



LTP and ROWIP Integration

Good practice note

England's extensive network of public rights of way is a unique and valuable resource. It not only provides opportunities for recreation, but also forms an integral part of the transport system. Rights of way provide means of sustainable travel, particularly for short journeys, in both rural and urban areas, and can play a significant part in reducing traffic congestion and harmful emissions, providing safer routes for vulnerable travellers.

Rights of way improvement plans have given an impetus to authorities to undertake a strategic review of their rights of way networks, to ensure that they cater for current and future needs. And the linking of rights of way improvement plans to local transport plans will help to optimise the part that rights of way play in the wider transport system.



1. Purpose

The publication of the Department for Transport's Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2009 guidance offers an opportunity to local authority transport planning and rights of way officers to optimise the part that rights of way can play in the wider transport system. Linking statutory rights of way improvement plans to local transport plans will promote a shift to active travel, a more interesting and connected transport network and help lever funding for implementation schemes that meet several joint objectives. This good practice note gives advice on how to achieve these outcomes and make efficient use of funding through joined up working.

2. Usefulness of LTP and ROWIP integration

- The new Local Transport Plan (LTP) guidance recognises the role of active travel solutions such as walking and cycling. There is now an opportunity for local authorities to take a broader, more holistic approach to transport and address the rights of way network as an integral part of urban and rural transport systems and in contributing to the achievement of all the national transport goals¹
 - reducing carbon emissions;
 - supporting economic growth;
 - promoting equality of opportunity;
 - contributing to better safety, security and health; and
 - improving quality of life and a healthy natural environment

Further detail on how rights of way can help contribute to these goals is illustrated in Table 1.

- There are many shared aims and links between LTPs and Rights of Way Improvement Plans (ROWIP) which can serve to strengthen and facilitate the long term sustainability of rights of way and the delivery of sustainable transport objectives. Joined up implementation plans can secure more direct and integrated funding and delivery.
- Integration encourages new ways of working with internal and external partners including local access forums.
- Integration gives local authorities an advantage in delivering positive benefits for people and the natural environment – a more active lifestyle in a greener, healthier, low carbon, quieter and safer environment.

3. Our Good Practice Note outcomes

Our aims are:

- for local authorities to be clearer on how the two documents relate to each other- their common themes, objectives and how the new LTP flexibilities enable pragmatic integration measures in the new plans and projects.
- To provide examples of good practice that cement the relationship between the LTP and ROWIP and in particular new ways of packaging rights of way schemes that meet national transport goals in both urban and rural areas that can contribute to sustainable tourism and recreation in addition to linking local communities to employment, key services and facilities.

¹ <http://www.dft.gov.uk/ltp>

4. Timeline

The Local Transport Act 2008² requires all transport authorities to have a new local transport plan in place by April 2011. The CROW Act 2000³ requires a review and a new assessment of a ROWIP not more than ten years after it is first published. This means that in many instances ROWIPs will not be due for review until 2017.

Authorities can now review the ROWIP within the same timescale as the LTP for both strategy and implementation elements. Alternatively owing to the increased flexibilities over timescales built into LTP review and replacement beyond 2011, authorities can review and integrate their ROWIP within the period of a future LTP implementation plan.

Authorities may also wish to consider aligning the implementation plan element of the LTP and statement of action of the ROWIP with local government funding settlement and local area agreement (LAA) timescales.

5. Document Format

Authorities can produce the LTP policy and implementation parts in separate documents and are free to determine when they renew the different parts. It is advisable to consider incorporating the ROWIP within the same framework to help achieve integration. Alternatively it is possible to keep the ROWIP and LTP documents separate but make clear that they complement each other, are both statutory and should both be taken into account in any transport/access related matters.

A common branding style will help integration with thorough cross-referencing to ensure that key aspects of the ROWIP and the role that rights of way can play in delivering sustainable transport solutions are clear.

Should authorities choose to produce the two documents separately, the LTP might include:

- a summary of the benefits and contribution that rights of way bring to the wider transport network;
- the key ROWIP priorities and how they can benefit other parts of the LTP; and
- signpost the detail contained within the separate ROWIP.

The ROWIP might include:

- recognition of the national transport goals and any other local transport objectives; and
- outline how development of the rights of way network can help contribute to these goals.

6. Cross boundary plans

The boundaries of a LTP/ROWIP do not need to follow traditional local authority boundaries; they may instead reflect travel patterns, particularly in city regions. There have been a number of successful Joint Plans for LTP2 and Joint ROWIPs with the same spatial coverage to maximise collaboration and accountability. Tyne and Wear⁴ is a model for LTP/ROWIP integration which other joint authorities may wish to follow in future. At Tyne and Wear an access development officer was appointed with responsibility for the ROWIP, supported by funding from the LTP partners.⁵

² http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2008/ukpga_20080026_en_1

³ http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/ukpga_20000037_en_1

⁴ <http://www.gateshead.gov.uk>

⁵ The LTP partners consist of officers and elected members from the five highway authorities (Gateshead Council, Newcastle City Council, North Tyneside Council, South Tyneside Council and Sunderland City Council) and the Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority.

7. Other statutory plans and strategies

To maximise the opportunities and benefits that active travel solutions can bring, authorities should ensure integration with other statutory plans and strategies at the local and regional levels and make timely contributions to these on key aspects of the LTP and ROWIP. For example, rights of way and the definitive maps which record them should be an integral part of local development frameworks (LDFs), transport asset management plans (TAMPs), cycling, walking, green space, road safety, crime and anti-social behaviour strategies. Merseyside ROWIP 2008-2018⁶ contains a clear diagram of the relationship between the ROWIP and other local authority plans and strategies.

⁶ <http://www.merseysiderightsofway.org>

8. Measures to ensure successful integration

The National Evaluation of ROWIPs 2008⁷ identified a number of measures which can help ensure successful integration of LTPs and ROWIPs. Table 1 below outlines these and provides examples of local highway authorities that successfully demonstrated these measures with Local Transport Plan 2.

Table 1 Measures to ensure successful integration

Measures	Description	Good practice example
Internal structures	Many authorities have reorganised their internal structures as a direct result of the ROWIP in order to improve joint working with the LTP team and more effectively deliver the aims and objectives of the ROWIP.	Nottingham City Council ⁸ benefits from a strong departmental working arrangement, which includes a rights of way officer located in the LTP team. As part of the LTP team, rights of way staff can recharge “preparation time” spent on designing schemes to the LTP as fee earning. The ROWIP and LTP teams also share the same Director which helps facilitate more “joined up” delivery. Merseyside Joint Authority has also been successful in locating a rights of way officer within the LTP Support Unit.
Strong working relationships	Strong working relationships between LTP and ROW staff are key to successful outcomes.	Durham County Council has been successful owing principally to strong working relationships between LTP and ROW staff from the outset and close alignment in a new Council structure without officers being physically located together. Rights of way staff attend LTP budget allocation meetings at the beginning of the financial year to present ideas, secure initial approval from the local strategic partnership (LSP) and secure funds to deliver projects.
Early discussions and linking ROWIP/LTP targets and actions	A partnership approach between ROWIP and LTP staff, which includes early discussions and continued dialogue, is critical to understanding LTP priorities, objectives and how the rights of way network might contribute to these objectives. Further integration can be achieved by setting out an authority’s policies which provide the framework for meeting LTP/ROWIP SMART ⁹ targets and actions, including a	Nottingham City Council’s partnership working helps identify ROWIP schemes as early as possible which form proposals for year on year LTP funding.

⁷ Rights of Way Improvement Plans: National Evaluation 2008: Natural England <http://naturalengland.etraderstores.com/NaturalEnglandShop/Product.aspx?ProductID=71f087f6-7914-4b24-9d84-d384d9056be4>

⁸ <http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk>

⁹ SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timed)

	<p>timescale for achieving the actions which cover either part or the whole life of the LTP and ROWIP. This approach will help define meaningful indicators for monitoring/reporting purposes such as annual review meetings with the government office.</p>	
<p>Establishment of a steering group</p>	<p>For both larger rural county authorities and smaller urban or unitary authorities the evidence is that more successful LTP/ROWIP integration has benefited from the establishment of a steering group to agree, guide and carry out the process taken from the outset. These include representatives from the LTP, ROWIP, planning and tourism teams and the local access forum. A steering group will help to raise the profile of the ROWIP and LTP and link to regional/ county/ district strategic documents.</p>	<p>Tyne and Wear set up an internal steering group, including representatives from the Joint LAF (JLAF), the LTP and highway authorities. Support from the elected council members and the JLAF was secured through this approach and regular progress reports made to this group, raising the profile of the ROWIP and LTP within the respective authorities.</p> <p>Nottingham, Leicester, Durham and Merseyside also attribute success in LTP/ROWIP integration to the early establishment of a steering group.</p>
<p>Political support</p>	<p>Political support - for rights of way, for staff resourcing and funding/ implementation of schemes is key for success.</p>	<p>Nottingham City has excellent political support for these purposes. The integration of the ROWIP/LTP builds on and develops policies agreed by elected members as expressed in the Corporate Plan, thereby embedding political support and resources. Retention of a specific ROWIP officer has proved to help drive forward and integrate with the LTP the policies and actions of the ROWIP.</p>
<p>Working with LSPs/LAAs</p>	<p>Local authorities have to show good performance against all national indicators and show improved performance for their selected targets in their local area agreement. The national targets/improvement targets fall within five main themes and it is possible to link rights of way improvements with all of these:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) stronger communities; 2) children and young people; 3) adult health and wellbeing; 4) local economy; 5) environmental sustainability <p>The National Indicator set contains specific transport indicators and there are also a number that relate to rights of way.¹⁰</p>	<p>Leicestershire County Council's¹¹ success in LTP funding for rights of way projects is linked to the strong identification of rights of way projects with local strategic partnership priorities and local area agreement performance targets that deliver on government objectives for public health, quality of life, physical activity in addition to the national transport goals.</p>

¹⁰ See Annex 1

¹¹ <http://www.leics.gov.uk>

Monitoring and reporting	Effective monitoring and reporting is vital to raise the profile and importance of active travel targets and projects in order to win political support and easier access to funding. Authorities should consider regular integrated ROWIP/LTP reporting.	Durham County Council ¹² maintains and monitors a work programme of proposed path improvements to present for consideration from any under spend from aborted schemes in the area programmes at LTP budget allocation meetings.
Proactive local access forum	The involvement of a proactive and well supported local access forum can help identify joint LTP/ROWIP improvement schemes through their independent role.	Tyne and Wear Local Access Forum has been fully involved throughout the LTP/ROWIP process and plays an important implementing role in supporting ROWIP schemes that complement and support LTP objectives.
Working with community groups	Good links and support from community representatives who sit on local strategic partnerships is an important factor in funding schemes for rights of way improvements	Durham's sound experience of working with community groups is an important mechanism for identifying and delivering projects, providing the evidence base required by the LTP.
Specific capital budget	Local authorities may wish to consider the feasibility of setting up a specific capital budget for ROWIP delivery from the LTP.	Cheshire County Council advocates this approach.
“Success breeds success”	Many authorities successful in gaining LTP funding also report successful bids from other funding streams following on from that.	Durham's healthy reputation for delivering large scale schemes with LTP funding has raised their profile, attracting additional funding sources for rights of way improvements on the basis that “success breeds success”.

9. LTPs, ROWIPs and the National Transport Goals

The Department for Transport advises authorities to consider the national transport goals as over-arching priorities for their LTPs. The rights of way network has an important role in helping to contribute to all of the national transport goals and suggestions are outlined in the table below.

Table 2 The contribution rights of way can make to the LTP and the national transport goals

National transport goal	Contribution rights of way (RoW) network can make to the LTP and national transport goals	Good practice example
<p>Reduce carbon emissions</p>	<p>A well planned and maintained RoW network, integrated with the public transport network provides a low carbon alternative to the car. Encouraging people to use this network, particularly for short journeys, can help tackle congestion and reduce carbon emissions.</p> <p>Possible measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improving condition and management of existing ROW ■ Creation of new RoW to improve connectivity of the network ■ Working with local planning authorities to achieve improvements in accessibility to and from employment, residential areas, key services and the natural environment ■ Promoting walking and cycling such as partnering local schools and provision of information/publications on walking and cycling routes. 	<p>East Sussex¹³ has integrated the objectives of its cycling strategy with the LTP and ROWIP, including the needs of recreational and off-road cyclists and the importance of links from urban areas into the countryside.</p>
<p>Support economic growth</p>	<p>In both urban and rural areas the RoW network has a role in contributing to both sustainable tourism and connecting local communities to areas of employment, key services and facilities.</p> <p>Possible measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Improving condition and management of existing RoW and creating new RoW to improve access to sustainable tourism destinations ■ Provision of public transport links along promoted routes ■ Promotion of circular routes from rail and bus stops. 	<p>Nottingham City Council has attributed its LTP funding success in part to linking rights of way improvements to the City's growth as a tourism destination for large numbers of visitors drawn to the City's historic past. It has concentrated on primary pedestrian and cycling routes into/out of the city linked to the tram/bus services.</p>

¹³ <http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk>

<p>Promote equality of opportunity</p>	<p>Through careful planning and inclusive design the RoW network can provide opportunities for all users to access employment, key services, the natural environment and increase people's social interaction and sense of community.</p> <p>Possible measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Adopt “least restrictive” access option to path improvements that are appropriate to landscape setting ■ Improve and promote information on path accessibility through signage, publications and web. 	<p>Leicester City¹⁴ has a wide ranging database of stakeholders. The Council consults stakeholders through an annual Local Transport day which provides an opportunity to put views directly to those responsible for the transport strategy - it results in many useful observations and ideas shared. Leicester City also carry out each year two major public consultation exercises- Public Ward meetings and Group Discussions- the knowledge gained has contributed to LTP objective formulation. Through regular partnership working (Leicester Partnership, City Older Persons' Forum and Mobility and Sensory Impairment Group, Local Access Forum) and the other consultations highlighted, a LTP strategy has been developed supported by stakeholders.</p>
<p>Contribute to better safety, security and health</p>	<p>The RoW network provides the opportunity for physically active travel and recreation in urban and rural areas, contributing to improved physical and mental health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Possible measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Working with travel plan and safe routes to school officers to ensure the RoW network is included for people's journeys ■ Linking with the primary care trust in the delivery of local Walking your way to Health Initiatives (WHI) ■ Creation of new links, higher rights or upgrading existing rights of way to improve connectivity of network for walkers, riders and cyclists and reduce the need to use the roads ■ Improving education and safety awareness for all road users. ■ Improving condition or management of existing RoW where these are currently perceived not to be safe or attractive routes. 	<p>Merseyside Joint Authority has worked with the Primary Care Trust and has been successful in funding rights of way schemes linked closely to national transport goals that include walking and cycling opportunities that address cross boundary issues, path improvements and network missing links that all help address the health agenda.</p>

¹⁴ <http://www.leicester.gov.uk>

<p>Improve quality of life and a healthy natural environment</p>	<p>The opportunities RoW provide for recreation, tourism and sustainable access to the natural environment has positive impacts on people's quality of life. They can form part of multi-functional green infrastructure networks which also deliver a range of benefits for the natural environment (climate change adaptation, flood alleviation, water management and biodiversity). Sensitive/appropriate construction and maintenance of the rights of way network can help protect and enhance the natural environment.</p> <p>Possible measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Providing RoW links between, and within, urban and rural areas to facilitate sustainable access to the natural environment ■ Information on and promotion of the rights of way network ■ Co operation and joint working across a range of teams to deliver better RoW improvements. 	<p>Staffordshire¹⁵ acknowledges the important role greenways and green routes (off-road routes), can play in providing shared use (walkers, cyclists and horse riders) between communities in urban areas with the surrounding countryside. Projects to improve connectivity using green routes for shares use are identified in the statement of action with agreed LTP funding.</p>
---	---	--

¹⁵ <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk>

10. ROWIP/LTP issues specific to different tiers of local government

Urban/unitary authorities

There is often an inherent focus placed on primary objectives of reducing congestion, air quality and road safety in urban/unitary authorities. Rights of way are perceived as an integrated part of these transport objectives. They can also contribute to improved access to the natural environment and for recreation purposes. The co-location of RoW and LTP staff in urban and unitary authorities is often cited as a key reason for success.

Rural highway authorities

Some rural authorities have many smaller settlements which are important service centres for large catchment areas. Access to and from these settlements often involves the use of well used rights of way which link with the public transport network and can therefore make them eligible for improvement within LTP funding criteria.

Other rural authorities, such as Leicestershire County Council, have one or two large urban centres where a policy decision has focused on gaining LTP funding for rights of way improvements in and around those centres where the majority of the population live.

Some rural authorities may demonstrate areas of low car ownership, poor health or low physical activity levels. Promoting non- car journeys through improvements to and promotion of the rights of way network can help meet combined ROWIP/LTP objectives.

National parks

Many national park authorities are involved with several ROWIPs and LTPs. For example the Peak District National Park Authority has six LTPs covering passenger transport authority and executive boundaries :Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Cheshire, South Yorkshire (including Barnsley and Sheffield), Greater Manchester (including Oldham) and West Yorkshire (including Kirklees) and the number of ROWIPs is even greater and produced by each local highway authority.

This additional complication makes it sensible for those highway authorities to make use of the increased flexibilities over timescales built into the new LTP and to integrate the ROWIP/LTP as much as possible.

Accessing LTP funding for rights of way improvements in the national parks requires linking projects with the wider transport agenda – and raising awareness that improvements to access services are not mutually exclusive to access for visitors and recreation. Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council's¹⁶ Countryside & Public Rights of Way Service has successfully accessed LTP funding for rights of way improvements within the North York Moors National Park as a result of :

- a close working relationship with the park authority generally ,– the Countryside and Public Rights of Way Service has a close working relationship with the LTP team which both form part of the Area Management Service Directorate with responsibility for both the ROWIP and the LTP.
- through management on cross-border projects, strategies and policies.

¹⁶ <http://www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk>

11. Local Access Forums

Local Transport Plan Guidance Part 1, Annex C includes local access forums (LAFs) as stakeholders. Authorities should consider their involvement at the outset of the LTP/ ROWIP plan preparation/review and encourage LAF input throughout. Whilst LAFs have a statutory duty to advise local authorities on rights of way and access issues, it is good practice to consult the LAF in LTP development and implementation, particularly on ROWIP/LTP integration matters. Support and encouragement for a proactive LAF can make a positive difference in helping to deliver sustainable transport objectives.

Annex 1 Transport and rights of way national indicators for local area agreements

Transport

- NI 47 People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents
- NI 48 Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents
- NI 167 Congestion – average journey time per mile during the morning peak
- NI 168 Principal roads where maintenance should be considered
- NI 169 Non-principal roads where maintenance should be considered
- NI 175 Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling
- NI 176 Working age people with access to employment by public transport (and other specified modes)
- NI 177 Local bus passenger journeys originating in the authority area
- NI 178 Bus services running on time
- Outcome - Environmental sustainability
- NI 198 Children travelling to school – mode of travel usually used

Rights of way

The following national indicators related to rights of way can also help deliver transport indicators

- NI 5 Overall/general satisfaction with local area
- NI 8 Adult participation in sport
- NI 55 Obesity among primary school age children in Reception Year
- NI 56 Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6
- NI 57 Children and young people's participation in high quality PE and sport
- NI 110 Young people's participation in positive activities
- NI 175 Access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling
- NI 186 Per capita reduction in CO2 emissions in LA area
- NI 198 Children travelling to school- mode of travel usually used
- NI 199 Children and young people's satisfaction with parks

Cover photograph:

© Merseyside Transport Partnership



Natural England is here to conserve and enhance the natural environment, for its intrinsic value, the wellbeing and enjoyment of people and the economic prosperity that it brings.

© Natural England 2009

www.naturalengland.org.uk

Natural England publications are available as accessible pdfs from: www.naturalengland.org.uk/publications

Should an alternative format of this publication be required, please contact our enquiries line for more information: 0845 600 3078 or email enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk