of the network was undertaken, to identify network density for different user groups, links from local settlements to key attractors, and any obvious gaps in the network. Unitary Development Plans were made use of – both covering OMBC, and the Peak District National Park – to identify areas likely to attract higher numbers of visitors, where demand for access is likely to be, and to identify how well served those locations are by the network.

This information was supplemented by undertaking a thorough literature review of relevant documents and plans. This included:

- A thorough review of relevant guidance and best practice on producing RoWIPs, including the DEFRA RoWIP guidelines;
- A review of relevant local, regional and national policy relating to land use, Rights of Way and transport (including policy documents from neighbouring authorities and the Peak District National Park). This included a review of the CRoW Act, Community Strategies and Regional Tourist Plans, UDPs, the Greater Manchester LTP, Oldham Beyond and relevant legislation, including the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and the Highways Act 1980;
- A critique of existing RoWIPs from other councils, including Rotherham, Lancashire, Hampshire, Wigan, Derbyshire and Peterborough, to assess content and structure, to identify best practice from elsewhere and to help decide on the overall approach to the RoWIP for OMBC; and
- A review of relevant data relating to people's usage of Rights of Way networks and leisure patterns, identified by the most recent census and other national surveys, to draw out general themes and issues.

The work carried out in Stage 1 helped to shape the approach used for the rest of the study, in terms of the structure and contents of the draft RoWIP.

### **Stage 2 – Assessment of (user) needs and demands**

Stage 2 involved carrying out consultation work with the network users and stakeholders to understand their needs and demands. Doing this early on in the RoWIP process enabled the identification of key priorities and issues for the next

stages of the work. In particular, it helped to focus the surveying activities in Stage 3 on key routes for different users. It also ensured that the final Statement of Action focused on the issues which are the most important to existing and potential network users.

In order to gather detailed qualitative information on current perceptions and use of the network from different user groups, a series of evening focus groups were held. Separate groups with walkers, equestrians and disabled users (including partially sighted and blind users) were held, with those invited being people who use the network for a range of purposes, for example, for leisure, utility, and educational purposes.

Invitations to the focus groups were sent to users identified through OMBC contacts within existing countryside user groups, as well as people who liked to receive information updates on the network and on available routes. A set agenda was used to ensure that a range of issues was covered in a structured manner. The study focused in particular on current usage of the network and specific priorities for improvement, with time for additional feedback provided at the end of the sessions.

A group for cyclists was also held, but there were no attendees. Alternative information was gained from known cyclists to ensure that this group were able to participate in the consultation.

A half-day workshop for stakeholders was carried out, and representatives from organisations such as cycle user groups, rambling groups, motorbike/ scrambler groups, fishing/ angling groups, local disability groups and mobility access groups; and other more formal organisations, such as land owners' or land management associations were invited. Key statutory consultees were also invited, such as Natural England, Parish Councils the Greater Manchester Pennine Fringe Local Access Forum, and the Peak District National Park Authority.

Results from the user groups, stakeholder consultation and landowners' questionnaire can be found in Appendix D.

The focus groups and workshop were used to enable the development of a focused approach to surveying routes in Stage 3, enabling the investigation of specific issues of interest to the different user groups.

Once the assessment of the network and user needs and demands had been completed, a SWOT analysis was carried out. This exercise helped to identify which routes were of the highest importance, used the most, and had the most significant issues, which helped to determine which routes would be prioritised for surveying.

### **Stage 3 – Assessment of the adequacy of the network to meet the needs**

Stage 3 formed the final part of the assessment stage of the RoWIP. This stage compared the current network with users' needs and demands to enable assessment of the adequacy of the network, and to identify potential improvements. This stage involved some route audit work to help identify specific problems and issues and to enable more detailed feasibility work to be undertaken on specific routes. The audits



were based on issues identified during stages 1 and 2, to ensure that they focused on priority routes and areas. Audits looked at issues such as:

- Surfacing and condition;
- Suitability for purpose;
- Accessibility (for different user groups, including access for disabled groups);
- Topography;
- Vegetation;
- Lighting and security;
- Access controls;
- Maintenance issues; and
- Signage/Waymarking etc.

To ensure that the surveys were comprehensive and consistent, an audit checklist, which included accessibility criteria for different user groups, as well as linking in with the Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) audit, was developed. The routes assessed included permissive routes, access land and quiet roads, as well as formal Rights of Way. Each identified section of the network was assessed taking into account all possible mode types, to ensure that network routes for individual modes could be produced. Infrastructure, quality and quantity of the routes were surveyed at this time, including the recording of any particular problems.

The audits enabled the identification of issues affecting different types of users of the network, for example, its suitability for those who use the network to exercise, participate in a particular activity, such as horse riding, or simply as a means of getting from one place to another.

The audits were written up, and key issues mapped to help to evaluate the network and options for improvement.

Once all the routes had been mapped, the current provision provided by the network could be identified, with several analysis options being enlisted in order to evaluate the network for different user groups and for different purposes.

At this stage the data collected was used to compare the overall network with other boroughs, or locations with similar attributes and proportions of urban and rural land. Using the maps, and accompanying data, user needs and demands were assimilated with the current network to identify all inconsistencies and issues arising out of the current network provision.

#### **Stage 4 – Preparation of Statement of Action**

Having gained a detailed understanding of the current network and how well it met different user needs and demands, a Statement of Action for improving the network was developed.

In order to produce and develop this, officers from OMBC were consulted, to identify a range of possible improvements for further investigation and development. This drew on the data collected during Stages 1-3 and also took into account the GMLTP2 objectives for the Oldham RoWIP.

The Statement of Action consisted of five overarching objectives, which linked to the Local Transport Plan objectives, alongside a list of supporting tasks, and a range of actions and tasks which would be used to meet the objectives. The recommendations were set out in order of priority, alongside indicative timescales, costs, funding opportunities, partnership opportunities, and any other relevant supporting information.

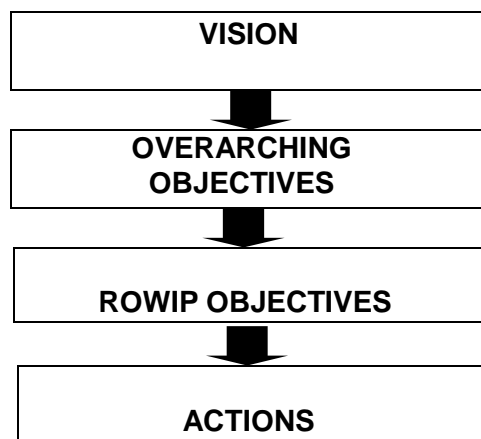
Throughout this section of work, comparisons were made with RoWIPs produced for other areas. The main comparisons are taken from Derbyshire County Council's draft plan.

### **Stage 5 - Production of Draft RoWIP**

The draft RoWIP produced included an overview of key issues identified during Stages 1 to 3, and the finalised Statement of Action.

The recommended actions as detailed within the Statement of Action were set within the context of a wider strategy framework, with a clear vision, objectives and key themes identified. This provided a clear structure for the document, and provided the basis for progress to be monitored against specific objectives. Linkages to the GMLTP were shown by identifying synergies between GMLTP and Oldham RoWIP objectives.

The actions for the RoWIP were set within the following context, which can be seen in detail in later sections of this document:



### **Stage 6 - Consultation with the public – Is this the Right Way?**

The draft RoWIP was out to public consultation for a three-month period, between June and the start of September 2007. The document was promoted using Oldham Council's website, alongside a leaflet and poster specifically produced for the purpose, and displayed within libraries, Tourist Information Centres and Countryside Visitor Centres.

A feedback questionnaire was produced to encourage structured feedback on specific elements of the plan, although several respondents chose to respond by letter or email in order to give more detailed responses and feedback.

A range of responses was received from organised interest groups, such as parish councils and local access forums, as well from interested individuals.

Responses received to the feedback questionnaire were analysed and overall priorities for respondents in terms of objective and supporting task importance were summarised. This information was then used to prioritise the importance of objectives and tasks, and their subsequent order, for production of the final RoWIP.

Comments received in letter or email form were set out in table-form, with a response provided for each comment, whether that be why a suggestion or comment had not been translated into the final RoWIP, to answer a particular question, or to state that the suggestion had been accommodated within the final document. It is intended that the written responses summary report will be available for a limited period on the OMBC website.

### **Stage 7 – Publication of the final RoWIP**

Using the information gained through the 12-week public consultation, the draft RoWIP was modified, with some suggestions assimilated into the document, where appropriate, and others responded to, as outlined above.

The publication of the final document signals the start of a large ongoing project to implement the actions outlined within the RoWIP.

## Appendix B: Rights of Way Survey Results

The following table outlines the observations made on the 16 routes in Oldham that have been surveyed as part of developing the RoWIP.

**Table 4: Audit Observations**

Survey Section	Current Status	Location	Comments
A	Footpaths 41 and 42 Crompton	Leading from The junction with the B6197 Buckstones Road to the A640 Rochdale Road	Legal Order required to upgrade this ridden track to a Public Bridleway. To be followed by drainage and surfacing works Strategic Link to the National Trail
B	Footpath 19 Chadderton and Bridleway 8 Royton	Chadderton Fold to Oozewood Royton (via Chadderton Heights)	Legal agreements required providing additional land for a field edge Bridleway on land above Chadderton Hall Park, as well as for part of the route in Rochdale which is designated as a footpath
C	Footpath Saddleworth 92	Leading from Church Lane Uppermill towards Ryefields	Surfacing and drainage improvements to the section of eroded Footpath alongside the cemetery
D	Bridleway Saddleworth 119	Leading from the junction with Wool Road Dobcross to Gatehead Delph	Engineering work to stabilise and re-route part of the Bridleway at Gatehead Mills
E	Footpaths Oldham and Crompton 114 111	River Beal between Cop Road and Fullwood	Footbridge replacement schemes at two locations on the River Beal and other path improvements between these sites on part of the Crompton Circuit
F (N)	Footpath Saddleworth 13	Tame Valley Way – north section Denshaw	Upgrading improvements to the Tame Valley Way between Denshaw and Delph
F (S)	Footpath Saddleworth 13	Tame Valley Way – south section Delph	Upgrading improvements to the Tame Valley Way between Denshaw and Delph
G	Footpaths 60 and 161 Oldham	Disused canal towpath from Roman Road Hollinwood to Cutler Hill Road	Removal of up-growth and side growth together with surfacing improvements – part of recreational cycleway route

<b>Survey Section</b>	<b>Current Status</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Comments</b>
H	Minor highways - unsealed	- Broad Lane and Hey Flake Lane Delph	Drainage and surfacing improvements to various minor highways, being part of the Horseshoe Trail Bridleway route
I	Footpath 35 Saddleworth	Castleshaw Valley	Strategic Links to the National Trail Footpath improvements including improvements to sections of boardwalk
J (N)	Footpath 255 Saddleworth	Leading from Holmfirth Road (A635) to Haw Clough Lane	Legal Order required to upgrade ridden track to a Public Bridleway. To be followed by drainage and surfacing works
J (S)	Bradbury Lane and footpath 263 (Oldham Way) Saddleworth	Bradbury Lane and footpath number 263 (Oldham Way) Saddleworth Within the Peak Park	Various drainage, surfacing and stile improvements
K	Various Footpaths	Paths between the A672 Oldham Road and the B6052 Delph New Road	Various drainage, surfacing and waymarking improvements to the Footpath network in this area – linking the Tame Valley Way and Oldham Way
L	Minor Highway	Wood Brook Lane	Major drainage and surfacing improvements
M	Footpath 36 Failsworth	Leading from Leicester Road to Lords Brook	New flight of timber steps required on sloping section of Footpath
N	Footpath 59 Crompton	Leading from Smallbrook Road to Shaw	New flight of stone steps and repairs to retaining wall required on the first section of Footpath
O	Bridleway 160 Saddleworth	Leading from Green Lane to Cabin Lane	Replacement footbridge to accommodate Equestrians
P	Footpath 54 Failsworth	Bell Clough Failsworth	Improvements to Footpath – boardwalk and step replacements. This forms part of the Medlock Valley Way, Oldham Way and Tameside Trail

## **Appendix C: Policy Context**

### **Introduction**

Government guidance recommends that RoWIPs be developed within the context of other plans and strategies produced by the relevant council, particularly with reference to healthy living, leisure, recreation, sport, tourism, transport and community strategies. RoWIPs, in turn, should also influence these areas of responsibility, particularly where they are relevant to the economic, social and well-being aspect of community strategies.

The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is particularly identified as being of relevance in terms of linkages, with the two documents due to progressively merge into one by the next round of the LTP in 2010/2011; Oldham Council's RoWIP has therefore been formulated to be closely aligned to the Greater Manchester LTP and its overarching objectives.

The RoWIP has potential to contribute to the following key policies and strategies, and by doing so, will ensure a joined up approach to implementation. In addition, this will provide potential for gaining access to additional funding streams.

### **Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000**

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 aims to extend and improve the Rights of Way network. By requiring Local Authorities to prepare and publish Rights of Way Improvement Plans within 5 years of the commencement of Sections 60-62 of the Act, with subsequent reviews to take place within 10 years of the initial RoWIP production, and on an ongoing basis thereafter.

The Act requires the following elements to be included in the RoWIP production:

- Assessment of present and future Rights of Way requirements for leisure and recreation, for all classes of user;
- Assessment of information gained, and use to develop recommendations for the Statement of Action;
- Consultation with a variety of users and stakeholders, at several stages of the RoWIP's production; and
- Publication and promotion of the plan.

### **Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan 2006-2010 (July 2006) (GMLTP2)**

The Greater Manchester LTP sets out key principles to assist in the development of Greater Manchester RoWIPs, to ensure that the two documents are able to be merged together in 2010/2011.

In addition to the central overarching objectives of Tackling Congestion, Delivering Accessibility, Safer Roads, Better Air Quality and Quality of Life, a list of additional relevant objectives are detailed. These are fully outlined in the Key Themes and Statement of Action sections of this report, and are directly referenced in the development of the RoWIP objectives and actions.

## **Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West (RSS)**

The Regional Spatial Strategy will influence the implementation of the RoWIP when the strategy is published and implementation begins. Recognition of the policies within this document may require updating in line with amendments to the Draft RSS.

Policy RT7 – A Regional Framework for Walking and Cycling, recognises the importance of better provision for pedestrians and cyclists in contributing towards a reduction in car dependency, development of sustainable communities, improved accessibility and community health. The RSS states that Local Authorities should produce action plans for the development of walking and cycling networks (in line with Department for Transport publication – Walking and Cycling: Action), combined with Rights of Way Improvement Plans. It recognises that walking and cycling networks can provide important elements of ‘Green Infrastructure’.

Policy EM3 – Green Infrastructure, states that “plans, strategies, proposals and schemes should:

- Identify, promote and deliver multi-propose networks of green space, particularly where there is currently limited access to natural green space or where connectivity between these places is poor; and
- Integrate Green Infrastructure provision within existing and new development, particularly within major development and regeneration schemes.

The ‘Green Infrastructure’ approach calls for networks of green space to be managed in an integrated way that allows for the provision of wider socio-economic and public health benefits (e.g. increased opportunities for physical activity) while at the same time contributing to the delivery of regional biodiversity targets.

A Green Infrastructure Guide for the North West is currently being prepared.

## **The Rural Development Programme for England 2007-2013**

The Rural Development Programme for England provides an overview of the current issues which influence rural areas and develops an action plan for future improvements. The report highlights the need for a Rights of Way Improvement Plan to be developed by each Local Authority, outlining the current demand, and means by which improvements can be made to their section of the Rights of Way network.

Rights of Way are highlighted in this report as the principal access to the countryside for the public, providing 120,000 miles of paths throughout the UK, and serving approximately 700 million day trips per annum. The need to improve access to the countryside is highlighted within this report, specifically with regards to creating new routes for walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and less mobile people. A survey conducted in 2000 found that almost half of those who had walked in the countryside in the past year would do so more if there was greater footway provision made.

The report recommends that improvements to the network should be made in a sustainable way so as to minimise the depletion of natural resources within rural areas.

Suggestions, such as the introduction of linear access and running educational visits, are outlined as potential methods of achieving this.

### **Oldham Metropolitan Borough Unitary Development Plan (adopted July 2006)**

Policy T1.3 – The Network of Routes for Non-Motorised Travel, seeks to protect from development a borough-wide network of routes for non-motorised travel, which are identified in Oldham’s strategies or form part of designated national networks. The policy aims to encourage a modal shift towards more sustainable and healthy forms of travel by improving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, whilst also increasing recreational opportunities for people in the borough by allowing them better access to the countryside and green corridors.

Policy R1 – Maintaining Supply through the Protection and Improvement of Existing Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities, recognises the importance of protecting recreation routes. It is acknowledged that they provide links between open space within the urban areas, and between the urban areas and the wider countryside. Recreation routes also provide opportunities for walkers, cyclists and horse-riders and other non-motorised traffic to travel on green transport networks, thereby improving accessibility and encouraging sustainable recreational activity, whilst also providing corridors for wildlife within the urban area.

### **Local Development Framework**

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 has resulted in major changes to the way the land use planning policy system operates. The Unitary Development Plan will eventually be replaced with a folder of spatial planning documents, which together form the Local Development Framework, and will include the following:

- Core Strategy – sets out a vision and strategic objectives for the borough, a spatial strategy, core policies and a monitoring and implementation framework for achieving delivery;
- Development Control Policies – set out criteria against which planning applications for development and use of land or buildings will be assessed;
- Site-Specific Allocations of Land – sets out where land is allocated for a specific use such as residential, business, retail or open space;
- Supplementary Planning Documents – expand on policy to help its implementation.

The timetable for producing these documents can be found in the Council’s Local Development Scheme. Work has begun on the preparation of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies - Development Plan Document.

### **Oldham Community Strategy – Planning for Sustainable Communities 2005-2020 (April 2004)**

A range of objectives are contained within the strategy, which aim to improve the quality of the environment in which people “live, learn, work and play”, by working to ensure improved environment, transportation, economic, health and social care outcomes.



Of particular relevance, are the key themes of “Health and Well-being for All” which contains aims to work with a range of partners to provide services ensuring equality of opportunity and equity of provision for all of the community; and “An Improved and Valued Environment” which contains aims to develop cycling and pedestrian strategies, an improved transport infrastructure to enable access to the network and higher quality environment through environmentally sensitive regeneration.

### **Oldham Local Agenda 21 Plan: 1999 onwards (1999)**

Oldham’s Local Agenda 21 strategy outlines many objectives, seeking both to ensure the conservation and protection of the local environment, as well as to improve access to it for the public. Those which are most relevant include aims and objectives to reduce pollution, enhancement of wildlife habitats, conservation of canals, access to open space, increased use of alternative forms of transport to the car, and health and equality themes. There are therefore strong links between the RoWIP and the Local Agenda 21 and these should be recognised within the RoWIP aims and objectives, for mutual benefit.

### **Peak District National Park: Local Plan (Adopted 2001)**

As part of Oldham’s Rights of Way network is within the Peak District National Park (PDNP), it is essential that the PDNP’s plans are taken into account, and objectives combine with those formulated for Oldham, to ensure that the policies fit together. The strategies outlined within the PDNP document include those to protect the flora and fauna, particularly in Special Protection Areas and Special Areas of Conservation, those protecting routes, where development is expected to remove a section of route, and those which provide improved routes for those making use of the Rights of Way network.

### **Oldham Beyond**

The Oldham Beyond project is a framework for bringing regeneration across the whole borough, with actions outlined up to the year 2020. It is an inspirational vision for the future and concerns development of quality public spaces, housing, learning, employment opportunities and transport links.

A series of reports, including The Heart of Oldham and a Local Needs Assessment and Audit, were produced as part of the Oldham Beyond project, to identify the ideas and strategies that would transform Oldham. These are outlined below in terms of their relevance to the Rights of Way network.

### **A Vision for the Borough of Oldham - the 'Common Ground'**

Elements of the strategy relate to a proposed range of improvements to the public realm of the borough, focusing on the spaces where people meet and interact. An aim of the strategy is to make better links between the urban and rural parts of the borough.

Amongst other proposals are a series of corridors through Oldham Town Centre, including Green Walks running from Oldham Edge to Alexandra Park, linking the countryside to the town.

## **The Heart of Oldham**

This report focuses on the town centre and is a strategy to improve the public realm of the borough, to unite the borough's community. It states how Oldham Town Centre is the hub for public spaces across the borough.

An aim of the Masterplan is to bridge the gap between the town centre and the surrounding neighbourhoods by creating a series of urban bridges and gateways to provide attractive routes into the town centre.

## **Local Needs Assessment and Audit**

A local needs assessment and audit of open space, sport and recreation facilities within the borough has recently been completed in accordance with Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (PPG17) on Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation and its companion guide.

This provides the Council with baseline information regarding existing provision, and will be used to identify surplus and deficiencies in provision and inform the preparation of the Local Development Framework. It will also help to inform the preparation of a revised Green Space Strategy.

## **Cycle Strategy**

Oldham's Cycling Strategy has been developed to address the needs of cyclists in Oldham and increase cycle usage. The strategy is based on the National Cycling Strategy and emphasises the needs of cyclists by:

- Providing a clear and concise framework for cycling infrastructure;
- Setting priorities for implementation;
- Communicating cycling needs to interested cycling groups and to the Council's internal departments;
- Encouraging awareness of cycle usage and other related issues; and
- Assisting in procurement of appropriate funding.

There are a number of policies that will link directly to Oldham's RoWIP and this will be recognised in the actions outlined in this plan.

## **Pennine Edge Forest Business Plan 2004 – 2013**

The Pennine Edge Forest aim is to create opportunities and benefits for the environment, economy and communities of the Oldham, Rochdale, Stockport and Tameside Metropolitan Boroughs, and create a high quality investment gateway to Greater Manchester. The Pennine Edge Forest Business Action Plan 2004-2013 has been produced by the Pennine Edge Forest Partnership to provide a focus for this.

The PEF Business Plan aims to achieve this by:

- Regenerating and transforming derelict land and neglected landscapes;
- Identifying new regional park resource potential;
- Delivering the green infrastructure for "The Northern Way";

- Bringing environmental quality to Housing Market Renewal;
- Connecting town and country in the urban fringe;
- Delivering the England Forest Strategy in the North-West;
- Supporting Rural Regeneration in the South Pennines.

## Appendix D: Consultation

*To measure “the extent to which the local Rights of Way meet the present and likely future needs of the public” and “the accessibility of local Rights of Way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems” (CRoW Act 2000)*

Consultation has taken place in several stages, which has contributed to production of the final RoWIP document. Initial consultation consisted of focus groups, a landowner’s questionnaire and a stakeholder event, allowing all interested parties to provide their input into the direction the RoWIP would take.

A range of questions was posed to each of the focus groups held, which are shown below. The questions formed the structure for each of the events, ensuring that constructive feedback was provided, which was of practical use to the RoWIP development work.

### Structure of Focus Groups

Introduction – the purpose of the evening

Explanation of RoWIPs

Discuss current usage of RoW.

- Name
- Area of residence
- How do you use RoW?
- Do you regularly use RoW outside of Oldham?
- Maps – ask participants to draw three routes where they use the network.

Discuss RoW Problems

- Obstructions – fencing, machinery, farm equipment
- Network proximity to origin / destination
- Legibility – signage, sense of direction / sense of place
- Surfacing - surface quality, consistent surfacing
- Lighting
- Security
- Fencing & gates
- Gradient
- Conflict with other users
- Crossings
- Access – onto network
- Quality of environment
- Any other general problems
- Maps – ask participants to pinpoint problem locations on the routes they have drawn.

Discuss access to RoW

- How do you currently access RoW?
- How could access be improved?

Discuss limitations to using RoW

Discuss how participants find information about opportunities for using RoW and the countryside.

Discuss improvements to existing paths

- Discuss adequacy of the network
- Highlight priorities for new provision
- Discuss specific improvements to be made
- Maps – ask participants to highlight useful additions to network

Ask participants to draw together 10-15 key points that have been discussed throughout the evening, that are most important to them – then to prioritise using stickers

A large amount of information was gained at each of the groups, as such, it has been summarised into the below tables. If you would like further details of the findings from the focus groups, please contact Unity Partnerships Rights of Way Officer.

The main outcomes of each of the groups follow:

### Walkers

Invitations to the Walking Focus Group were sent to walking enthusiast groups, and known walking residents in the Oldham area. Groups invited included:

- Groundwork Oldham and Rochdale / Oldham Stepping Forward
- Oldham Mountaineering Club
- Environment Partnership
- Peak & Northern Footpath Society
- Wednesday Walkers
- Open Spaces
- Ramblers' Association

A total of 5 attended the focus group, of which three were local residents, one was representing the Wednesday Walkers, and one was representing the Peak and Northern Footpath Society.

**Table 5: Walkers' Focus Group: Issues and Solutions**

Key Issues	Solutions
Maintenance	Tougher penalties on landowners breaking law
Conflicts with landowners	Links between definitive map and way markers
Poor signage	Improvements / maintenance on existing paths
Fly tipping	More paths and better information to relieve pressure on heavily used areas
Illegal off-road motorcycling and 4x4 use	User code of conduct
Lack and quality of toilet facilities	Improved and increased provision of toilet facilities

Priorities for walkers were:

- A well maintained network
- Maintenance on existing routes rather than creation of new routes

## Equestrians

Invitations to the Equestrian Focus Group were sent to riding clubs, stables, and other known equestrian residents in the Oldham area. Groups invited included:

- Oakhill Riding School
- Hudsteads Riding School
- Low Crompton Stables
- Limefield Livery Stables
- Kenyon Farm Riding Centre
- Rochdale and District Riding Club
- West Pennine Bridleways Association
- Croft End Equestrian Centre
- Tameside Riding Club
- Foxdenton Riding School
- Saddleworth and District Pony Club
- Oldham and District Riding Club

A total of 11 attended the focus group, of which seven were local residents, and four were representing the West Pennine Bridleways Association, and the Croft End Equestrian Centre.

**Table 6: Equestrians' Focus Group: Issues and Solutions**

Key Issues	Solutions
Path closure, restrictions, inaccessible routes and subsequent safety implications for on-road riding Landowner obstruction of routes Poor maintenance Lack of signage and information about routes Fly tipping	User code of conduct Better information provision Improved access to longer routes Maintenance (particularly surfacing) of routes Policing of authorised use of Rights of Way Closer working with landowners

Priorities for equestrians were:

- Maintenance of existing routes
- Improved access to longer distance routes

## Mobility and Sight Impaired Users

Invitations to the Mobility and Sight Impaired Users Focus Group were sent to known mobility and sensory impairment support and assistance groups in the Oldham area. Groups invited included:

- Oldham Promobility
- Access for All
- Sensory Rehab Services
- Shaw Disability Association
- Oldham Disability Alliance
- Manchester Environmental Group of Blind and Partially Sighted People
- Manchester Disabled Peoples' Access Group

A total of 3 attended the focus group, of which all were local residents.

**Table 7: Mobility and Sight Impaired Users' Focus Group: Issues and Solutions**

Key Issues	Solutions
User conflict	Improved surfacing including colour contrasting and tactile markings
Maintenance of vegetation and surfacing along routes	User code of conduct
Awkward stiles	Information provision in all formats and from a range of locations
Fly tipping	Better maintenance of routes and surfacing
Lack of information in a range of formats, lack of tactile signage	Segregation of motorised users from main network
Problems accessing guided walk locations	Replacement of stiles with gates
Lack of adequate lighting	Improved lighting

Priorities for mobility and sight-impaired users were:

- Maintained and defined foliage
- Replacement of stiles with gates
- Improved information provision, both prior to arrival at and once on network



## Stakeholder Consultation

A consultation event was held to gain the views of a range of stakeholders. After an initial presentation, attendees were split into three groups, with a range of questions posed to each of the groups, which are shown below. The questions formed the structure for the event, ensuring that constructive feedback was provided, which was of practical use to the RoWIP development work.

### Structure for Stakeholder Consultation Groups

#### Introductions

- Name
- Organization represented
- Mode type
- Maps – ask participants to highlight areas where they use the network.

#### Discuss RoW Problems

- Obstructions – fencing, machinery, farm equipment
- Network proximity to stables
- Legibility – signage, sense of direction / sense of place
- Surfacing - surface quality, consistent surfacing
- Lighting
- Security
- Fencing & gates
- Headroom
- Gradient
- Conflict with other users
- Access – onto network
- Crossings
- Quality of environment
- Any other general problems
- Access issues
- Printed information / websites etc.
- Adequacy of the network
- Maps – ask participants to pinpoint problem locations on the routes they have drawn (using stickers or post it notes).

#### Discuss solutions to above problems

- New routes (Maps - ask participants to highlight useful additions to network)
- Missing links
- Signage etc. (see above list)

Ask participants to draw together 5 key points that have been discussed that are most important to them – then to prioritise these using stickers (5 each)

A range of groups and individual stakeholders were identified and invited to the event. The list includes, but is not exclusive to:

- Neighbouring Councils (including Oldham itself) – relevant departments
- Peak Park Authority
- British Waterways
- United Utilities
- Countryside Agency
- GMPTE
- National Farmers' Union
- Friends of the Earth
- Shaw and Crompton Parish Council
- Local Residents' Associations
- Saddleworth Civic Trust
- Oldham Ramblers' Association
- Oldham Mountaineering Club
- Oldham Touring Cyclists
- Cyclist Touring Company
- Trans-Pennine Cycling Club
- Trail Riders' Fellowship
- Rochdale Canal Society
- National Federation of Anglers
- West Pennine Bridleways Association
- Tameside Riding Group
- Saddleworth & District Pony Club
- Oldham Race Equality Partnership
- The Oldham's Adults & Kids Project (Oak)
- Anglo West Indian Sports & Social Club
- BME Network
- Manchester Environmental Group of Blind and Partially Sighted People
- Oldham Promobility

A large amount of information was gained at the event, as such, it has been summarised into the below tables. If you would like further details of the findings, please contact Unity Partnerships Rights of Way Officer.

The main outcomes were a range of issues and potential solutions:

**Table 8: Stakeholder Consultation Results**

Key Issues	Solutions
Lack of resources (staff and financial)	Additional funding to be acquired for both staff resource and for identified works on Rights of Way network
Maintenance on network	Improved maintenance on network
Poor communication between Council and users	Improved communication between Council and existing/potential users
Obstruction on network	Longer routes for equestrians
Lack of route continuity in areas	A User Code of Conduct to reduce user conflict
User conflict on network	

Priorities for stakeholders were:

- Increased resources for Rights of Way network
- Better maintenance on network
- Better route continuity

## Landowners' Questionnaire

A questionnaire was sent to a range of landowners and farmers, to gain their feedback on issues concerning them, where Rights of Way cross their land. The main outcomes follow:

**Table 9: Landowner Questionnaire Results**

Key Issues	Solutions
Gates left open Issues with dogs (fouling, out of control) Poor signage Lack of promoted "Country Code" Poor maintenance of routes Lack of policing of network	Production and promotion of User Code of Conduct, including User Responsibilities Improved maintenance to network Improved signage and way marking Reclassification of selected routes Wardens on network to police and reduce anti-social behaviour

### Summary of key issues

- General priorities for all network users
- Maintenance of existing routes as opposed to new routes
- Improved signage (including tactile)
- Improved 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

## 8 References

Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs

1. Rights of Way Improvement Plans: Statutory Guidance to Local Authorities in England and Wales (November 2002)
2. Local authorities Rights of Way Improvement Plans and Local Transport Plans – A report – May 2006