

Executive Summary

The Leeds Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP), forms a ten year management plan, setting out areas for consideration and improvement across the public rights of way network within the Leeds district.

The ROWIP links to aims and priorities at both a national and local level, such as the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan, Vision for Leeds, Leeds Strategic Plan, Cultural, Sport and Recreation Strategies.

As the Local Authority, we have a statutory duty to publish a Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Leeds which we see as an aspirational document highlighting improvements (which in part) are over and above the basic statutory requirements. This ROWIP provides an opportunity to bid for additional funding on an informed basis. This in turn will inform the Council's future investment decisions concerning improvements to the public rights of way network in Leeds.

Our draft Plan was subject to a 12 week statutory consultation period during which time, comments were received. Following this public consultation period, and taking into account any comments and suggestions made, the final Plan is now ready to be published,. The Leeds ROWIP will be reviewed again within 10 years.

This Rights of Way Improvement Plan covers eight main sections and begins by setting out the legislative requirements and guidance on how to prepare such plans as part of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000. In particular, we have focused on the following three areas of assessment:

- a) The extent to which rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public.
- b) The opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open air recreation and enjoyment.
- c) The accessibility of local rights of way to blind and partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems.

Countryside and Access in Leeds

The public rights of way network in Leeds is both extensive and varied and includes a number of key recreational routes. Key aspects to highlight include:

- a total length of path network of 799km broken down to specific categories of public rights of way. In addition, it is also important to stress the importance of permissive paths, which are over and above this figure and enhance overall public access.
- key strategic and recreational routes, such as the Dales Way Link, Ebor Way, Leeds Country Way, Trans Pennine Trail and Aire Valley Towpath.

- local recreational routes such as the Meanwood Valley Trail, Calverley Millenium Way, Pudsey Link Bridleway, Leeds Links, The Linesway, Harland Way, Rothwell Greenway, Temple Newsam bridlepath, West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateways and the Wyebeck Valley Way.
- open access land (a total of 350ha) and Woodland Trust Sites,

The Definitive Map and Statement

The Definitive Map and Statement is a legal record that indicates the location and status of a public a right of way. This is a key information source used by many different users, landowners, agents and organisations who require accurate public rights of way information for recreation, land management and business purposes.

The Ordnance Survey use the public rights of way information shown on the Definitive Map in their published maps (Explorer etc.) providing an invaluable guide to public access in the countryside and elsewhere for walkers, horse riders, cyclists and vehicular users.

As the Local Authority, we have a statutory duty to keep the Definitive Map and Statement under continuous review and to make any modification orders as necessary. Through our statutory powers we can make changes to this legal document through a Definitive Map Modification Order (DMMO).

Currently, we have a considerable amount of work to undertake to process 49 outstanding DMMO applications. In addition, there remains a legacy from the West Yorkshire County Council of an 'excluded area', of previously unsurveyed land in Leeds, which includes much of the inner-city, which is estimated to include some 500 paths.

Importantly, the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 has imposed a cut off date on the Definitive Map of 1 January 2026. Consequently, after this time, it will not be possible to add any additional public rights of way to the Definitive Map on the basis that they are recorded in historical documents. We, recognise that before 2026 we will have to carry out a full historical path survey of the whole district.

Consultation and Assessment Methodology

In preparing this Plan, we have already sought to obtain the public's view on the current rights of way network, how they use it now and improvements they would like to see in the future. In summary we have carried out:

- Face to face questionnaire surveys
- Postal questionnaires surveys
- A 'desk top' assessment of the definitive map and statement to identify:-
 1. the extent to which routes and networks are available to different groups of path users.

2. areas which are deficient in rights of way for all, or particular groups of path users.
3. the possible restoration of severed rights of way due to road building.

Following this assessment we have identified parish areas where there are obvious deficiencies, such as the total lack of rights of way in one parish, and no recorded bridleways in 7 other Parishes. Closer scrutiny of the definitive map has identified that there are over 20 specific path issues or anomalies, together with a number of road severance issues.

Leeds ROWIP Questionnaire Results

The consultation process that we have undertaken has helped us to analyse the needs of walkers, cyclists, horse riders, disabled path users and motorised vehicle users. In terms of how the respondents use the path network this is summarised in the table below:

The table below summarises the main points.

A total of 775 people responded to the questionnaire

% of Respondents who use public rights of way.	89%
% of Respondents who use public rights of way on foot.	92%
% of Respondents who use public rights of way on horseback.	7%
% of Respondents who use public rights of way on a bicycle.	25%
% of Respondents who use public rights of way in a wheelchair.	2%
% of Respondents who use public rights of way for leisure purposes	91%
% of Respondents who use public rights of way for fitness purposes.	49%
% of Respondents who use public rights of way to get to work.	19%
% of Respondents who use public rights of way to get to local amenities.	31%

Table 1

ROWIP Statements of Action

Taking into account the results of the questionnaire survey; analysis of the Definitive Map and Statement; national and local policy objectives and operational matters – a range of statements have been formulated to guide the work that Leeds City Council undertakes to protect, maintain and improve its public rights of way network.

Our actions have been grouped into:

- Definitive Map issues and orders
- Path improvements and signposting
- Obstruction and nuisances
- Planning applications
- Key recreational routes
- Missing links and developing the network
- Promotion and publicity
- Stakeholder liaison and
- Partnership working

The Action Plan

Based on our Statements of Action we have developed our action plan which sets out specific improvement projects, together with their estimated costs and priorities. If delivered, these would improve the extent and usability of the rights of way network; provide more publicised routes for path users; and increase understanding of the practical and legal issues surrounding the management of public rights of way.

If all of the identified projects were to be delivered over the next ten years, the City Council would need to seek funding for between £2.3m and £3.9m.

Our Action Plan sets out our aspirations for the long-term development of the public rights of way network in Leeds. The improvements that we have outlined detail our aspirations and will give added focus to our future investment decisions to ensure that when resources are available we will be able to address our stated priorities.

It is not our intention at this stage to identify the specific funding streams that will meet our stated priorities, however we will work with a range of stakeholders to help bring forward funding packages over the lifetime of this plan.

In particular, we will seek to use Section 106 Planning Agreement monies that become available, monies from the West Yorkshire Transport Plan and third party grants to maximise the funding that we can draw upon. Where appropriate we will look to supplement the funding streams identified above with mainline capital resources from the Council, although it is recognised that this funding will largely act as a catalyst for securing funding packages from other sources, often external to the Council.

9.0 ACTION PLAN

9.1 PROW - Statements of action

Conclusion from Assessment	Recommended action	Estimated costs	Completion date	Key organisations
Continue to review the Definitive Map and Statement	Determine DMMO applications within 12 months of receipt and produce a LEMO each year	Within Existing Resources	Ongoing	
Need to map the Excluded Area of Leeds	To publish a map of the excluded area, review it and make Orders to record paths	Within Existing Resources	2015 to publish map then review is ongoing	Work with various User Groups and other LCC Services
To achieve the cut off date for the Definitive Map and Statement	Continue to research and identify historic routes, missing links and unrecorded paths and make Orders to record them	£150K	2026	Work with various User Groups and other LCC Services
Need to make the Definitive Map and Statement easily available to view	Digitise the Definitive Map and Statement Then make it available for viewing online	Within Existing Resources	2009 2015	Work with various User Groups and other LCC Services
Provide online registers of DMMO applications and Section 31(6) Deposits	Provide the online registers and continue to update them	Within Existing Resources	2009 then ongoing	
Consolidate the Definitive Map and Statement	Update the base plan when required as soon as the Excluded Area has been mapped	£150K >	2015	Work with various User Groups and other LCC Services
Review the Statement of Priorities	Up date the statement of priorities in line with changes in legislation	Within Existing Resources	When Required	LCC
Page minimum & maximum estimated costings		£300K		

Conclusion from Assessment	Recommended action	Estimated costs	Completion date	Key organisations
Signpost all public rights of way where they leave a metalled road	Establish a proactive sign posting strategy across Leeds & include destinations and symbols where appropriate	Within Existing Resources	2017	LCC Highways Services, contractors and volunteers
Paths overgrown making them difficult to use	Establish a more proactive cyclical maintenance programme	Within Existing Resources	2017	LCC, contractors, farmers and volunteers
Pressure on existing revenue budget to maintain a growing path network	Need to seek additional funds for the maintenance of new PROW added to the Definitive Map	£15K - £50K	Ongoing	LCC & Local Contractors
Lack of knowledge and understanding of rights of way legislation	Raise the profile of public rights of way through an information leaflet aimed at landowners and developers	Within Existing Resources	2009	LCC, NFU & CLA
Need to protect and improve the path network where it is affected by development	Need to attract s.106 monies to assist with path improvements	£50K - £150K	Ongoing	LCC, Developers, Local Contractors, User groups, Parish & Town Councils
Raise the profile of public rights of way including key recreational routes	Make data available on line and secure funding to publish and re-print leaflets etc.	Within Existing Resources	Ongoing	LCC and Local Contractors
Monitor the use of Key Recreational Routes and selected PROW	To set up automatic counters and carry out on site surveys	Within Existing Resources	Ongoing	LCC and Local Contractors
Page minimum & maximum estimated costings		£65K - £200K		

Conclusion from Assessment	Recommended Action	Estimated Costs	Completion Date	Key Organisations
Need to provide more circular route leaflets particularly for horse riders and cyclists	To produce 6 route cards or leaflets per year over the next 5 years	Within Existing Resources	2012	LCC, Parish & Town Councils, Interest & User Groups
Desire for more local involvement in managing the rights of way network	Seek additional funds for Countryside/ Community Rangers	£50K - £150K	Ongoing	LCC, Parish & Town Councils, National England
Need to encourage more people to undertake healthy exercise in the wider countryside	Seek additional funds for Countryside/ Community Rangers to lead and carry out a guided walks programme throughout Leeds	£50K - £150K	Ongoing	LCC, Primary Care Trusts
Volunteers can feel undervalued and not supported	Establish a formal training programme to enhance and develop the skills of volunteers and volunteer leaders	Within Existing Resources	Ongoing	LCC, User groups, Parish & Town Councils & interest groups
Page minimum & maximum estimated costings		£100K - £300K		

Statements of action minimum and maximum costings - £465,000 - £800,000>

9.2 Path improvement projects

9.2.1 Listed below are the key path improvement projects that we would like to address over the next ten years. However, we recognise that other path improvement projects are likely to become apparent during this period and priorities may change.

Path Improvement Project	Detail / description	Estimated costs	Priority	Comments
Riverside path collapse & other natural path erosion	Repair or realign paths	£150K>	When required	Work with various landowners, Environment Agency & user groups
Need to make all paths suitable for their intended use	Improve the surface and drainage as appropriate	£150K>	Ongoing	Work with landowners, other Council Services. & user groups
People with mobility problems unable to gain access into the wider countryside	Identify areas where paths could be made more accessible for those with Mobility problems	£150K>	Ongoing	Work with local groups who specialise in making the wider countryside more accessible
Improve ease of access along key recreational routes	Improve the standard of maintenance, path furniture and signing along Key Recreational Routes	£150K>	Ongoing	LCC and Local Contractors
Fragmented path network	Upgrade existing paths and/or create new path links where appropriate	£150K>	Ongoing	LCC, Developers, Local Contractors, User groups, Parish & Town Councils
Carlton FP 1	Upgrading of footpath section to bridleway by legal agreement / order; and associated surfacing, fencing and path furniture works	£50K - £150K	High	A key missing link in the bridleway network, linking Yeadon to Otley-Chevin which will avoid a long detour via busy country roads
Page Minimum & Maximum estimated costings		£800K - £900K		

Path Improvement Project	Detail / description	Estimated costs	Priority	Comments
Boston Spa BW10	Upgrading of footpath to Bridleway by legal order	£5K	High	Following a DMMO , this work is now required to provide bridleway access to the nearby bridge over the River Wharfe
Barwick-in-Elmet FP 17	To divert a dead-end footpath by creating a new field-edge path link	£5K - £15K	Medium	This path has been a dead-end since the early 1950's
Otley-Chevin (Danefield Plantation)	To correct a number of definitive map anomalies and inconsistencies by way of Path Orders	£5K - £15K	Medium	To reconcile the bridleway and footpath network as shown on the definitive map with that which is available on the ground
A new FP along the South bank of the River Wharfe at Otley	To create by agreement / Order a 'new' public footpath	£5K - £15K	Low	This path is being used but would benefit from being formalised and improved.
Wothersome BW 1a / 1b	To create by agreement / Order a 'new' bridleway link along an existing track	£5K - £15K	Medium	This 'new' bridleway will provide an off road link between existing bridleways; thus avoiding a detour via busy roads
East Keswick BW 2 – FP 10 (Ebor Way)	To create by agreement / order a new footpath link alongside the River Wharfe	£50K - £150K	High	This new footpath would provide a safe off-road link between existing paths - thus avoiding fast, vehicular traffic on the busy A659 Harewood Avenue
Page Minimum & Maximum estimated costings		£75K - £215K		

Path Improvement Project	Detail / description	Estimated costs	Priority	Comments
Leeds FP 132	To upgrade an existing footpath to bridleway status by Agreement / Order	£15K - £50K	Medium	This will provide an enhanced link for bridleway users to the Temple Newsam Bridlepath
Collingham FP 14 (Compton Lane)	To upgrade an existing footpath to bridleway status by Agreement / Order	£15K - £50K	High	This will make a key improvement to the bridleway network in the Thorner, Bramham Park & Collingham area
Bramhope FP 12 to Golden Acre Park	To create a new Footpath by Agreement / Order	£15K - £50K	Medium	This will create an off road link for walkers between Bramhope and Golden Acre Park
Leeds FP 58 to 66	To create a new footpath link adjacent to the A6120	£50K - £150K	Low	This requires further investigation and assessment of need
Leeds FP 56 to 71	To create a new footpath link across LCC land between the Meanwood Valley Trail & Weetwood	£5K - £15K	Medium	A useful link which would enhance the Meanwood Valley
Page Minimum & Maximum estimated costings		£100K - £345K		

Path Improvement Project	Detail / description	Estimated costs	Priority	Comments
Leeds FP 102	To upgrade this footpath to cycleway or bridleway by agreement/order - plus path widening and resurfacing works	£50K - £150K	Medium	This is a popular but narrow footpath linking Shadwell and Roundhay Park & may become part of a strategic cycle route
Thorner BW17 (Saw/Kiddal Woods)	To create new bridleway links, within Kiddal Wood	£15K - £50K	Medium	These proposed links will provide a circular network avoiding the busy A64 road
Thorner FP 5	Divert / extend FP via a field edge track to connect FP 6.	£5K -£15K	Low / Medium	To avoid walking along a narrow and busy road (Carr Lane).
Bardsey village to 1 st Avenue (the Congreves)	To create a new walking/cycling link by Agreement	£50K - £150K	High	This proposed link, which was identified in the local village design statement, will avoid walking/cycling along the busy A58 road
A new footpath between Bramham School and Willow Garth	To create a new FP connecting Bramham FP no's 1 and 7.	£5K - £15K	Low / Medium	Will provide a useful local link enabling circular walks.
Castle Hills Woodland, Micklefield	To up grade Forest track footpaths to bridleway	£15K - £50K	Medium	This proposed upgrade will provide a wider means of access
Manston to Wetherby Disused Railway	To create a mostly 'traffic free' route for walkers, cyclists, and horse riders	£150K >	Medium	This route has been identified as an important key recreational route by Sustrans for the National Cycle network (route 66)
A new FP along the North bank of the River Wharfe at Wetherby	To create by agreement / Order a 'new' public footpath. From the Wildnerness carpark Wetherby to join FP 20 near Flint Mill Farm.	£5 - £15K	Low / Medium	This path is being used but would benefit from being formalised and improved
Page Minimum & Maximum estimated costings		£295K - £595>		

Path Improvement Project	Detail / description	Estimated costs	Priority	Comments
Parlington Path Improvement Project	To create a more comprehensive and meaningful path network for pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists	£15K - £50K	High	New routes will connect into the existing path network and link Parlington to Barwick –in- Elmete
Skelton Lake & Footbridge	To create new paths within the site by agreement/orders; and facilitate a new footbridge across the River Aire & Canal	£150K >	High	These routes will link Temple Newsam, and Rothwell Country Parks as well as to the Trans Pennine Trail
St Aidan's Country Park	To create a series of new footpaths and bridleways across the former opencast coal site	£15K - £50K	High	These new routes will link to other key recreational routes such as the Leeds Country Way, 'The Linesway' & Trans Pennine Trail
Fairburn / Newton Ings riverside path	To create a new footpath link along the north bank of the River Aire	£50 - £150K?	Medium	This link was requested by the Ramblers Association and Allerton Bywater Parish Council but requires further investigation
Pudsey FP 143	To upgrade this footpath to bridleway by Agreement / Order	£15K - £50K	Medium	This proposed upgrade will provide a useful off road link for horse riders and cyclists between Cockersdale and Nan Whins (Sykes') Wood
Page Minimum & Maximum estimated costings		£245K -£450K>		

Path Improvement Project	Detail / description	Estimated costs	Priority	Comments
A647 Leeds-Bradford Road (Pudsey Link)	To provide signalised 'Pegasus' and 'Toucan' crossings for horse riders, cyclists, and walkers plus approach paths	£150K>	High	The path network is disjointed due to the busy A647 effectively creating a barrier for bridleway users wishing to access the wider countryside on either side
A660 Otley Road	Improve road crossings, verges and signing	£50K - £150K	Low / Medium	A key Bridleway crossing point of a busy road.
King Lane, Adel	To improve the existing verges of the road for walking and build new adopted footways where appropriate.	£150K>	High	King Lane is a busy 'country' road with verges of varying quality and width. The Leeds Country Way and Meanwood Valley Trail both follow this road in part, and verge improvements are required to address road safety concerns.
King Lane & Leeds BW18 plus FP Nos 20 & 21(part)	To create a re-aligned path crossing point at Golf Farm and upgrade the footpath north of King Lane to bridleway	£50K-£150K	Med/High	Leeds BW 18 also meets King Lane (at a blind bend at Golf Farm) but there is no continuation bridleway northwards to Eccup as this is currently a footpath across LCC Farmland.
Page Minimum & Maximum estimated costings		£400K - £600K>		

ROWIP projects minimum and maximum costings - £2,380,000 - £3,905,000>