

CITY COUNCIL - 15 OCTOBER 2007

**REPORT OF THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR TRANSPORT,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SKILLS**

RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2006/7 TO 2010/11

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This report seeks Council approval to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2006/7 – 2010/11 (ROWIP) for the City of Nottingham. The ROWIP is a strategic plan for improving the local rights of way network which includes all footpaths, cycle paths, bridleways, canal towpaths, riverside walkways, greenways and any other path or track which is an off-road route and is not part of a vehicular carriageway. A copy of the ROWIP has been circulated to members separately.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

IT IS RECOMMENDED that the ROWIP 2006/7 – 2010/11 be approved for publication.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way 2000 (“the CROW Act”) places a statutory duty on the City Council as highway authority to prepare and publish a ROWIP by November 2007. The ROWIP is a strategic tool for improving the local rights of way network, taking into account the needs and aspirations of all types of user regardless of their mobility. It is not intended to make detailed solutions to every locality but to take a strategic approach to improving public access to and through the City of Nottingham.

The ROWIP should assess;

- 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 outdoor recreation and the enjoyment of the authority's area
- the accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems

3.2 The ROWIP is a subsidiary document to the Local Transport Plan (LTP). It is the intention of Government that the ROWIP will be directly linked to the LTP by 2010. Improvement schemes within the ROWIP should complement the objectives of the LTP, for example encouraging people to walk and cycle more often especially for local journeys.

3.3 Preparation of and Consultation on the ROWIP

3.3.1 Approximately 2000 questionnaires were distributed to users of the local rights of way network during May and June 2006. 300 (15%) replies were returned providing an up-to-date view of the state of the network, who uses it, how often, for what purpose, what discourages people from using it and what improvements should be made. The questionnaire was available on the Council's website, local Council offices, all major libraries, doctors' surgeries and cycle/outdoor/camping retailers. Face-to-face interviews were also undertaken in the City Centre and the Forest Recreation Ground Park and Ride site during June 2006. All Corporate Directors were sent a copy of the questionnaire and were invited to complete one. The replies informed the preparation of the draft ROWIP. A summary of the questionnaire replies is attached to this report at Appendix 1.

3.3.2 The Nottingham Local Access Forum (NLAF), which the CROW Act 2000 required the Council to establish in 2002 to advise on public access matters has been involved in the preparation of the draft ROWIP. The NLAF consists of 14 members including Nottingham City Councillors, representatives from the Ramblers Association, Cyclist Touring Club, British Horse Society, Walking Your Way to Health (Trent Tickers and Best Foot Forward) projects and other day-to-day users of the local rights of way network. The Nottingham Disability Advisory Group was also consulted during the preparation of the draft ROWIP. Where appropriate and

relevant, all comments have been incorporated in the draft ROWIP.

3.3.3 The Portfolio Holder for Transport and Street Services approved the draft ROWIP for the purposes in consultation in April 2007. That draft was then subject to a 12 week statutory consultation period between May and July 2007. Approximately 60 copies of the draft ROWIP and response forms were distributed to key user groups. All Corporate Directors were sent a copy of the draft ROWIP and were invited to comment. The draft ROWIP and response forms were available on the Councils website, local Council offices, all major libraries, doctors' surgeries and cycle/outdoor/camping retailers. 6 formal responses were received during the consultation period. Where appropriate and relevant, all consultation responses have been incorporated into the revised ROWIP. A summary of relevant responses is attached to this report at Appendix 2.

4. PROPOSALS

Subject to Council approval it is proposed to publish the final ROWIP in November 2007.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is the intention of Government that improvements made to the local rights of way network, as a consequence of the ROWIP, shall be funded through LTP settlements. The ROWIP will also be used to bid for external funding.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

As set out in this Report

7. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

- Rights of Way Improvement Plan User Questionnaire 2006
- Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2006/7 –2010/11

- Rights of Way Improvement Plan Response Form

8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

- Local Transport Plan for Greater Nottingham: Full Plan 2001/02 – 2005/06
- Local Transport Plan for Greater Nottingham: 2006/07 – 2010/11

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APPENDIX 1

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES FROM THE ROWIP USER QUESTIONNAIRE (USED IN PREPARATION OF DRAFT ROWIP)

2000 questionnaires were sent out and 300 (15%) were returned. The results from this survey would provide an up to date view of the state of the network, who uses it, how often, for what purpose, what discourages people from using it and how and what improvements should be made.

It is difficult to know exactly how many of the responses did actually relate to the local rights of way network. This problem is in part due to the general perception that public rights of way exist solely in rural areas, with urban areas having only pavements and footpaths alongside main roads. A definition of “off road” routes, tracks and paths was given at the front of the questionnaire to help respondents focus on those types of routes with which the survey was concerned. However, a number of comments were made in the questionnaires indicated that the respondents were referring to pavements or on road cycle routes as opposed to “off road” routes.

General assumptions may be made from the replies to the questionnaire. For example, most people who use the network use it for walking, they use it daily and they like to visit places like the Canal, the City Centre, Wollaton Park and nearby Local Nature Reserve and the Riverside Embankment. Most people use the network for health and exercise and to access local amenities such as shops and public transport.

52% of respondents indicated that they were either always or sometimes discouraged from using the network by the fear of crime or antisocial behaviour. 36% were discouraged by a lack of network. 55% of people discouraged by a lack of network are walkers, 34% cyclists, 6% equestrians and 5% other users (including mobility users, skate boarders and roller bladers)

4% of respondents do not use the network at all. Comments such as “they didn’t know there was a network” and “didn’t know anything

about it” were given on more than one occasion, as a reason for not using it.

Question 6 asked what would make people use the network more often. 32% indicated better cleansing, 25% indicated better maintenance, 23% more network and 20% better signage. Cleansing and maintenance would appear to be significant factors.

When asked where the Council should spend money on improvements 44% said improve the existing paths, 29% create new paths and 27% thought we should do a bit of both. Of the respondents who want to see improvements to the existing paths 17% thought we should improve cleansing, 14% want to see more barriers to stop unauthorised vehicles, 13% improved surfaces and 13% better lighting.

When asked where we should provide new paths the majority want to see either safer routes to school or paths to access open space which are circular and suitable for walking and cycling and ideally should be located along rivers and canals.

When asked whether large scale development (such as housing or industrial) make a positive or negative contribution to the network 43% thought negative, 34% positive and 23% were undecided.

57% of respondents thought the City Council were doing well in improving the network, 32% not very well and 11% were undecided.

16% of respondents were male aged 60 or over, a further 16% were male aged between 50 and 59. 15% were females aged between 40 and 49. The lowest response was from both females and males aged twenty or under who collectively accounted for 4%.

91% of respondents were white British, 3% other British and 2% white Irish with Chinese, black Caribbean, Indian and Pakistani accounting for 4% of all respondents.

APPENDIX 2

DRAFT ROWIP - SUMMARY OF RELEVANT RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION

<u>Chapter heading</u>	<u>page number / sub section</u>	<u>Summary of comments</u>
Foreword	Foreword	<p>Delighted, additions to network and signage over the last 5 years. (comments from Ramblers Association)</p> <p>Disappointed not to see a commitment to complete the Definitive Map and Statement by a stated deadline. (comments from Ramblers Association)</p> <p>We wholeheartedly support the City's Vision, Purpose, Priorities and Corporate Plan. Disappointed not to see each of these made explicit for the path network. (comments from Ramblers Association)</p>
1 Introductions and Setting the Scene	Page 2 - 1.3	Commend the Council for its work of the Nottingham Local Access Forum but have noticed deterioration in a working partnership with the Ramblers Association (comments from Ramblers Association)
2 Description of the Plans Geographical Area	Page 4 - 2.6	We concur regarding partnership working between the City and County Councils which in turn will improve access between the administrative boundaries (Comments from

		Nottinghamshire County Council)
3 Policy Context	Page 11 and 12 - 3.10 and 3.11	We note the Council's obligations from other plans concerning crime and disorder. Concerning gating orders we ask that we are brought into discussions as early as possible (comments from Ramblers Association)
4 Access Users and their Needs	Not specified	We would like to see the Council promote walking using expert walk leaders (comments from Ramblers Association)
	Not specified	Understand the pressure on land use but believe there should be separation of vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists (comments from Ramblers Association)
	Not specified	Welcome Council's Policy commitment to "Access for All" (comments from Ramblers Association)
	Page 14 – 4.2	We don't think the Plan included an adequate assessment of the needs of different users – should include importance of circular routes and well maintained network (cutting back vegetation etc) (comments from Pedals)
	Page 14 – 4.2	Include easy to use gates, stiles etc as one of the users needs and reference to cutting back vegetation should be included (comments from Pedals)
		Include cyclists require quick and direct

	Page 14 – 4.2	routes (City Council Transport Strategy team)
5 Use Demand and Reasons for Access	Not specified Not specified	Do not accept that “access to the network may be more difficult” as the Council has worked well on providing access (comments from Ramblers Association) Note access to network via the NET and hope new routes will be planned with this in mind (comments from Ramblers Association)
6 Current Provision	Not specified Not specified Page 21 - figure 3	Agree Definitive Map and Statement is not complete, congratulate Council on GIS and mapping system (comments from Ramblers Association) We commend the commitment of the people who have contributed to such an excellent BVPI No. 178 results (comments from Ramblers Association) Dead-ended paths should be extended and linked to another highway (private individual) Map shows some cycle paths as footpaths (comments from Pedals’)
7 Assessment and Evaluation	Not specified	We acknowledge and support the statements made and the extensive survey undertaken as part of the consultation leading to the draft ROWIP (comments from Ramblers Association)

	Not specified	We don't think the Plan included adequate assessment of the local rights of way network i.e. cycling paths should not be shown as footpaths (comments from Pedals)
8 How Improvements Can be Made	Page 32-33 - Case Study 1	We support the "Big Track" and would support a new River crossing at either Colwick or Clifton (comments from Ramblers Association)
	Page 34 - Case Study 2	Motorcycle Inhibitor Barriers – use of them undermines Policy ROWIP 16 (provide a safe and user friendly environment) (comments from Pedals)
	Page 32-33 - Case Study 1	Include "Big Wheel" as a partner (City Council Transport Strategy team)
9 Statement of Actions 10 Policy Listing	<u>Policy</u>	<u>Priority (High, Medium, Low) % of respondents who thought a specified Policy should be given a High, Medium or Low priority</u>
	ROWIP 1.....	25% = M 75% = H
	ROWIP 2.....	100% = H
	ROWIP 3.....	100% = H
	ROWIP 4.....	100% = H
	ROWIP 5.....	100% = H
	ROWIP 6.....	50% = M, 50% = H
	ROWIP 7.....	75% = M, 25% H
	ROWIP 8.....	100% H
	ROWIP 9.....	25% = M, 75% = H
	ROWIP 10.....	50% M, 50% H

	ROWIP 11.....	25% M, 75% = H
	ROWIP 12.....	100% = M
	ROWIP 13.....	75% = I 25% = H
	ROWIP 14.....	25% M 75% = H
	ROWIP 15.....	25% M, 75% H
	ROWIP 16.....	100% H
	ROWIP 17.....	25% L, 50% M, 25% H
	ROWIP 18.....	25% M, 75% H
	ROWIP 19.....	25% L, 25% M, 50% H
	ROWIP 20.....	25% L, 50% M, 25% H