

Final Draft Copy



Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Leicestershire 2006-2011

Published September 2006





Rights Of Way Improvement Plan For Leicestershire 2006 – 2011

Published September 2006

Further copies of this document may be obtained from the Rights of Way team, Room 500, County Hall, Glenfield, LE3 8TE. Further information is available at the County Council website @ www.leics.gov.uk/paths. The site also contains a downloadable pdf version of the document. You can also request further copies of the plan, or further information by e-mailing footpaths@leics.gov.uk or ringing 0116 2657086

Some of the information on the maps in this document is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material © Crown Copyright LA100019271

1 Foreword

As a former member of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum, I am delighted to introduce the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Leicestershire.

Leicestershire County Council has always recognised the importance of the Rights Of Way network. The 3024 kilometres (1878 miles) of paths in the county offer a wonderful way of exploring and enjoying our county. They also provide important local routes that link communities and give access to schools, shops, work places and other facilities for many.

Sometimes we take things for granted and never miss them until they have gone. The closure of paths and sites in the county during the Foot and Mouth crisis reminded us of how important walking, riding and outdoor recreation is in our lives.

Although this network has developed over hundreds of years, it needs to meet the current and future needs of users. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan considers how best to manage this unique resource. The plan is also being co-ordinated with our proposals contained in the Second Local Transport Plan published recently.

I would like to thank all those that have contributed to this document. This includes all those that so kindly commented on the Draft Plan published earlier this year.

As a Chairman of a Primary Care Trust, health is never far from my mind. The Chief Medical Officer has reported on a series of studies on links between physical activity and health. That message could not be stronger. Walking contributes to well being, is essential for good health and physically active people reduce the chance of heart disease by 50%. You only need to be active for 30 minutes, five times a week to significantly improve your health. 94% of people in the county live within 500 metres of a footpath or bridleway. With so many paths on your doorstep, why not explore your local area.

Happy walking, or riding,

County Councillor Ernie White



2 Contents

1 Foreword.....	5
2 Contents	7
3 Summary.....	11
3.1 Introduction	11
3.2 The Background	12
3.3 We Want To:.....	14
4 Setting The Scene.....	15
4.1 The Plan Area.....	15
4.1.1 Introduction.....	15
4.1.2 Landscape.....	15
4.2 Policy Framework	19
4.2.1 Corporate and Partner Strategies.....	19
4.2.2 Draft Local Transport Plan.....	20
4.2.3 Strategic Environmental Assessment	22
4.2.4 Leicestershire Community Strategy.....	23
4.2.5 Planning.....	24
4.2.6 Local Development Framework.....	26
5 Different Users And Their Needs	28
5.1 Walking.....	28
5.2 Riding.....	33
5.3 Cyclists	36
5.4 Motor Users	40
5.5 Disability, Mobility And Visually Impaired	42
5.6 Population Pressures	44
5.7 Health & Socio Economic Issues, including latent demand	46
5.8 Tourism.....	53
5.9 Utilitarian Use	55
6 Current Provision & Analysis.....	58
6.1 The Path Network.....	58
6.2 Assessment & Evaluation.....	59
7 What We Do & Propose	67
7.1 Looking After Paths	67
7.1.2 Best Value	67
7.1.3 Reactive Management.....	69
7.1.4 Crops & Vegetation	72
7.1.5 Waymarking.....	74
7.2 Broadening and Improving Access – Local Transport Plan	77
7.3 Promoting Use.....	79
7.4 Open Access	84
7.5 Mapping Paths.....	87
7.5.2 The Definitive Map & Statement	87

Contents

7.5.3	Changing the map - Modification Orders	91
7.5.4	New Claims	93
7.5.5	Priorities.....	94
7.5.6	Registers	97
7.6	Moving Paths.....	99
8	Planning For Action	103
8.1	Statement Of Action	103
8.1.2	Rights Of Way Improvement Plan	103
8.1.3	Planning.....	103
8.1.4	Health and Accessibility.....	104
8.1.5	Cycling.....	104
8.1.6	Best Value	105
8.1.7	Dealing With Problems	105
8.1.8	Near Urban Area Schemes 2006 – 11.....	106
8.1.9	Rural Waymarking and signing 2006 – 09.....	110
8.1.10	Promoted Routes and Publications renewal schedule.....	112
8.1.11	Open Access	113
8.1.12	Mapping and Orders.....	113
8.1.13	Modification Orders	114
8.1.14	Moving Paths.....	115
9	Policy List.....	117
9.1	Planning.....	117
9.2	Users And Needs	118
9.3	Looking After Paths	120
9.4	Open Access	122
9.5	Mapping Paths.....	123
9.6	Diverting Paths	125

Figures

Figure 1 - Districts & Divisions In Leicestershire	15
Figure 2 – Landscape Character Areas	16
Figure 3 - Sites Of Special Scientific Interest & National Forest Boundary.....	17
Figure 4 - Distance Travelled In Car Before Walk	28
Figure 5 - Importance Of Access To The Countryside	29
Figure 6 - Frequency Of Recreating In The Leicestershire Countryside	30
Figure 7 - Reasons For Walking / Riding.....	31
Figure 8 - Things that would encourage respondents to walk or ride more often	32
Figure 9 - National Cycleway Network.....	38
Figure 10 - Population Figures By District	44
Figure 11 - Rights Of Way Network Breakdown	58
Figure 12 - Rights of Way Availability By User Groups	59
Figure 13 - Network Length By User	59
Figure 14 - Path & Population Density.....	60
Figure 15 – Households more than 250 & 500 metres from any path	62
Figure 16 – Households more than 1 kilometre from a bridleway	63
Figure 17 – Urban Areas With Paths & Properties	65
Figure 18 - BVPI Figures 2002-05.....	67
Figure 19 - Ease Of Use	68
Figure 20 - Defect Reports 1997-2005.....	69
Figure 21 - Defect Reports Over Ten Year Period	70
Figure 22 - Principal Reports Received	70

<i>Figure 23 - Waymarked Areas In Leicestershire</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>Figure 24 - Promoted Routes In Leicestershire</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>Figure 25 - Open Access Area Map Of Leicestershire</i>	<i>85</i>
<i>Figure 26 - Definitive Map Sheets For Leicestershire.....</i>	<i>88</i>
<i>Figure 27 - PAI Programme</i>	<i>91</i>
<i>Figure 28 - List Of Anomalies</i>	<i>93</i>
<i>Figure 29 - Path Availability Against Demand</i>	<i>95</i>
<i>Figure 30 - Rationalisation Scheme Map.....</i>	<i>99</i>
<i>Figure 31 – Map Of LTP Areas For 2006-2012</i>	<i>107</i>
<i>Figure 32 - List Of LTP schemes 2006-2012.....</i>	<i>107</i>
<i>Figure 33 - LTP Programme Stages.....</i>	<i>108</i>
<i>Figure 34 - Rural Waymarking Programme 2006-2010.....</i>	<i>110</i>

Contents

3 Summary

3.1 *Introduction*

3.1.1.1 Welcome to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Leicestershire.

3.1.1.2 Leicestershire, like many counties in England has a wonderful network of Public Rights of Way. The 3024 kilometres (1878 miles) of footpaths, bridleways and byways offer the best way to explore and enjoy the countryside. The paths also provide local routes that link communities and give access to schools, shops, work places and other facilities for many. To put this into some sort of perspective, this is the equivalent of managing a path that extends from Leicester to well beyond Moscow.



3.1.1.3 Although this network has developed over hundreds of years, it needs to meet the current and future needs of users. The County Council is considering how best to manage this unique resource.

3.1.1.4 In researching this plan the authority has considered national, regional and local research. This includes local surveys, exemplar projects set up by the Countryside Agency and a raft of national studies. All of these have underlined the importance of walking and riding in people's everyday lives. Some of the key findings include:

- Most walking journeys begin from the doorstep
- 90% of the Leicestershire public see access to the countryside as important
- Most people in the county go walking or riding in the countryside at least once a month
- 94% of the Leicestershire public live in or close to predominantly urban areas
- 46% of the network is within these areas, amounting to 1400 kilometres (870 miles) of routes near to doorsteps
- The main motivation for walkers and riders is because it is fun and healthy.
- Over the last 25 years the amount of miles travelled on foot and bicycle fell by more than 25%
- Physical activity, walking in particular, could make the single most effective contribution to the health of the nation. Regular walking reduces the risk of coronary heart disease by up to 50%

3.1.1.5 The walking and riding environment also helps to contribute to a number of areas other than general access. By its very nature, walking and riding, is a socially inclusive activity. Respondents repeatedly underlined the quality of

life contribution that walking provided both within the local community and accessing the landscapes around them. It is also sustainable in the short and long term, providing opportunities for people now and hopefully in the future.

- 3.1.1.6 At the heart of the proposals set out in this document, is the desire to provide improved opportunities for walking and riding. Much needs to be done to arrest the current falls in walking and riding. Society is increasingly dependent on the car and we live ever more sedentary lifestyles. Often those groups in society that would benefit most from more active lifestyles, are those least likely to undertake exercise.
- 3.1.1.7 Both local and national studies show that walking and riding remain extremely popular. The challenge is to involve a wider section of society and make walking and riding part of our everyday lives. Access should be for all, and to be so it needs to compete with the car for utilitarian journeys and a host of other activities for recreational time. It needs to be available near to everyone's home, be fun, attractive and free from physical and mental barriers. The County Council is proposing to focus new improvements and promote use near to where people live. We will continue to maintain the quality of the network as a whole, but key improvements will be focused in areas that maximise benefit. About 94% of the population live in or near to urban areas. Nearly half of the Rights of Way network, falls in these areas. We are currently producing proposals under the Local Transport Plan. This includes schemes of improvements, maintenance and promotion to local path networks that are intended to:
- Increase levels of walking and riding in all sectors of the community;
 - Raise environmental awareness;
 - Improve social inclusion;
 - Encourage tourism and economic development;
 - Contribute towards physical activity levels;
- 3.1.1.8 The proposals have been developed in direct consultation with those communities affected. The Draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan was subject to a consultation period earlier this year. All of the written responses have now been considered, resulting in a number of changes. This document is also being published in conjunction with the Second Local Transport Plan published by the County Council in 2006.
- 3.1.1.9 The Improvement Plan is supported by the Leicestershire Local Access Forum. The forum is a new statutory group that provides advice to the County Council and other bodies, on the improvement of public access for the purposes of open-air recreation and the enjoyment in Leicestershire.

3.2 The Background

- 3.2.1.1 From the 21st of November 2002, Highway Authorities in England were required to prepare and publish a Rights Of Way Improvement Plan¹. This has to be completed by 2007. This has now been amended by the

¹ <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000037.htm>

requirement to fit elements of the plan into the Local Transport Plan (LTP). The provisional LTP has been published with proposals for the Rights of Way network. The authority is now producing an Improvement Plan with links to the LTP process. Current guidance indicates that the Improvement Plan will be fully integrated into the LTP process by 2010.

3.2.1.2 The Improvement Plan is a statutory requirement set out in Sections 60 & 61 of the Countryside and Rights Of Way Act 2000.

3.2.1.3 In summary, the Plan is required to consider at least, the following:

- 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 the authority's area;
- The accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems;
- A statement of the action the authority proposes to take for the management of local rights of way, and
- Such other matters as the Secretary Of State may direct.

3.2.1.4 The new requirements build on previous initiatives, including Milestones, encouraging local authorities to look at the longer term management of the Rights of Way system.

3.2.1.5 The County Council has a statutory role as:

- A Highway Authority to maintain routes on the ground and to keep them open.
- A Surveying Authority to map all of the paths on the Definitive Map.
- An Access Authority to look after the new open access sites and rights.



3.2.1.6 These statutory requirements will continue to be the major focus of our work. They are discussed in further chapters. However, the plan offers an opportunity to stand back and consider how best to deliver the Rights of Way service. It is all too easy to identify further funding requirements without first considering how to get the most from existing resources.

3.2.1.7 The authority is also looking at attracting funding from a number of other agencies, including central and regional government. These include funding

through the Local Transport Plan and involvement in the Local Area Agreement process.

- 3.2.1.8 As well as looking at how best to provide these statutory requirements, the plan considers other areas that have been identified by government and the community.
- 3.2.1.9 In 2002, the Chief Medical Officer produced a report entitled 'Health Check: on the state of public health'². He highlighted the problem of obesity and the general health of the nation. This and further research has underlined the need to exercise:
- Sedentary lifestyle is one of the ten leading global causes of death and disability;
 - More than two million deaths worldwide each year are attributable to physical inactivity (W.H.O.)³;
 - Regular walking reduces the risk of coronary heart disease by up to 50% (Dept Of Health), and
 - Lack of exercise causes more illness than smoking in EU countries (W.H.O).
- 3.2.1.10 The Chief Medical Officer described this as a wake up call, that needs to lead to changes in lifestyle in all households. Being inactive is described as no longer an option. Scientific evidence indicates that most people need to undertake moderate physical activity, walking is ideal, for at least 30 minutes, 5 times a week.

3.3 We Want To:

- 3.3.1.1 *Develop and manage a Rights Of Way Network that meets the current and future needs of the local community***
- 3.3.1.2 *Provide a high quality Rights of Way service, including working effectively with other agencies and authorities***
- 3.3.1.3 *Enable walking and riding opportunities to as many people as possible, with particular focus on those currently excluded including the young and those with mobility problems***
- 3.3.1.4 *Contribute towards improving the health of residents of Leicestershire***
- 3.3.1.5 *Promote Leicestershire as an attractive place to walk, cycle & ride for all including those visiting the county***
- 3.3.1.6 *Monitor and report on how we are achieving these goals at regular intervals***

² <http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/AnnualReports/fs/en>

³ <http://www.who.int/en/>

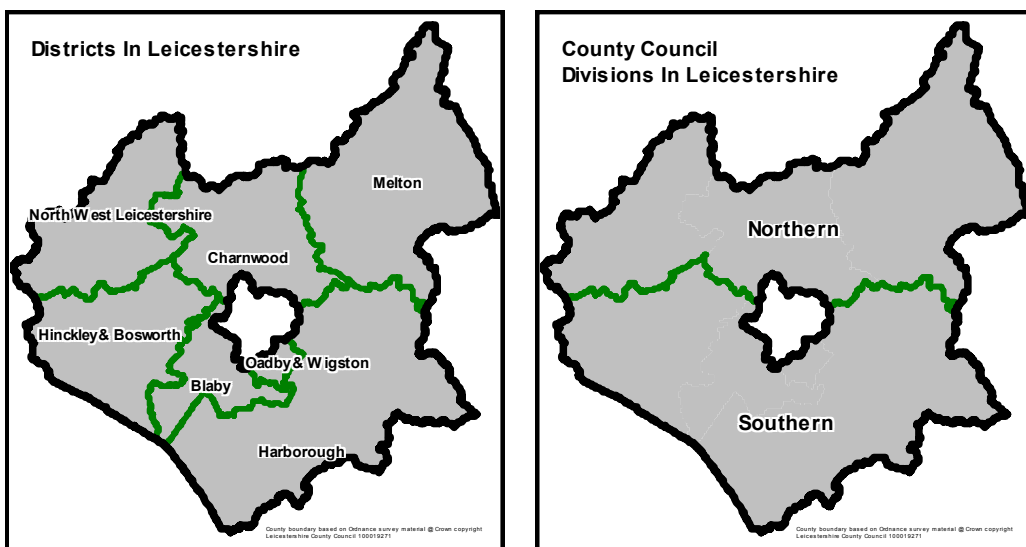
4 Setting The Scene

4.1 *The Plan Area*

4.1.1 *Introduction*

- 4.1.1.1 Leicestershire is located in the middle of England and known as the ‘Heart of the Shires’ and the County of the Horse. It borders Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire to the north, Northamptonshire and Warwickshire to the south, Rutland and Lincolnshire to the east and Staffordshire to the west.
- 4.1.1.2 The county has two tier local government. The administrative area of Leicestershire County Council covers 7 district authorities, North West Leicestershire, Charnwood, Melton, Hinckley & Bosworth, Blaby, Oadby & Wigston and Harborough. In the centre is the City Of Leicester, which is a unitary authority and is producing its own Improvement Plan.

Figure 1 - Districts & Divisions In Leicestershire



- 4.1.1.3 The County Council operates as Highway, Surveying and Access Authority for the entire County. Most of the services are supplied from the Rights Of Way team at County Hall. Some services are via Divisional offices, one for the north, and one for the south. Both District Councils and the 234 Parish Councils have powers to become involved in work on footpaths and bridleways. Parish Councils often act as a first point of contact from the public regarding local rights of way issues. A number of parishes have also worked with the County Council on local path improvement projects.

4.1.2 *Landscape*

- 4.1.2.1 The landscape is in a constant state of flux. At the end of the 19th Century, the County was known as a huge exporter of horses, especially for London and the production of sheep and wool. The image of foxhunting across an emerald landscape has changed radically since the war. Whilst the hunts

are still in place, the landscape has undergone tremendous change. Gone are much of the grass fields that supported the horses and sheep. Nearly half of the county is tilled agricultural land, and less than a third managed grassland. The landscape historian, Hoskins⁴, described the county as being “generally dismissed by those who have merely driven through it on the A6...with somewhere in the unseen background a lot of fox-hunting going on”. Times change, and most travellers see the county from the M1. This view offers a very different perspective of the county, especially in the north. Gone is the lowland floodplain of the Soar Valley that sweeps north to meet the Trent. In its place is the more rugged landscape of the Charnwood Forest area.

Figure 2 – Landscape Character Areas



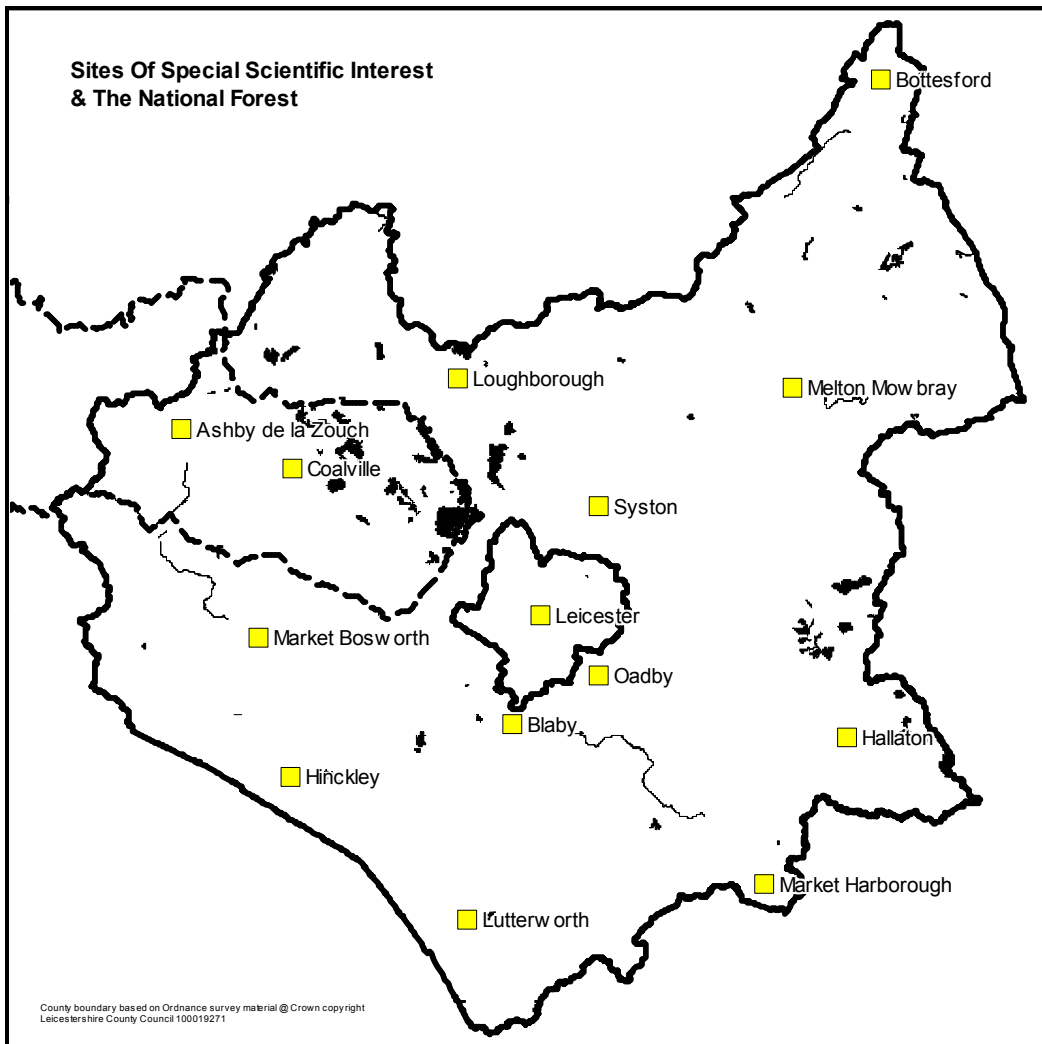
4.1.2.2 The modern landscape has evolved over centuries. The primary change that created the picture we see today was the enclosure of land over the last 4 centuries. The allocation of land also led to the creation of most of the paths we see today. Enclosures were drawn up under Parliamentary provisions.

⁴ The Making Of The English Landscape – W.G. Hoskins

These documents granted title to land that forms the basis of most holdings today and also balanced this with the laying out of local carriageways, bridleways and footways. Both private ownership and public access owe their roots to the same process and documentation, and as such they are intrinsically linked. This balance between private rights and public rights continues to cause debate to this day.

4.1.2.3 The Landscape character areas produced by the Countryside Agency show a more complex picture, with a wide range of landscape types. More recent changes, include the loss of Elm trees during the 1970's. The general perception of a county with a uniform agricultural pattern is partly deserved. The last 30 years has seen the removal of many hedges and the creation of larger cereal fields. The work of keeping paths open through crops and maintaining headland paths has increased over time.

Figure 3 - Sites Of Special Scientific Interest & National Forest Boundary



4.1.2.4 The two areas that attract most visiting walkers are the Charnwood Forest in the north west and High Leicestershire in the east. High Leicestershire has

broad and rolling valleys. Population is sparse with a number of deserted settlements. The area has a distinctive feel, partly due to the ironstone and limestone buildings, including churches. Charnwood Forest has a low density of paths since enclosure during the last century. Before that it was a largely an open area of moor and heath. It has outcrops of ancient Precambrian rocks and has areas of heath, bracken and woodland.

- 4.1.2.5 Leicestershire is one the poorest counties in terms of biodiversity. However, it does support a number of important habitats. It has one Special Protected Area and more than 50 Sites Of Special Scientific Interest. Some of these have new access under the Open Access provisions. The county is one of the least wooded areas of England, with less than 4% cover. Ironically, this helped to attract the National Forest to the west of the county. The National Forest⁵ covers an area of approximately 200 square miles. The Forest is taking root in the heart of England across parts of Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Staffordshire. From one of the country's least wooded regions, the ambitious goal for is to increase woodland cover to about a third of all the land within its boundary. Woodland cover has already increased to 16% in the Forest area. Many of the sites have or will have access to the public.
- 4.1.2.6 The development of the National Forest and the restoration of parts of the Ashby Canal will attract increasing numbers of visitors over the plan period.

⁵ <http://www.nationalforest.org/>

4.2 Policy Framework

4.2.1 Corporate and Partner Strategies

4.2.1.1 The Rights of Way Improvement Plan sits alongside many other documents. These are produced by a variety of agencies. The County Council has embarked on its second full Medium Term Corporate Strategy⁶. This covers priorities for the four year period to May 2009, including the delivery of services, and Rights of Way. The authority affirms:

4.2.1.2 *“We will listen to the views of the Leicestershire people and, by working with them and our partner agencies, ensure they enjoy the quality of life which they expect: to live in a County and region which is safe, healthy, attractive and prosperous.”*

4.2.1.3 In summary, the priorities are set out in three primary aims:

- Improving quality of life for people,
- Improving quality of life in communities
- Improving services so they are high quality and value for money.

4.2.1.4 The Rights of Way service has a clear relationship to these aims. Quality of life is at the centre of providing a recreational network, including working and delivering services directly and in response to communities. The Improvement Plan is also focused on providing the maximum benefits within likely constraints. The service must provide an improving service to compete with travel, recreational and other opportunity costs. By focusing on these primary aims the Council intends to make it clear what it wants to achieve.

4.2.1.5 Past successes and high levels of services have led to the authority receiving an ‘Excellent’ rating by the Audit Commission in 2004⁷. Following a revision of the system by the Commission, the County Council’s star rating is now 4 Stars. This is the highest rating achievable. Ironically, this removed the formal requirement to produce both a Local Transport Plan and a Rights Of Way Improvement Plan. The authority recognizes the importance of both documents to properly plan and manage the service and has therefore chosen to continue with the process. It also provides opportunities for seeking external funding aside from the county rate payer.

4.2.1.6 The County Council has considered a wide range of opinions in preparing this document. The views of the Leicestershire Local Access Forum⁸ have been sought together with the involvement of the Leicestershire citizens’ panel and citizens’ juries involving people from across the community. This feedback has already led to a number of changes to the proposed delivery of services over the next five years. The draft rights of way Improvement Plan was subject to a consultation period, earlier in 2006.

4.2.1.7 The Council and its partners are in the process of developing a Local Area Agreement (LAA) with Government. Some of the targets within this Strategy will develop as the programme develops. Progress against the targets will

⁶ http://www.leics.gov.uk/corporate_strategy

be monitored and published each year in the Council's Annual Plan.

4.2.2 *Second Local Transport Plan*

4.2.2.1 The requirements for the Rights Of Way Improvement Plan were set out in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The Act envisaged that the Plans would be in place by 2007 and be updated every five years thereafter. Government has indicated that the plan should now become integrated with the Local Transport Plan (LTP) process. Government guidance states that integrating these two plans is to:

- *clearly establish the shared aims and establish a definite link between ROWIPs and LTPs;*
- *ensure that, as public highways, rights of way are embraced by the LTP process and recognised in LTPs as a key ingredient in the development of an integrated transport network that provides choice in a variety of transport modes;*
- *recognise the invaluable role rights of way can play in assisting LTPs to achieve the shared priority and wider quality of life objectives;*
- *strengthen and facilitate the long term sustainability of rights of way in the longer term and reduce the quantity of plans produced by an authority*

4.2.2.2 This round is currently envisaged to be the last Improvement Plan that will be published as a separate document from the Local Transport Plan. At this stage, authorities have been asked to partially integrate the two documents and develop close links between them. Guidance further states that; '*The Government recognises that it would be unrealistic to expect authorities to fully integrate the two plans by March 2006, particularly as the first ROWIPs do not have to be completed until November 2007. Full integration will therefore take place from 2010 onwards, building on the development of full ROWIPs.*'

4.2.2.3 *Policy P1*

The Rights Of Way Improvement Plan has direct links to and is being produced in conjunction with the Second Local Transport Plan published by the County Council in 2006.

4.2.2.4 The County Council has published a Local Transport Plan for the period 2006 – 2011. Previously, rights of way have not formally been part of the LTP bidding process. The new guidance brings into line the other 3024 kms of the highway network that was previously excluded from the process. The Local Transport Plan is fundamental in setting a policy and guiding implementation for walking and cycling initiatives in the county. The document sets out the strategy and programmes for transport over a five-year period to meet a series of objectives, these 'shared objectives' include:

- **Tackling congestion** by more effective vehicular use of congested road space and increasing the use of buses, walking and cycling
- **Accessibility** this includes where possible, to enable people to access employment, education, health care and food shopping, by foot or cycle.

⁷ <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk>

⁸ <http://www.leics.gov.uk/laf>

This is particularly important where analysis shows the greatest levels of social exclusion. Government suggests that this should be achieved by ‘*improving routes and facilities, maintaining them in a more usable condition, improving Rights of Way in both urban and rural areas, and making routes safer, more secure, and more attractive*’ This also includes making current routes more open and easier to find and use. New routes are only one possible solution.

- **Safer Roads** through local safety schemes and speed management activities as well as continuing road safety education, training and publicity campaigns. Many users identify safety as one of the primary reasons for not walking or cycling. How people access walking and cycling opportunities while interacting with the carriageway network is fundamental. Paths would have greater use if they could be reached safely.
- **Improving air quality** in the traffic related Air Quality Management Areas in each district through action plans and robust monitoring of nitrogen dioxide concentrations against national target levels. The reduction of traffic flows at certain sites isn't just moving the problem elsewhere, it includes the provision of other travel options including non-motorised.
- **Quality Of Life** is a strand that is made up in part of the above objectives. The active encouragement of walking and riding can raise perceptions of the communities where people live, work and enjoy their lives in. In urban areas the interaction with Public Open Space and the provision of associated schemes, including street furniture, trees and greenery, lighting and signage all help. The network gives access to the wider surrounding countryside areas. There is also an important health benefit in such activities.



4.2.2.5 LTP proposals should demonstrably address wider quality of life issues including neighbourhood renewal, quality of public space, landscape and diversity, safe and prosperous communities, health, noise and climate change through local communities, near schools and within town centres by reducing vehicle speeds and in exceptional cases re-routing the traffic. This can lead to more journeys to these facilities by walking and cycling.

4.2.2.6 The LTP also underlines the need to achieve results in the most cost effective way through robust condition monitoring, timeliness of intervention

and economies of scale in repairs and renewal. The rights of way network needs to be managed following similar principles.

- 4.2.2.7 This is the second Local Transport Plan⁹ for the county. The document has a dual role of providing a strategic framework and as a funding document setting out proposed schemes and programmes over the next five years. In April 2006, the County Council produced a Second Local Transport Plan for the period 2006-2011. This sets out a longer-term transport strategy, and shows in detail the proposals for meeting the objectives. The Local Transport Plan is fundamental to the management and planning of Rights of Way over the next five years. Much of the proposals contained within it have been developed via the provisional work on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. It is the single most important opportunity for Rights of Way development for many years, not least for the funding opportunities it offers. In a very real sense it also formally recognises and values the role that walking, cycling and riding offer towards the overall management of transport in the county.
- 4.2.2.8 In line with the guidance from government, the Local Transport Plan has included prioritised rights of way improvements that help meet the shared priorities. This work requires funding and will be reported on in Annual Progress Reports. The proposals and details of schemes are set out in detail elsewhere in this document.

4.2.3 *Strategic Environmental Assessment*

- 4.2.3.1 An environmental report has been produced which shows the impact of our proposals. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive¹⁰ requires certain plans to be subject to an assessment. This is to enable environmental considerations to be built into plans more effectively and consider the medium and long term environmental consequences of plans. Leicestershire County Council has undertaken this process as part of the Local Transport Plan process. Rights of Way proposals set out in the Transport Plan and this document have been considered alongside other areas. The SEA took a long term view of the scheme proposals beyond the lifetime of the plan.
- 4.2.3.2 The SEA¹¹ recognises the contribution that the greater use of public transport, cycling and walking can make towards improving air quality and its effects on health levels. It does point out that these can only be realized if there is a shift away from single car occupancy to other travel options. It also underlines the need to actively promote the opportunities generated by the scheme proposals. It does not envisage that the rights of way proposals will have a negative environmental effect through implementation. Indeed the provision of access to the environment should lead to a greater awareness and enjoyment of the landscape that should help support its protection and enhancement.

⁹ <http://www.leics.gov.uk/LTP>

¹⁰ <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/eia/home.htm>

¹¹ http://www.leics.gov.uk/ltp2_appendix_c-2.pdf

4.2.4 *Leicestershire Community Strategy*

- 4.2.4.1 Leicestershire Together produced a 2nd Leicestershire Community Strategy¹² in 2005. The partnership brings together a wide range of organizations in the county. These include the County and District Councils, Primary Care Trusts, Ethnic and Business partnerships as well many others. The partnership seeks to improve the quality of life for Leicestershire people and to improve the quality and co-ordination of public services.
- 4.2.4.2 The partnership is committed to developing:
- *A vibrant and thriving County in which to live work and play*
 - *A County where all have access to quality services*
 - *A County which looks to the future by maximizing opportunities for its young people*
- 4.2.4.3 A series of consultation exercises sought to find out exactly what local people thought and wanted. People wanted and believed in a positive image for Leicestershire and the promotion of what is best about the County. With over 23 million visitors attracted to Leicestershire and Leicester in 2000, around 22 million of these were day visitors, contributing around £782 million to the local economy, there was much to celebrate and develop. One stated outcome was to develop a web based portal to promote what is going on in Leicestershire for tourists and local people, including walking and riding.
- 4.2.4.4 A feeling of community was important, as was the ability for people to have a say in future proposals. Community led consultation and development by supporting local community groups, has already led to a series of Village Appraisals and Parish Plans. Nearly all of these stress the importance of local recreation and highlight a range of issues that should be addressed on the Rights of Way network. Maps showing local path networks are available from the Rights of Way team for groups carrying out appraisals. Proposals developed later in this document include specific local consultation exercises linked to works and promotion proposals.

4.2.4.5 *Policy P2*

The County Council will seek the views of any local communities involved in schemes developed from the Local Transport Plan proposals and develop future projects accordingly.

- 4.2.4.6 The Citizens Panel¹³ was also asked for its views on walking, riding and cycling. This is discussed later. Access to the countryside and green spaces was seen as very important. The Community Strategy includes targets to increase access to the countryside by improving the rights of way network. Specifically the document seeks to increase to 81% the percentage rights of way that are signposted and easy to use by members of the public. This is further developed later in this document.

¹² http://www.leics.gov.uk/community_strategy

¹³ http://www.leics.gov.uk/consultation_citizens_panel_voice

4.2.5 Planning

- 4.2.5.1 The Local Planning system is in a period of change. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004¹⁴ is ushering in a new hierarchy of plans. Currently, the county has an adopted Structure Plan.
- 4.2.5.2 Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and Rutland County Council District Council produce a joint Structure Plan¹⁵. The Plan sets out the proposed strategic framework for the use and development of land up to 2016. It provides a framework for development and use of land consistent with national and regional policy. This includes land use issues such as demand for housing, creating major employment sites, new road proposals, providing for recreation, leisure and shopping, mining and the disposal of waste. The Structure Plan guides the more detailed policies and proposals of Local Development Frameworks and decisions on planning applications.
- 4.2.5.3 The Structure Plan adopts a common theme of stressing the importance of forms of transport other than the car. Provision for walking cycling and public transport is at the top of the agenda both within and around new development proposals of all types, including road construction. This is applicable for both transport policies and energy efficiency.
- 4.2.5.4 The Structure Plan is being superseded by an East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy which will incorporate a more local Sub regional strategy that will cover all of Leicestershire and extend to Nottingham and Derby. At a district level the current set of Local Plans are due to be replaced by Local Development Frameworks. A large amount of planning work is being undertaken at a local, sub regional and regional level. This new look at planning from the ground up offers an opportunity to raise the profile of Rights of Way and Access in the planning process.

4.2.5.5 Policy P3

Developers will be expected to maximise the potential for access within, to and from new development by walking and cycling. This should include links to travel plans and public transport.

- 4.2.5.6 Good design takes account of the needs of all, including the disabled, with the development of high quality walking and cycling networks. It also underlines the need to not just provide the infrastructure but to provide an attractive environment that encourages people to move around on foot or bicycle. This includes enhancing the feeling of personal safety, linking green areas and providing an attractive environment. Existing facilities should be retained and enhanced where possible as well as considering new ones.
- 4.2.5.7 It is not just in new developments that non motorised travel should be considered. Developers are expected to maximise the potential access to and from new development by walking, cycling and public transport. This

¹⁴ <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2004/20040005.htm>

¹⁵ http://www.leics.gov.uk/structure_plan

may extend beyond the developed site. Developers are asked to 'meet the requirements for, and costs of, relevant infrastructure and facilities and other resources required to support the development'

4.2.5.8 Policy P4

Infrastructure assessments to access new development sites, including developer contributions, should include foot and cycle proposals.

4.2.5.9 Employment sites are likely to need specific routes to allow access to and within the development. The Structure Plan states that Strategic Employment sites should be 'in locations which are capable of being made accessible by walking, cycling and public transport'. Housing development needs a broader approach. The development would also need access into and within the site, including links to open or recreational areas in the development. However, new residents are going to want to access and enjoy the surrounding area for recreation. Existing paths may need to be upgraded to meet demand or new routes considered to link to the surrounding network or communities.

4.2.5.10 Policy P5

Consideration should be given to linking new housing sites into the surrounding recreational networks or where there isn't one, creating routes that link to surrounding path networks, communities or facilities.

4.2.5.11 The development of new or linking footpaths, bridleways and cycleways can be considered anywhere including the Green Wedges. Indeed it is recognised that the countryside around towns should have provision for walking and riding, including the provision of sustainable forms of tourism such as walking and cycling. The provision of local recreational opportunities on the doorstep reduces pressure on areas with greater leisure and tourist demand.

4.2.5.12 New roads are a significant issue for walkers, riders and cyclists. The County has many examples of historic road schemes that have effectively severed community link paths and wider recreational networks. Bridleway users are particularly vulnerable. The Structure Plan states that where bypasses and other new routes are to be built, alterations to existing routes will be carried out to encourage walking and cycling. This is an opportunity to obtain improvements to local networks, provided that it does not involve large scale diversions or at grade crossing on high speed routes.

4.2.6 Local Development Framework

- 4.2.6.1 The Structure Plan makes direct links with the Local Planning Frameworks. It encourages land to be identified in Local Plans to be reserved for walking and cycling, it also has specific policies for development areas identified in Local Plans.
- 4.2.6.2 A new Local Development Framework¹⁶ is being established. This will replace the District wide Local plans. The current adopted Local Plans within the County are to be reviewed and form part of the new Development framework. The current review of planning across the county provides an opportunity to raise the profile of walking cycling and riding. Under the new legislation and guidance, it is intended that current Local Plan policies and proposals will be “saved” for a period from the commencement of the Act or until they are superseded by the adoption of LDF documents.
- 4.2.6.3 Whilst the County, can give guidance on policy, it is the District Councils that deal with most planning applications on a daily basis and need to take account of access issues, including those paths that are directly affected by new developments. The effect a development has on a path is a material consideration at the time of granting a planning permission. This will be looked at alongside all other matters, when deciding whether to grant planning permission. Should permission be granted for a new development, the proposals for the path will have to be resolved prior to any works beginning. This includes, where appropriate, the formal diversion or extinguishment of a path.



4.2.6.4 Policy P6

Where development proposals affect public rights of way, the development must ensure the existing or diverted route is both convenient and safe in order to encourage its future use.

- 4.2.6.5 As Highway Authority, the County Council has a direct role to play in advising all parties. This includes future maintenance of any routes diverted or created. To help both developers and District Authorities considering applications, the County Council produces two documents. The first, is 'Highways, Transportation and Development' (HTD)¹⁷ This deals with the provision of highways and transportation infrastructure for new developments in areas for which Leicestershire County Council is the highway authority. The guidance and procedures set out in the document are intended to help applicants prepare development proposals. It also encourages developers to agree proposals both with the County Council and the local planning authority at the pre-application stage. This can save

¹⁶ <http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1143892>

considerable time taken during the planning application stage, as well as providing better design solutions to be incorporated at an early stage.

- 4.2.6.6 The second document is specific guidance on development and Rights of Way, produced by the rights of way team. This document needs to be updated, in the light of changes in policy, advice and legislation. At that stage relevant information will be fed back to the Htd document.

4.2.6.7 Policy P7

The County Council will produce a new Guide to Development and Rights of Way and welcomes contact from developers considering proposals within the county and other planning authorities.

- 4.2.6.8 In all development matters, early discussions between developers, the County Council and other interested parties, result in far more effective schemes.

¹⁷ http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/highways/road_improvements/htd.htm

5 Different Users And Their Needs

5.1 *Walking*

5.1.1.1 Walking is the primary means that people use to move around. In the age of the car, all that can walk do so, every day. A great marker in our lives is the day we 'walk' rather than crawl.

5.1.1.2 The reasons for walking are many and varied. They extend from walking around the home, to visiting the shops or school or setting off on a recreational stroll. Ramblers, dog walkers utilitarian journeys and casual journeys, each has different needs. General rambling based on groups with transport is well catered for with a uniformly developed network. The vast majority of journeys are made up of local recreational walking, dog walking as well as utilitarian journeys. Local solutions are required to improve availability.

5.1.1.3 Walkers are generally well catered for. The entire rights of way network is available to walkers. This compares to less than 20% for horse riders and less than 2% for motor users.

5.1.1.4 The UK Day Visitor survey¹⁸ noted that walking accounts for 1.5 billion trips per year. Nearly one third of visitor journeys, begin and end, on foot. Nearly all journeys that involve the car then result in a walking journey. Most walks are of less than 2 miles and occur from or near to where people live.

5.1.1.5 The County Council undertook a questionnaire with the 'Leicestershire Voice Citizens Panel'¹⁹. The results highlighted the importance of walking in peoples lives. Nearly all utilitarian journeys to shops, schools or other facilities begin from the doorstep. Half of all recreational walks in the countryside start from home. Even those walks that start with a car journey tend to begin within a few miles from home.



Figure 4 - Distance Travelled In Car Before Walk

	%
0-1 miles	3
2-3 miles	23
4-5 miles	28
6-10 miles	27
11+ miles	16

¹⁸ <http://www.countryside.gov.uk/WhoWeAreAndWhatWeDo/dayvisits.asp>

¹⁹ http://www.leics.gov.uk/questionnaire__results_spr04.doc

- 5.1.1.6 The network of paths is spread across the county in a generally uniform pattern. The population is predominantly focused around built up areas. Naturally, people tend to use the paths close to them the most. In absolute terms, the current network does not reflect the journeys patterns that people do and seem to want to take. It would be surprising that a network that evolved over several hundred years during periods of huge population migration and growth would be a perfect solution for modern travel patterns.
- 5.1.1.7 Sadly, the last 25 years has seen a significant fall in the amount of exercise and walking undertaken by the general public. In, 'Choosing Health? Choosing Activity'²⁰, published in 2004 the Department of Health points out that between 1975 and 2001 the total miles travelled on foot fell by more than a quarter. The increasing role of the car and sedentary lifestyles has led to a decrease in the physical activity rates in the nation as a whole.
- 5.1.1.8 In order to achieve an improvement in health by increasing walking activity, it follows that the provision of better paths close to peoples home is likely to have the greatest benefit. Good quality routes that can be used regularly can attract the infrequent, occasional and reluctant walker.
- 5.1.1.9 On a positive note, nearly 90% of respondents of the local survey identified walking to access the countryside as important and 65% as very important. These figures do vary by age group and gender. The figures are less impressive when looking at frequencies of activity. It seems people would like to walk more, if it is easily available and attractive.
- 5.1.1.10 Patterns across age, gender and socio-economic groups are more complex. Those aged 45-59 are those most likely to say that access to the countryside is very important, as do higher socio-economic groups.

Figure 5 - Importance Of Access To The Countryside

	Very important	Fairly important	Neither important nor unimportant	Not very important	Not important at all	
Overall (958)	65	26	6	1	1	%
18-29 (32)	61	32	2	2	0	%
30-44 (232)	63	28	6	2	1	%
45-59 (373)	71	21	6	1	1	%
60+ (321)	63	26	8	1	1	%
AB (275)	70	22	6	0	0	%
C1 (442)	66	26	6	2	0	%
C2 (135)	59	27	8	3	2	%
DE (99)	59	30	7	2	2	%
Access to car/light van (898)	65	27	6	1	0	%
No access to car/light van (46)	56	17	11	6	6	%

²⁰ <http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsLibrary/fs/en>

5.1.1.11 About three quarters of those questioned go walking in the countryside at least once a month. This compares to only 48% of people without a car, whose walking patterns are focused around where they live. Lower socio-economic groups and non-car owners seem to show the greatest latent demand. With nearly half of all walks to the countryside starting from home even when visiting the countryside, the need and availability for local opportunities is apparent. Even when the car is used, most walks start within 5 miles from home. Less than 1% of walks to the countryside, start with a public transport journey. This figure is not representative of utilitarian journeys that involve public transport.

Figure 6 - Frequency Of Recreating In The Leicestershire Countryside

	Daily	More than once a week	Monthly	Every 3 months	Less often	Never	%
Walk in the countryside	13	28	33	10	10	5	%
Cycle in the countryside	1	6	14	9	15	43	%
Horse ride in the countryside	0	1	1	0	2	80	%

5.1.1.12 The primary motivation for walking as with other activities below is to do something that is enjoyable. This is also linked to the exercise of self or a pet. These two areas dominate all others. To make walking more attractive it needs to compete with other pleasures and needs to be easy, local and promoted. The health message is a strong pull with nearly half of all journeys being linked to health reasons. Above all it needs to be fun. Clambering over barriers, pushing through crops, worrying about losing your way or being barked at by a large dog is not fun for a lot of people. In particular those latent users need a good experience to get them walking on a more regular basis.

5.1.1.13 Walkers also have concerns that may restrict the numbers or types of journeys they make. The perception of personal safety is a very real issue. This is particularly true for women. Nearly 20% of respondents were concerned by safety. This varied according to the time of day or year. Other safety issues include, other traffic, mostly cars, poor lighting, and potential crime. Dog dirt also featured, as did the quality of the paths.

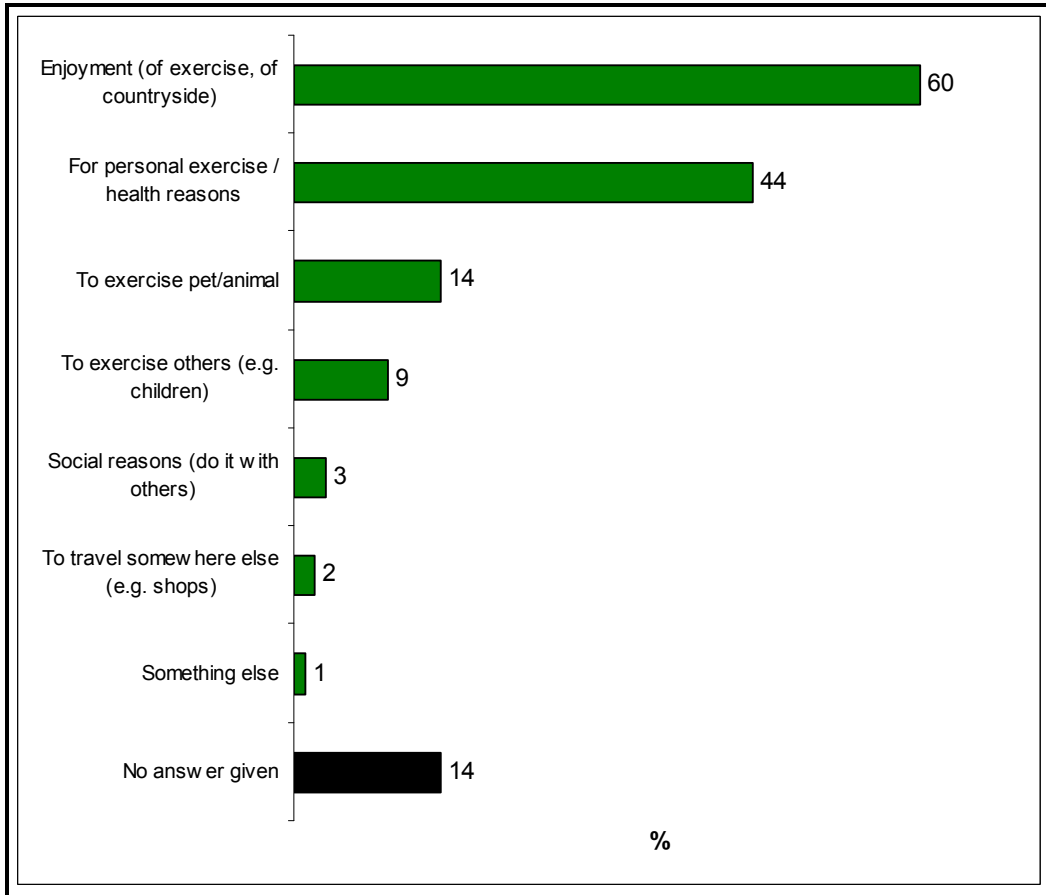


Figure 7 - Reasons For Walking / Riding

5.1.1.14 One key element also stated was time. There are a lot of opportunity costs when it comes to leisure time. Walking and riding has to compete with all of the other leisure activities available. Some of those are delivered with the flick of a button, directly to home. The National Rights of Way survey²¹ listed the primary reasons for not walking or riding as:

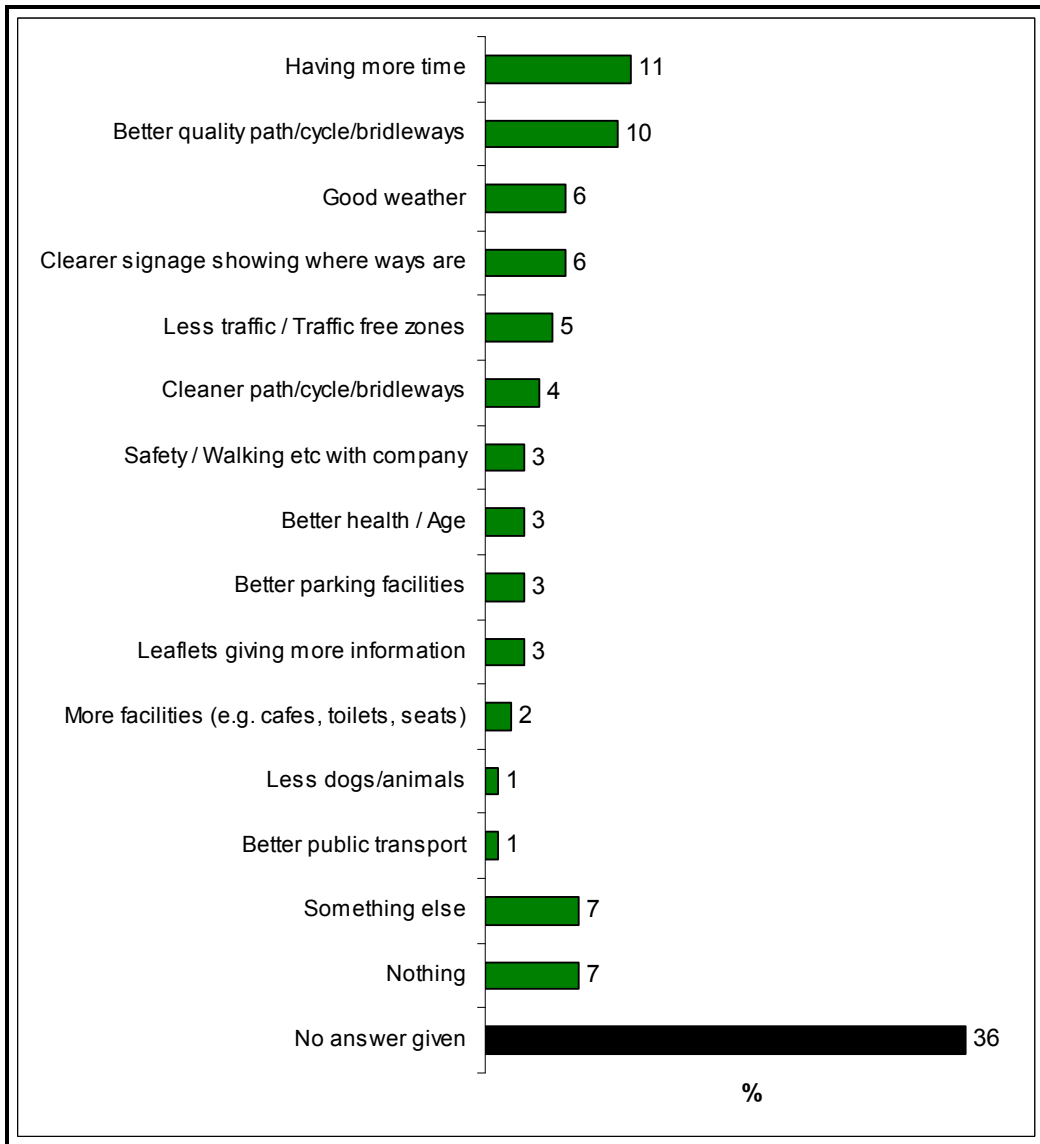
- 24% Not enough leisure time
- 16% Poor health
- 13% Age reasons
- 12% Not interested in the activity.

5.1.1.15 The local study differed in that it listed concerns about safety at 21%. Even issues such as not enough time can be partially addressed by having route options close to people's homes. A number of other authority surveys have also identified a lack of awareness of the local network. This was particularly strong in non-users, as you would expect. The poor condition of paths was raised by 10% of respondents. Walking like any other service has to compete with both work and leisure activities. The message seems to be,

²¹ http://www.iprow.co.uk/gpg_docs/RevisedUse.Demand.pdf

more opportunities, close to home, that are easy to use and safe.

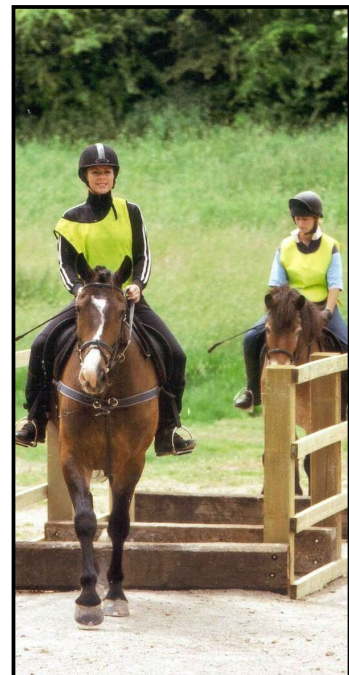
Figure 8 - Things that would encourage respondents to walk or ride more often



5.2 Riding

5.2.1.1 Leicestershire has a rich equestrian history. A hundred years ago the county was a primary supplier of horses in England. The predominance of grazing for sheep, horses and other livestock resulted in large tracts of the county being suitable for general riding. The various hunts in the county are a testament to this rich past.

5.2.1.2 The picture today is somewhat different. Wholesale changes to farming have resulted in a predominantly arable landscape. The network of definitive paths that horse riders are entitled to use extends to nearly 600 kilometres (370 miles). These are mostly made up of bridleways. In addition horse riders can and do use the carriageway network. The changes over the last 100 years have led to this resource being more and more restricted. This is due in part, to huge increases in motor traffic and the associated dangers and difficulties for horse riders.



5.2.1.3 The scale and amount of riding within the county is difficult to ascertain. Even national statistics seem to vary from study to study. The British Horse Society estimates that a little over 4% of the population are regular riders. Other studies put the figure at below 3%. The local Citizens panel questionnaire suggested a figure of about 3%. Despite this low figure, the horse riding industry is an industry of some size and contributes to the local economy, especially in rural areas.

5.2.1.4 Horse riding is a predominantly female activity. Other areas of non motorised travel often show a strong male bias, partly due to security concerns.

5.2.1.5 An overview of the network shows a heavily fragmented picture of bridleways and byways. This does need to be considered alongside the connecting carriageway network. Horse riders are severely restricted on most of the carriageway network in the county. Safety limits the use of most routes and the crossing of busy roads can effectively terminate many routes, even when other paths are available nearby. The bridleway network would benefit more than any other part of the network from new links. In addition there are entire areas of the county that have little or no routes (see current provision, later).

5.2.1.6 Minor or 'unclassified' county roads do offer key routes for horse riders both linking bridleways and providing routes where no other options exist. A

number of these paths are likely to feature in the 'lost ways' programme set out later.

- 5.2.1.7 The picture of livery yards, stabling and paddocks is more complicated. Horse riding patterns are different from walkers. This is dominated by the need to have routes from where horses are stabled, rather than where riders live. For many horse riders, the opportunity to ride from home is not an option. The Entec Rights of Way study of 2001 pointed out that horse riders are regular users of local routes, due to the need to exercise horses. It also confirms that most rides occur close to where horses are stabled and consist of routes that are about 7 kilometres, preferably circular. Most riders seek out traffic free environments.
- 5.2.1.8 It is a challenge to make a significant impact on these issues. Safety on the carriageway has been the centre of recent public information together with the overall reduction of traffic speeds. Set against this is the ever increasing volume of traffic. The Second Local Transport Plan, includes a range of proposals to tackle congestion, reducing road casualties and the impact of road traffic, over the next five years. In a Rights of Way context, the legislative framework makes adding or even diverting routes a time consuming and potentially expensive process. This does not preclude seeking opportunities. Where new development affects routes, including road, housing and commercial opportunities proposals should have specific proposals for horse riders.
- 5.2.1.9 Realistically, the existing network is going to remain largely unaltered. Better availability and use of that network, including safer links into the carriageway network seems to be best way forward. Many routes are under-utilised and a 600 kilometre network is a significant asset. Riders will use paths that are available, well promoted and easy to use. By necessity, stabling already tends to be focused near to where people can ride.
- 5.2.1.10 The Leicestershire Local Access Forum²² has identified the potential use of some roadside verges as one way forward. As well as providing further riding opportunities, it may provide routes that can link bridle and other paths that join the carriageway network. It also allows route development on land in the control of the highway authority. The issue of crossing busy roads with a horse is a significant barrier. The County Council has already installed some toucan crossings, however, this can only be a site specific solution in a very limited number of cases. Low level improvements can also have a considerable impact. A number of bridleway junctions with roads have been upgraded with horse turning areas that allow user to open gates while staying safely away from traffic.

5.2.1.11 Policy U1

The County Council, in conjunction with the Leicestershire Local Access Forum, will develop guidance notes and proposals for improved use of roadside verges for walkers and riders.

²² <http://www.leics.gov.uk/laf>

- 5.2.1.12 The use of the verge network is a complex issue and a number of factors need to be considered. Most verges contain a plethora of infrastructure. Even a simple mowing regime needs to consider the effects this would have on biodiversity, including statutory protection. The proposals developed will need to consider these and many other issues.
- 5.2.1.13 A number of relatively minor improvements can have a significant effect. Adequate signing, making clear the status and availability of routes is one. Adequate maintenance, including the removal of overhanging and surface vegetation is another. Reducing or improving the barriers on routes is a constant request to the Highway authority. Each gate needs to be opened. Where this can be done without dismounting, significantly improves the quality and enjoyment of a ride. This has to be considered on a case by case basis to adequately consider stock issues.

5.3 Cyclists

- 5.3.1.1 Cycling, as a means of transport, has seen a long-term decline that has been mirrored by increasing car usage. This, at a time, when cycle ownership has stayed strong and seen a boom in some areas, such as mountain bikes. In 2001 43% of households owned at least one bicycle. Government has been attempting to arrest this decline in use, including a ten-year target to increase cycle journeys three fold by 2012.
- 5.3.1.2 In the more recent past, cycling saw a fall of about 20-25% during the 1990's. Cycling currently accounts for about 1% of all journeys. This fall seems to have now tailed off, following the initiatives of the past five years.
- 5.3.1.3 Department of Transport research²³ indicates that men aged between 16 and 20 are the most likely to cycle. Six times more men than women cycle in this age range. Overall men are significantly more likely to cycle than women.
- 5.3.1.4 The primary reason for cycling is to travel to and from work. This accounts for a little over 40% of all cycle journeys. About 3% of all journeys to work are by bicycle. The other large area is for recreational purposes, just over 30% of journeys. One success story has been an increase in the amount of leisure cycling. Over the past ten years leisure journeys have increased significantly. Only 2% of journeys to school in 2001 were by bicycle. Cycling is more popular during the summer months, as you would expect.



- 5.3.1.5 Cyclists are entitled to use the same routes that are available to horse riders on the rights of way network. The Countryside Act of 1969 extended rights on bridleways to include cyclists. The network of byways and bridleways in the county extends to nearly 600 kilometres. There is no obligation on the highway authority to provide a suitable surface on bridleways for cyclists. This was a severe curtailment until the advent of mountain biking. With the growth in mountain biking, the improvement to some routes may make them less desirable. However, most bridleways in the county remain off limit to cyclists due to poor surfaces and vegetation.
- 5.3.1.6 Leicestershire has seen a tremendous growth in the availability of routes for cyclists over the past ten years. Many of the dedicated routes have been created through development or reclamation schemes as part of the planning process. Many of these have created high quality routes that are

²³ http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_sustravel/documents/divisionhomepage/031336.hcsp

ideal for off road cycling by all of the family. Typical of these have been the conversion of sections of disused railway lines by the County Council and Sustrans. The popularity of these routes has been tremendous. They have attracted a great deal of recreational use, especially when linked to parking areas.

- 5.3.1.7 Where they offer practical routes between home and work place they are used throughout the week. A 'rush hour' does occur on the Great Central Way and Riverside routes into Leicester from the surrounding settlements that are linked on the route. This is testament to the sealed surface and lighting. Another route, the Glenfield to Ratby route has also proved popular, especially with local walkers. However, it has been less used by commuter and utilitarian cyclists due to the poor surface. The two are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The sealed surface of the Great Central Way is very popular with walkers and offers access to a wider range of the population. Surfaced low gradient cycleways are very popular with walkers. The disabled and those with mobility issues are much more likely to use routes of this type.
- 5.3.1.8 The planning framework in the county stresses the need to develop routes that will provide links into and out of new development, including routes to employment. On the leisure side it also recognises the need to create new routes for leisure. The main opportunities to develop new utilitarian routes are likely to come through the planning process.

5.3.1.9 Policy U2

The County Council will prioritise the development of links to the National Cycle Network and the development of routes within the Local Transport Plan priority areas.

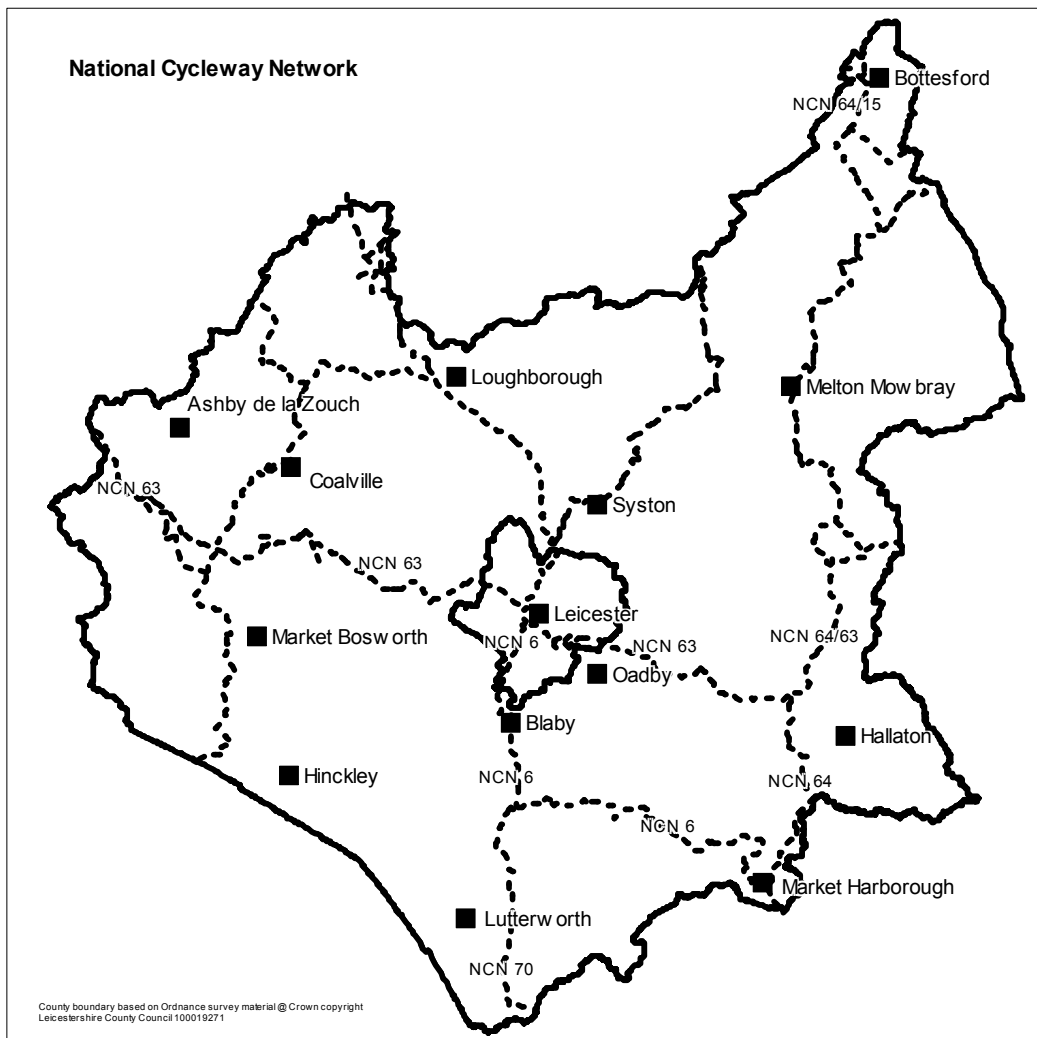
- 5.3.1.10 The Second Local Transport Plan including the continuing work with Sustrans has a number of proposals for developing the cycle network in the county over the next five years. A large number of improvements and new routes are proposed, with particular focus on routes into major urban centres, especially Loughborough and Leicester. The carriageway network remains the main provider for cycling in the county, either within it or on linked segregated routes. On a national level a great deal of work has already been done on the establishment of a National Cycleway Network. Several routes cross the county. Sustrans is now keen to help identify and promote local networks to schools, stations and local facilities.
- 5.3.1.11 The development and management of new routes can generally be achieved in ways that are beneficial to biodiversity. Specific assessments need to be carried out in advance to determine if they affect any priority habitats and species, such as those listed in the Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)²⁴
- 5.3.1.12 Parts of the Rights of Way network already provide excellent cycling facilities not only for recreational purposes but also for a large range of utility journeys. These routes provide vital links and thereby contribute to the

²⁴ <http://www.lrw.org.uk/bap.asp>

cycling network as a whole including those parts of the National Cycle Network which cross Leicestershire.

5.3.1.13 The establishment of this provisional network has been achieved working with a range of partners including British Waterways, the National Forest, Sustrans²⁵, The Woodland Trust, Government Agencies and others. The development of this network is of benefit to all non-motorised users, especially the less able, due to the high quality of the routes on the ground its further development is essential for the future. Cycling can contribute to health, transport, environmental and economic agendas and is an area of County Council activity which is well received by the public and actively promoted by a number of Government Departments and other National organisations.

Figure 9 - National Cycleway Network



²⁵ <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/>

5.3.1.14 Policy U3

The County Council will complete the development of a County Cycling Plan and promote its use by all Planning Authorities and developers when dealing with applications and consents..

5.3.1.15 Policy U4

The County Council will create a schedule of off-road and on-road cycle routes for immediate future development to provide recreational and other travel opportunities for all.

5.3.1.16 Comprehensive planning of the cycling network for the future is the key to achieving well thought out partnerships with developers and other partners to provide facilities on the ground which meet the needs and aspirations of users. The Department Of Transport has set out good practice examples in 'Walking and Cycling – An Action Plan'²⁶

5.3.1.17 Demand for new routes and upkeep of existing routes already outstrips available resources and a system of prioritisation must be put in place. Working with partners to improve resource availability and deal with the practical challenges can be the only way forward for the immediate future.

²⁶ http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_sustravel/documents/page/dft_sustravel_029200.hcsp

5.4 Motor Users

- 5.4.1.1 The majority of the highways network in the county is available to motorised vehicles. The primary focus and spend on the highways network is on the provision of routes for vehicles.
- 5.4.1.2 The rights of way network also includes some carriageways. 2% of the network of Definitive paths is available to motor users. A number of lesser 'County Roads', not on the Definitive map also provide unsurfaced carriageways.
- 5.4.1.3 Last year, Defra published a report²⁷ based on research of the use of Byways Open To All Traffic and minor unsurfaced carriageways²⁸. This concluded that motorised recreational users saw such routes as of vital importance. The routes also provided opportunities for disabled people to explore the countryside in vehicles or motorised wheelchairs. The main traffic on the routes in the study, was for utilitarian rather than recreational use. Byways, on average, see 4 vehicular movements per day. The majority is access to properties and for land management purposes. About 40% of journeys are for recreational purposes, about 1½ journeys per day per route. The majority of traffic along these routes are walkers and horse riders. This does fit one definition of a byway, namely a carriageway that is used mainly by walkers and riders.
- 5.4.1.4 Motor recreational use falls into three main categories. Motor rambling tends to take place at weekends. And is generally 4x4 vehicles and motorbikes. These sorts of journeys tend to focus on longer routes, trying to keep 'off road'. The byways network offers very little in the county, although the 'Meres' in the south of the county are a good example of routes affected by this sort of use. Other 4 x 4 recreational users are linked to other activities. These include hunting, shooting and fishing. Finally are the users that simply use the route to park and then use them to walk or cycle. These users value the easier walking or riding conditions on such routes compared to cross-field walking or cycling. The routes themselves also offer easy and safe parking, away from traffic.
- 5.4.1.5 On average, the County receives about 2000 reports per annum, regarding issues on Rights of Way from the public. The number of reports relating to four wheel use is insignificant and hardly measurable. However, there are specific problems relating to individual paths with use by motor cycles. Recent government advice in



²⁷ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/cl/mpv/pdf/consult-govresponse.pdf>

²⁸ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/cl/mpv/pdf/researchrep-veh.pdf>

'Regulating the use of motor vehicles on public rights of way'²⁹ offers advice to highway and police authorities on addressing the issue.

- 5.4.1.6 The maintenance of byways and minor county roads presents a range of challenges, especially on routes subject to use by farm and recreational motorised traffic. Improvements to the surface are costly and diminish the recreational and rural feel of routes. 'Making the best of byways'³⁰ was published in December 2005, by Defra. The guide was prepared to help with the management of byways where problems exist. It provides information to highway authorities and interested parties with an interest in the use of byways and the management of routes. It also gives good practice examples as well as other reference material for the maintenance of routes.
- 5.4.1.7 In 2006, the government published legislation that curtailed claims for vehicular rights of way. The provisions were set out in part 6 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006³¹. The existing byway network will not now be extended by historical research into routes that may have been omitted from the definitive map. New claims for routes will be limited to 'Restricted Byways', a new category of path that excludes mechanically propelled vehicles. These do allow the use of horse drawn vehicles such as traps, which provide access opportunities for the disabled and less mobile. All routes formally shown on the Definitive map as roads used a public paths have now become restricted byways.
- 5.4.1.8 A concern of users has been the availability of clear records showing which routes are vehicular. The closure of the Definitive Map and the work of the archive research unit do offer a chance to better record routes (discussed later).
- 5.4.1.9 The recent changes in legislation and the complex issue of defining which routes have carriageway rights has led to some confusion amongst users and landowners. The County Council supplies highways data to the Ordnance Survey for use on the Explorer maps. This includes all routes shown on Definitive Maps as well as minor roads that are not otherwise apparent to the public.

5.4.1.10 Policy U5

The County Council will continue to develop and improve the information supplied to The Ordnance Survey for use with the Explorer sheets. This includes other routes with public access.

²⁹ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/cl/mpv/pdf/regulating-motorvehicles.pdf>

³⁰ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/cl/mpv/pdf/bestofbyways.pdf>

³¹ <http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2006/60016--i.htm#66>

5.5 Disability, Mobility And Visually Impaired

- 5.5.1.1 Disability is sometimes described as barriers created by society. Rights of Way are often crossed by many physical barriers and many invisible ones that limit the range of people able to use or participate in using them. Everyone has different needs and currently many paths effectively exclude or limit access for a lot of people.
- 5.5.1.2 The publication of the Disability Discrimination Act³² (DDA) in 1995 focused the issue and requires all service providers, including Highway Authorities, to take a more inclusive approach. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister³³ (ODPM) estimate that 20% of the population has some form of disability. That figure is much higher on any given day, if you consider those with temporary disabilities such as injuries and illness. In addition, many parts of society are less able than others to use the rights of way network. The old and young can find surfaces and crossing points difficult. In addition many can't read a map without some form of help and many find rural areas an alien environment.
- 5.5.1.3 The DDA makes it unlawful to discriminate against anyone on the grounds of his or her disability in connection with employment, public transport, education and the provision of goods and services. Parts II and III of the Act apply to service providers premises, a term that includes land. The County Council is for these purposes, a 'service provider'. This includes its functions as a Highway Authority. The condition of paths on the ground, structures and surfaces along them can significantly reduce access for many. Effective enforcement and maintenance also results in more paths, more easily available for more of the year. It also applies to its new duties as an Access Authority for the Open Access areas. The new sites are subject to Access Management Plans that will consider the range and extent of access to be made available. It also infers duties in respect to the surveying authority function, including promotion. Knowing where paths are and promoting their use leads to greater use to a wider proportion of the public.
- 5.5.1.4 The Act did not set out exact standards that a service provider should provide. It does require reasonable provision should be made. How far this extends can only be decided by the courts. However the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has produced a code of practice³⁴.
- 5.5.1.5 Parts of the DDA were amended in 2005. This requires Service providers to act in a more pro active way. The County Council's Medium Term Corporate Strategy already commits the authority to improving access to County Council services. This includes work to actively promote equality and reduce disadvantage in access to services. The County Council is also in the process of responding to new requirements to produce a Disability Equality Scheme, including removing barriers for disabled people.

³² <http://www.drc-gb.org/thelaw/thedda.asp>

³³ <http://www.odpm.gov.uk/>

³⁴ <http://www.drc-gb.org/thelaw/practice.asp>

5.5.1.6 Policy U6

The County Council will seek to make all routes available to as wide a range of the community as possible, with regard to location and costs.

- 5.5.1.7 The term 'removal of barriers' is very apt in respect to Rights of Way work. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act of 2005, introduced a formal requirement to consider the needs of disabled people when authorising the erection of stiles, gates or other works on rights of way. The County Council would like to enable the best possible quality of service with regard to value for money. The very simple act of removing a barrier or stile can make a path usable to many more people. The Countryside Agency has produced a guide called 'By All Reasonable Means' that advises authorities on making routes more accessible.

5.5.1.8 Policy U7

The County Council will seek to have all routes as free from barriers as possible. The County Council will presume that all paths should be open. A barrier shall only be allowed where the control of livestock or vehicular movements is an issue. If a barrier is authorised it should be as widely accessible as possible, such as a hand gate or kissing gate.

5.5.1.9 Policy U8

Help, including installation will be available from the County Council to replace existing stiles with easy access gates, where resources allow.

- 5.5.1.10 A path is only as accessible as its least accessible point. There is little point in improving crossing points and sections of surfacing unless a whole section is considered. Considering the needs of all, can help everyone. Having regard to disabled and visually impaired users can have a beneficial impact on many more. Good surfacing may well make a section of path usable for people with specific mobility issues. It also makes the route available to parents with pushchairs, in some case cyclists and may encourage much greater general use. This is also the case when routes interact with busy roads and safer crossing points include help for the visually impaired. Everyone on foot benefits from the safer crossing.

- 5.5.1.11 Barriers to access are not just physical. Like many organisations, the County Council is in the process of reviewing a range of plans. This includes the Corporate Equality Plan³⁵ and the production of a draft Disability Equality scheme this year. Part of this process includes carrying out equality impact assessments of all services, and improving information regarding the users of services and promoting equality. Current data capture does now include ethnicity and statistically a picture of countryside access will be available by 2007. The Local Transport Plan did include an equality impact assessment that, while focused on public transport, did consider walkers and cyclists and has driven policy accordingly.

³⁵ http://www.leics.gov.uk/cep_accessible.pdf

5.6 Population Pressures

5.6.1.1 The County has a population of nearly 624,000 (mid 2004). At a district level, the figures are:

Figure 10 - Population Figures By District

Blaby	91,600
Charnwood	157,500
Harborough	79,900
Hinckley & Bosworth	102,200
Melton	48,300
North West Leicestershire	88,300
Oadby and Wigston	56,100
Total	623,900

5.6.1.2 Most of the population is focused in specific areas, including settlements around Leicester, such as Oadby and Wigston. This fringe area has a population in the region of 175,000. The picture is complicated by the Leicester City area. This is predominantly urban and physically linked to many of the county fringe settlements. It has a population of about 280,000. Communities in the city area regularly use the network in the surrounding county areas. The main towns in the county are Loughborough (55,000), Hinckley (37,200), Coalville (33,000), Melton (25,000) and Market Harborough (18,500). Other urban areas surrounding the county are far smaller and have less impact on use of the network. Nuneaton is one such example.

5.6.1.3 The population in the County is increasing. During the last 10 year census cycle, the population increased by 6%. This is a result of natural growth and migration. 6% of the county population are of a minority ethnic origin. This figure is increasing. The City figure is far higher and is one of the highest percentages, outside London.

5.6.1.4 Part of the reason for the growth in population of the county is its central location. It is well served by major transport routes. It is crossed by the M1, M69 and M42/A42 and other major roads. A number of these effectively sever parts of the path network. Parts of the rest of the carriageway network also have high traffic levels that either preclude foot and cycle access along them or operate as local barriers.

5.6.1.5 Areas of the County are also subject to large development pressures. Many of these overlap with urban corridors that have well used paths and open space areas. The Leicester Western Bypass is one example. Development pressures also overlap with a number of green corridors that extend into and out of a number of settlements. The County is a major producer of minerals. The minerals industry is primarily focussed around larger quarries. The coal mining industry has all but ceased in the county but left a rich legacy of

restoration projects providing access areas and opportunities to convert disused rail lines for recreational use.

- 5.6.1.6 The Improvement Plan covers the administrative area of Leicestershire. As previously discussed, there is a clear correlation between where people live and the likelihood of them using any particular path. Nearly half of recreation walks and most utilitarian walks begin from the doorstep. However, that still leaves half of all recreational walks and a number of utilitarian journeys that begin and end elsewhere, although most of those occur within 5 miles of home.
- 5.6.1.7 The user base includes populations from outside the county area. If you include all out of county visitors the list becomes exhaustive. For the purposes of the plan, population in and within 5 miles of the county have been considered.
- 5.6.1.8 94% of the population of the county lives in or close to built up areas of more than 2 and a half square kilometres, the majority of use is therefore focused around these specific areas. The real picture is far more detailed and area specific. Rural areas surrounding urban areas tend to have a great deal of local recreational use. Paths within built up areas or linking close communities, tend to see widespread utilitarian usage, including lots of 'dog walking'.
- 5.6.1.9 There is also a background population throughout the area. The county has 234 parishes, containing more than 400 settlements. These range from small clusters of houses to market towns. Reports testify that all paths in the county are used to some extent.

5.7 Health & Socio Economic Issues, including latent demand

- 5.7.1.1 The primary focus of Rights of Way management and the delivery of services has traditionally been to meet the needs of current users and customers. Those that already use the network report back to the highway authority and have regular dialogue. User groups tend to be those that are consulted on orders diverting paths sent out by the surveying authority. This is only natural since these operate as representatives of groups using the network.
- 5.7.1.2 The Citizens Panel figure of nearly 75% of people walking recreationally at least once a month is heartening. However, that still leaves 25% of the population that do not. In addition, is at least once a month a relevant figure? The Chief Medical officer wants public activity levels increased. This is fundamental for physical and mental well being. If walking is a prime means to achieve this, then opportunities need to be provided for people to walk or exercise five times a week.
- 5.7.1.3 The proportion of those that regularly walk in the countryside is far lower for certain groups. The 75% figure falls to 40% for those with a disability and less than 50% for those without a car. The percentage is also less for lower socio-economic groups. The very people that would most benefit from the enjoyment of the countryside and its surroundings and the health benefits are those least likely to use the network.
- 5.7.1.4 Overall, the county is not deprived. The County ranks the 136th most deprived out of 149 in England³⁶. This average figure is potentially misleading as there are pockets of the county that figure far worse than others. Even so, the figures for each district are also low. These range from Harborough, which is ranked, 336th out of 354 authorities in England, to North West Leicestershire, ranked 195th. Within the county more than 44,000 people live in income deprived households (below 60% of median income). Of these, nearly 60% are under 16 or over 60 years of age. These are the groups that are most likely to depend on forms of transport other than the car.
- 5.7.1.5 The ten most deprived areas in the county are located in parts of Loughborough, North West Leicestershire and Hinckley & Bosworth. All have urban profiles and also include most of the highest figures for both poor health and disability. The potential gains towards healthier lifestyles through physical activity would be greatest in these areas.
- 5.7.1.6 Parts of the Leicester urban fringe are located either close to or beside high deprivation areas located in the City. These have usage shadows that extend well into the county area. The City Council is also drawing up an Improvement Plan and a Local Transport Plan. Discussions continue between the two authorities to co-ordinate schemes and initiatives. The County Council is also liaising with surrounding Highway Authorities including Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Rutland, Northamptonshire, Warwickshire and Staffordshire. Consultations regarding Rights of Way Improvement Plans and the establishment of Local Access

³⁶ http://www.leics.gov.uk/indices_of_deprivation_2004

Forums have improved joint working..

5.7.1.7 Policy U9

In considering improvements to local path networks, the County Council will work with adjoining authorities, in particular, Leicester City Council. The County Council will also have regard to the needs of communities accessing paths that live outside the county area.

- 5.7.1.8 The government has placed greater emphasis on health in recent years. In 2002, the Chief Medical Officer produced a report entitled 'Health Check: on the state of public health'³⁷. He highlighted the problem of obesity and the general health of the nation. He then commissioned a series of scientific studies to examine possible links between physical activity and health.
- 5.7.1.9 A further report in that same year 'Securing good health for the whole population' proposed that government should ensure that the public has sufficient information to make life decisions regarding health. It also highlighted evidence that provided compelling evidence of the link between physical activity and health. It provided evidence that government can and should provide opportunities for all sectors of the community to live more active lives.
- 5.7.1.10 The report and further research pointed out that physical activity:
- Contributes to well being, including mental health
 - Is essential for good health
 - Can reduce the risk of coronary heart disease by up to 50%
 - Can reduce the chances of strokes and type 2 diabetes by 50%
 - Reduces the risk of premature death by 20-30%
 - Could reduce the costs of physical inactivity, currently £8.2 billion per annum
 - Could reduce the costs of inactivity due to obesity, currently £2.5 billion per annum
- 5.7.1.11 The Chief Medical Officer described this as a wake up call, that needs to lead to changes in lifestyle in all households. Being inactive is described as no longer an option. Scientific evidence indicates that most people need to undertake moderate physical activity for at least 30 minutes, 5 times a week. This led to the publication of '*At least five a week*' by the Chief Medical Officer in April 2004.
- 5.7.1.12 The document stated that 30 minutes of activity can be split into three or more sessions of 10 minutes. An ideal way of doing this is through walking. This may be recreational, catching a bus or simply going to work or visiting the shops. The 30 minute recommendation is only sufficient for maintaining general health. To minimise obesity, 45-60 minutes is advised. For the young, this figure should be at least 60 minutes.
- 5.7.1.13 The report recognises the huge cultural shift that is required to change attitudes. This is a great challenge and needs to be spread across a range

³⁷ <http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/fs/en>

of agencies. It also points out that the attitudes of individuals need to be changed as well as society. This it argues, can only occur if the benefits are shown and opportunities exist such as local opportunities and facilities. Improving your health should be seen as fun, and better health as attainable for all. The dangers of current lifestyles need to be pointed out. Too many people assume they are active enough, when this is not the case.

5.7.1.14 In 2004 the Government produced a white paper '*Choosing Health*'. John Reid, the then Health Secretary, reminded readers that a founding principle of the NHS in 1948 was to improve health and prevent disease, not just the treatment of the already sick. The paper commits government to promoting physical and mental wellbeing. It also recognises that action needs to be increased to meet these goals. However, a key thread is choice. Government should provide information and help to those that want to choose healthier lifestyles.

5.7.1.15 '*Choosing Health? Choosing Activity*'³⁸ was a consultation on how to increase physical activity, published in 2004. By this time it was accepted that active lifestyles are the key to better health. The simple challenge is how to make more people want to be active and identify the barriers that stop people becoming active. The main focus of the document was to provide a discussion framework to formulate an action plan. Improving health and narrowing inequalities are recognised as society wide issues and the document seeks to broaden the Choosing Health debate.

5.7.1.16 Increasing activity and changes in diet would contribute to the reduction of:

- Coronary Heart Disease
- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Cancer

5.7.1.17 Cancer and cardiovascular disease are the causes of almost 60% of premature deaths in England.

5.7.1.18 The paper also points out that activity levels continue to drop:

- Between 1975 and 2001 the total miles travelled on foot and bicycle fell by 26% for the population as a whole.
- 23% of the population are obese, treble that of the 1980's
- 70% of men, 63% of women are overweight. 24 million adults
- 16% of children are now obese
- This leads to health problems of heart disease, hypertension and diabetes

5.7.1.19 The barriers to increasing activity are threefold

- Attitudinal - most think they are healthy
- Physical - presence of suitable infrastructure, including footways and paths, safety fears, lighting and time constraints
- Workforce - a lack of professional staff in key areas addressing these very issues

³⁸ <http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/fs/en>

5.7.1.20 Inequalities in health exist in society and some action needs to be targeted.

- 66% of men are not active enough
- 75% of women are not active enough
- 30% of boys are not active enough
- 40% of girls are not active enough
- After the age of 35, activity levels in the population drop away
- For all, low educational attainment levels are linked to those of physical inactivity

5.7.1.21 In order to make the avowed targets of activity of 30 minutes five times a week for adults, the paper has a suggested activity menu. These include:

- Organised activities in clubs, including walking and cycling
- Walking and cycling to work
- Lunchtime activities, including purposeful walking
- Recreational walking and riding
- Informal activities with friends including walking and cycling
- Weekend family led activity visits, including walking and cycling in the countryside and parks

5.7.1.22 To attain the goals set out, key organisations need to be co-ordinated to increase physical activity including the encouragement of walking and cycling.

5.7.1.23 Following the consultation, the Department of Health produced '*Choosing Activity: a physical activity action plan*'³⁹. The plan recognises the need to raise the ambition of people themselves to lead want to lead healthier lives. It builds on the consultations set out above and an earlier within the strategy, '*Game Plan*' produced by government to deliver sport and physical activity.

5.7.1.24 This is underpinned by three principles:

- Informed choice for all
- Personalisation of support to make healthy choices
- Working in partnership to make health everyone's business

5.7.1.25 Key to this is the need to provide local support and the ability to co-ordinate local government, local health agencies, local communities, business and the voluntary sector.

5.7.1.26 The importance of the issue is underlined by the establishment of a new Cabinet Committee chaired by the Secretary of State. Government departments are to develop agreements to set out how they will deliver key Choosing health priorities.

5.7.1.27 At a regional level, the action plan underlines the role of Government Offices and the Regional Development Agencies in health and strategic planning of transport, employment and the environment. They will also play a key role via the Regional Physical Activity Co-Ordinators based at Public Health

³⁹ <http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/fs/en>

Groups to provide a link between national and regional and sub regional activities and actions. This includes the development of Regional Physical Activity Plans.

- 5.7.1.28 The Action plan also focuses on the need to partner work between the local Primary Care Trust (PCT) and local authorities. This includes sharing good practice, and delivering joint programmes including Healthy Walking. Co-ordination is already happening through Local Strategic Partnerships, including the Leicestershire Local Strategic Partnership (Leicestershire Together). All PCTs' are required to produce Local Delivery Plans that include planning for meeting the targets of Choosing Health.
- 5.7.1.29 Success in increasing physical activity can only be achieved through close working partnerships between Primary Care Trusts, Local Authorities and the Public and Private sectors. Local Area Agreements are being developed as a new process, which bring the issues of health inequalities and health outcomes to local community planning. In general the agreements are based on three themes:
- Children and young people
 - Safer and Stronger Communities
 - Healthier communities and older people
- 5.7.1.30 21 pilot areas are already in operation and a further 40 are due to be in place by April 2006. It is hoped that this will provide a framework and additional funding within which to look at the issue of Healthy Walking across the County.
- 5.7.1.31 Funding is also being made available through the PCTs. The Physical Activity Promotion Fund⁴⁰ will have an allocation of £55 million for the next two years for actions relating to diet, physical activity and obesity. This is aside from large scale additional health funding to enable the delivery of Choosing Health and Big Lottery monies.
- 5.7.1.32 All of this work will be evaluated to see how the Action Plan is delivering. The Health Survey for England will monitor physical activity. The National Travel Survey will monitor travel journeys made on foot or bike. This data will focus on travel on public highways. A number of research and development initiatives are being put in place with funding.
- 5.7.1.33 In a local context, the County and City Councils are undertaking extensive planning documents looking at the provision of infrastructure for walking and riding. Both organisations have recently produced Local Transport Plans. These have specific proposals for the improvement and management of the infrastructure that the public use to walk and ride. In addition both authorities are currently undertaking Rights of Way Improvement Plans, looking in more detail how to meet the needs of the local communities for walking and riding. Choosing Health challenges traditional methods of providing and promoting the use of these networks.
- 5.7.1.34 For some time, a number of agencies in the county have been considering the need to better co-ordinate and promote healthy walking and riding

⁴⁰ <http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/fs/en>

opportunities. This marks a shift from simply providing infrastructure by Local Authorities and health messages and advice from Primary Care Trusts and other agencies. A number of initiatives are already happening. These include:

- Promotion of walking and riding from the County Council
- School and work travel plans
- GP Health referral scheme
- Local encouragement of facilities such as parks and visitor sites.
- Walking the Way to health initiatives supported by volunteers
- Local guided walk programmes provided by a range of agencies

5.7.1.35 All of these initiatives help towards the goals set out in Choosing Health. However, a more co-ordinated cross agency approach is needed to meet the challenges set out in the Action Plan. In particular the need to bring together the PCT, LA and voluntary activities.



5.7.1.36 Leicestershire Together has developed a Local Area Agreement with government. Within the document, it is recognised the part that walking can play in increasing public health levels. Infrastructure needs to be in place, but primarily, people need to be encouraged to walk and exercise. One proposal is the need to better co-ordinate and promote current and future schemes in the county.

5.7.1.37 Policy U10

The County Council will work with The Primary Care Trusts, Education providers & The Countryside Agency and other partners to assess how the Rights of Way network and other access facilities can contribute to improving health and to addressing partners health improvement targets.

This planning exercise will be followed by the development of a programme of promotional and infrastructure initiatives designed to contribute to wider developments, including Healthy walking

proposals.

5.7.1.38 Choosing Health challenges us all to adopt active lifestyles for better health for our children and ourselves. Underpinning this is the need to be more active. 'At Least Five Times a week' identifies how this can be achieved and that walking and riding are key to delivering this, at a time when the amount of walking and riding continues to decline. The challenge is a large one, but Government at the highest level is committed to this process.

5.7.1.39 Increasing participation is dependent on understanding why people walk and ride. The local panel results are in line with national statistics. The primary reason that people walk or ride, is to do something enjoyable. To motivate people it needs to be fun.

5.8 Tourism

- 5.8.1.1 One of the beauties of Leicestershire as a tourism destination is its central location and the fact that it is not dominated by one or two visitor attractions. The rural county offers gentle rolling countryside that while not spectacular is quintessentially English. Walking and riding make up part of the patchwork that attracts people to the county. The scale of the recreational market is substantial.
- 5.8.1.2 Measuring visitor levels and the economic value that they bring to an area is notoriously difficult. The most recent local figures are in the 'STEAM'⁴¹ report for 2003. The totals spent by tourists in the plan area for the year was nearly £1 billion. Spends on food, drink and accommodation amount to more than £250 million. Indirect expenditure amounts to another £241 million. Visitors spent £62 million on recreation in the county area. This does not include other spends from these visitors. Recreational visitors spend support the equivalent of more than 1800 full time jobs. In terms of visitor numbers, there were approximately 28 million day visits. These outnumber longer visits with accommodation by more than 10 to one. Unlike major recreational tourist centres, like areas of some National Parks, the use of the rights of way network is still dominated by local day visits.

5.8.1.3 Policy U11

The County Council will seek out and realise opportunities to raise the profile of Leicestershire as a recreational walking, riding and cycling destination.

- 5.8.1.4 The value of Tourism and in a local context, the recreational network, was highlighted during the foot and mouth crisis. As a result of extra powers granted and requests from government the rights of way network was closed. The cost of the outbreak to the food and farming industry has been estimated by the Economics and Statistics Directorate, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs at about £3 billion. The majority of this figure was offset by government grants and support. Remarkably, the cost to other sectors of the rural economy was also in the region of £3 billion. This was more widespread and was not offset by government support. It was directly related to the reduction in visitor numbers to the countryside and associated



⁴¹ <http://www.lsint.info/downloads/Steam%20research%20August05.pdf>

tourist income. This includes the whole visitor management sector. Even in areas hit by the outbreak, such as the Lake District National Park appeals have been made to government to never 'close' the countryside again, including the path network. The network within Leicestershire and associated recreational parks and sites were closed for up to 7 months, including the peak summer months. A number of specific sites in the county also attract large visitor numbers for general recreation. To underline the numbers involved, Bradgate Park, the most popular destination may see approaching 1 million visitors in a busy year.

- 5.8.1.5 Using the above figures, Foot and Mouth may have cost more than £30 million in lost revenue from recreational activities in the county.

- 5.8.1.6 As a walking and riding destination, the County can boast its own long distance walk, the Leicestershire Round, a 100 mile walk around the county. The area is also traversed by the Midshire's Way. This has become a popular long distance walking and riding route stretching some 225 miles across Middle England. From South to North, it crosses 5 counties: Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, and the Peak District National Park, before reaching the Pennines near Stockport. Other promoted routes include the popular 'Walks Around Series' and a series of County Council developed walks around popular tourist destinations. Although there are named and promoted routes from the County Council, an increasingly strong private sector market has been established. You only need to scan the shelves of local book stockists to find a host of walking literature. This industry depends on the routes being maintained, signed and managed. This is further developed in the Promoting paths section of this document.

5.9 Utilitarian Use

- 5.9.1.1 Whilst not dealing with Rights of Way specifically, the last Local Transport Plan did much to develop routes for utilitarian use. This included strategies for both cycling and walking. At the heart of the Second Local Transport Plan is the desire to improve access for all, including investment for walking and cycling facilities that link directly to people's homes with the services they want to access. Walking and cycling are also seen as real alternatives to certain car journeys, helping to reduce car congestion.
- 5.9.1.2 Utilitarian walking and riding is in direct competition with other forms of travel, particularly the car. Most would agree that the car has become predominant and that this trend may continue. Any travel choice is an opportunity cost decision. The car has many advantages. However, there are many downsides, including congestion. Whilst better management can help, it is a truism to say that the only way to tackle congestion is to reduce the number of car journeys, especially at peak times, such as the rush hour and the school run.

5.9.1.3 Policy U12

The County Council is committed to increasing the levels of walking and cycling and the use of public transport, through the Local Transport Plan process.

- 5.9.1.4 To improve access to facilities, it is proposed to review pedestrian infrastructure and where there are gaps, plan comprehensive Rights of Way improvements, particularly those close to urban areas. This includes assessments of socially deprived areas, where there are difficulties accessing services. The fear of crime is also being addressed through work with the Community safety partnerships with investment in Street lighting, including walking and cycling routes, where appropriate.
- 5.9.1.5 Much walking and riding occurs alongside or on the carriageway, including gaining access to the rest of the network. The reduction of road casualties, including walkers and riders, is a priority. This includes taking steps to reduce pedestrian and cycling casualties. It also seeks to address the impact of traffic making detours through community areas, particularly for the school run, by encouraging walking and cycling.

5.9.1.6 Policy U13

The County Council is committed to reducing road casualties through local safety schemes and speed management activities as well as road safety education, training and publicity campaigns.

- 5.9.1.7 The National Transport Strategy, set out by government with guidance wants to see the promotion of school travel plans, workplace travel plans and personalised planning that encourage more walking and riding. Government accepts that this needs to be developed in conjunction with an improved local environment and the encouragement of walking and cycling

being real alternatives to the car. The Regional Transport Strategy for the East Midlands was produced under the Regional Spatial Strategy in 2005. The health of residents and the need to improve accessibility to the environment, jobs, homes and services is underlined. Respondents to the consultations carried out as part of the LTP process repeatedly supported improvements to walking and cycling facilities.

5.9.1.8 Travel plans are now being developed for several areas, including, School Travel Plans, Workplace Travel Plans and Personalised Travel Planning.

5.9.1.9 The change in travel patterns for children attending school has been rapid. Over the past 20 years the number of children travelling to school by car has more than doubled. The numbers cycling and walking has declined accordingly. It is estimated that one in five cars at 8:50am is on a school run. Half of all primary school children go to school in a car. One in five of secondary children go in a car. This curve is on a rise and much needs to be done simply to stop it increasing. If travel patterns can be changed, the benefits will extend to beyond reducing congestion. This includes healthier lifestyles. Ironically, this comes at a time when new legislation has been enacted that allows for the closure of paths that cross or run near schools. Paths can also be considered for closure where they may encourage criminal activities.

5.9.1.10 The County Council has already established a programme of school travel plans. A quarter of schools already have adopted travel plans.

5.9.1.11 Policy U14

The County Council aims to have travel plans for all 304 schools in the county by 2011.

5.9.1.12 Works and improvements stemming from the plans are intended to be focused on schemes that provide for walking and cycling. Government research has shown that in areas with adopted plans, car use has been reduced by about 10%. This has also involved significant improvements to infrastructure, as well as educational information.

5.9.1.13 Providing walking and cycling opportunities is only one part of the picture. People need to be encouraged to use them. Both pupils and parents need to be encouraged. Many school run trips fit into adult journeys, including to workplaces. The County Council has been actively promoting new initiatives, including 'walking buses', 'park and stride' and car sharing. Rewards have also been offered to pupils involved in the 'Star Walker'⁴² scheme that has proved successful. One school has seen a near quarter reduction in car journeys.

⁴² http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/highways/road_safety_traffic_mgmt/school_travel_plans.htm



5.9.1.14 The improvements and promotion of walking and cycling from the school travel plans extends into the wider community. This includes accessibility to other facilities and services. Safer crossing points for school children and links to public transport all help towards short and long term development of new walkers and riders.

5.9.1.15 Workplace travel plans aim to increase the use of public transport and the number of walking and cycling journeys. 60% of all car journeys at peak times are to the workplace. The County Council has developed a travel plan for its main headquarters in Glenfield. New development offers great potential to encourage utilitarian journeys, including access to new facilities, if appropriate infrastructure is in place for walking and cycling from the beginning. Adequate planning at an early stage is vital. The County Council is working in partnership with the District Councils on planning and highway matters.

6 Current Provision & Analysis

6.1 *The Path Network*

6.1.1.1 The rights of way network within Leicestershire is the primary means for the public to access the countryside. It is the best way to explore and enjoy the county. Leicestershire is not blessed with extensive areas of mountain, moor or heath. As a result, the total land proposed to be included in the new Open Access mapping is very small. The 3024 kilometres of paths within the county also provides local routes linking communities and giving access to shops, schools and other facilities.

6.1.1.2 The patchwork of paths reaches out to nearly all parts of the county. They link into carriageway routes and form an integral part of the highways network. The Rights of way network consists of four types of path, footpaths, bridleways, byways and restricted byways, (formally roads used as public paths).

6.1.1.3 The traffic entitled to use these routes is shown in the figures below:

Figure 11 - Rights Of Way Network Breakdown

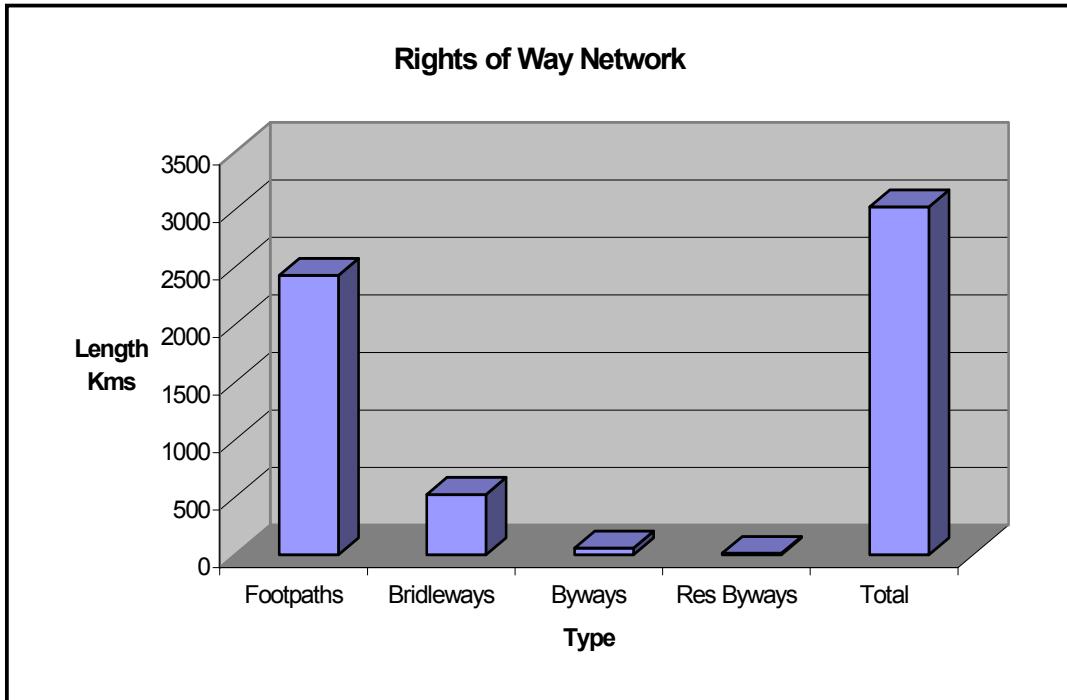
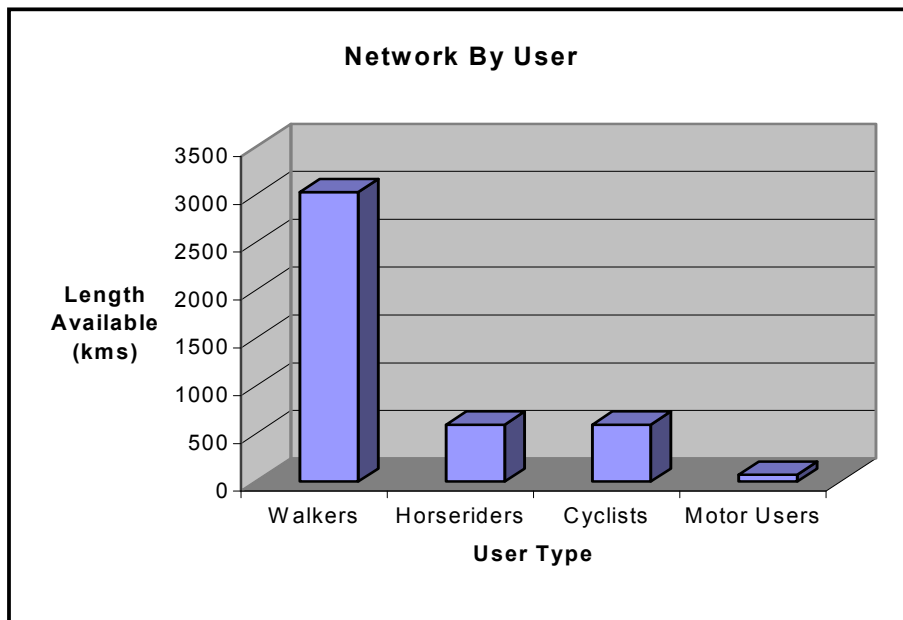


Figure 12 - Rights of Way Availability By User Groups

	% of Network	Walkers	Horse Riders	Cyclists	Motor Users
Public Footpaths	80.32%	2429			
Public Bridleways	17.36%	525	525	525	
Byways Open To All Traffic	1.88%	57	57	57	57
Restricted Byways	0.43%	13	13	13	13
Sub Total (kilometres)		3024	595	595	70
Total	100.00%	100.00%	19.68%	19.68%	2.31%

6.1.1.4 The fact that a route is shown on the definitive map does not mean that it is available on the ground (see below). Assuming that paths are in good condition, the entire network is available to walkers. Less than 20% is available to horse riders and cyclists. The actual figure for most cyclists is far less. Many bridleways, that cyclists are entitled to use cross arable land and are unsuitable for all but hardy mountain bikers. Motor users can only utilise less than 3% of routes. This needs to be balanced with the availability of the carriageway network for users. Most of the highways network (carriageways) in the county is available to the motor car and very well surfaced.

Figure 13 - Network Length By User



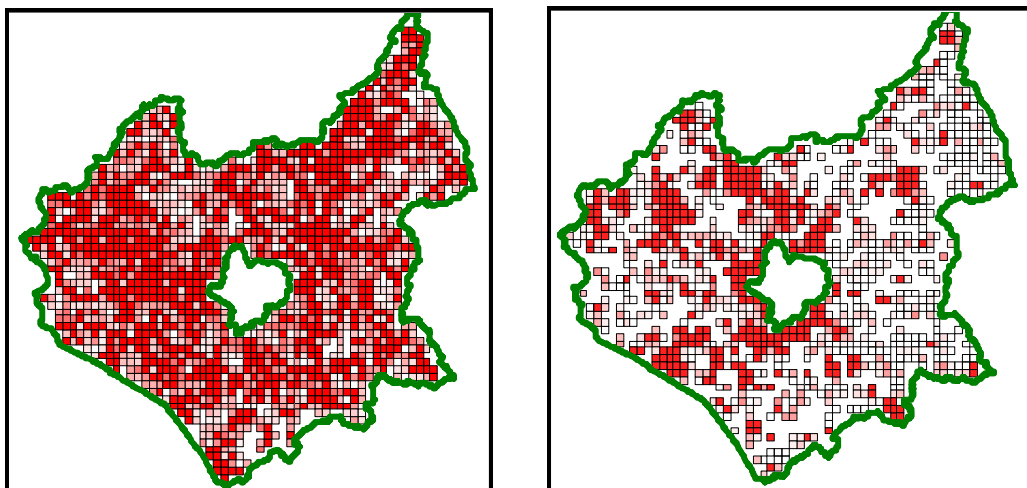
6.2 Assessment & Evaluation

6.2.1.1 In preparing a rights of way improvement plan, Leicestershire County Council is required by the legislation to assess “the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public” and the

opportunities they provide “for exercise and other forms of open air recreation and the enjoyment of the authority’s area”.

- 6.2.1.2 As previously stated, a series of studies including a local questionnaire has been considered to assess this issue. In addition the authority has looked at a series of possible methodologies that may be able to measure need and focus on where current availability and management are leading to a shortage. It is within this context that the authority can then decide where to initiate proposals and actual improvements.
- 6.2.1.3 Traditionally, the authority has maintained and improved the network in a fairly uniform pattern in line with legislative requirements. This has also been further entrenched with the introduction of Best Value Performance Indicator 178 (discussed later). This measures the percentage of total length of footpaths and other rights of way, which are easy to use by members of the public. Since this is based on random surveys of the network as a whole, it requires local authorities to bring the network up to a set standard, with little or no account of the level of current or future use.
- 6.2.1.4 This assumes a completely uniform use of the network by the public. As shown previously this is not the case. Different parts of the network are under different levels of pressure and use, just like the carriageway network. Common sense and studies show that this occurs close to population centres. This is backed up by local and national research. The Rights of Way Use and Demand Survey (2001)⁴³ and the Leicestershire questionnaire indicate that nearly half of all rural walks start from the doorstep and that most people only want to travel at most 5 miles to their start point. Nearly all utilitarian walks start from home.

Figure 14 - Path & Population Density



Path density per square kilometre

Population density per square kilometre

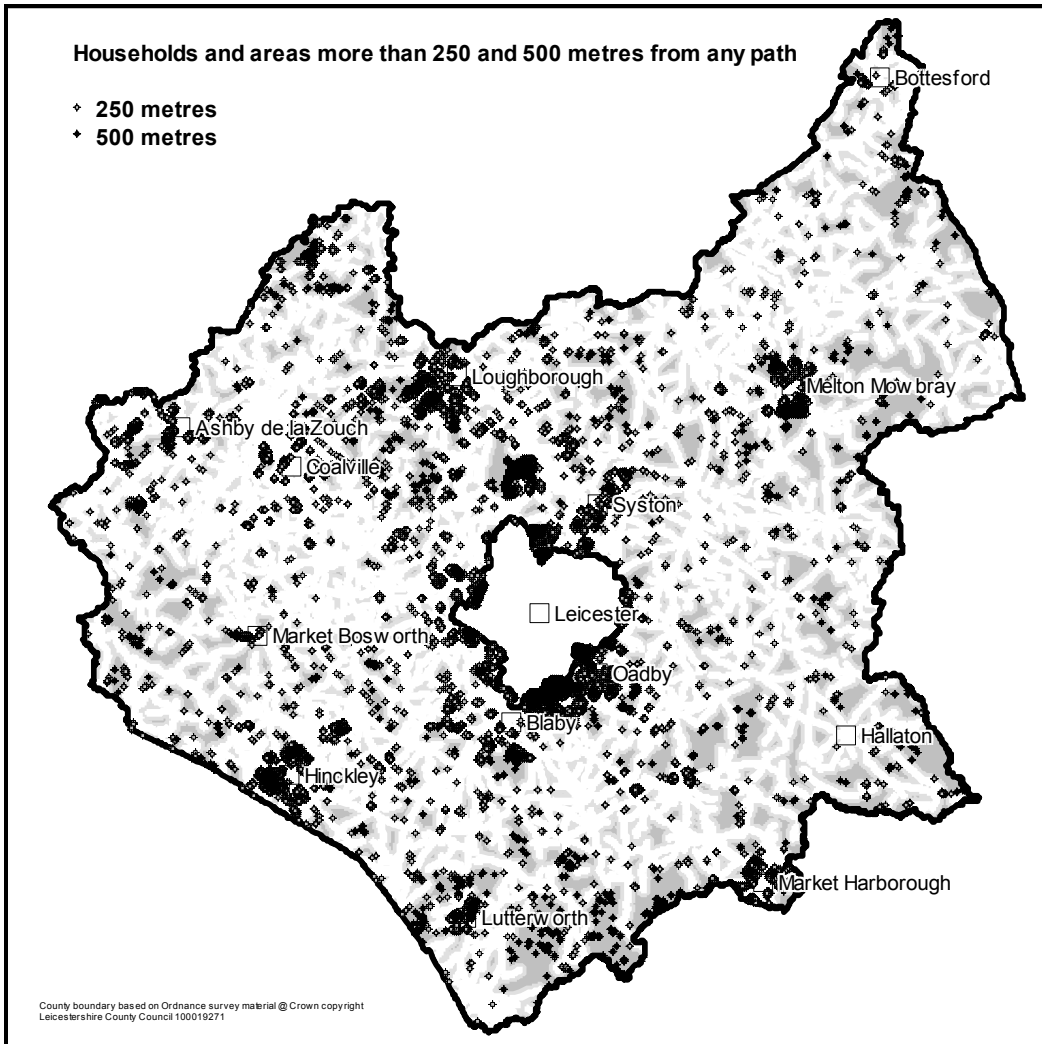
- 6.2.1.5 The paramount issue is matching the resource to those that want to use the network. Even a brief look at the density patterns for paths in the county

⁴³ http://www.iprow.co.uk/gpg_docs/RevisedUse.Demand.pdf

reveals a remarkably even pattern. A number of statistical studies all reveal a near uniform density of paths in the county. This is applicable to users on foot. The picture for horse riders, cyclists and motor vehicles is different. The low-density areas of the network occur mainly in rural areas. Since paths go from settlement to settlement, this is as expected. The few gaps in the network tend to be related to historical anomalies. This includes the Charnwood Forest, a particularly attractive landscape. This formally open moor land had few settlements and was enclosed in the last century with little regard to public access other than straight carriageways. Some other areas have few paths due to limited returns, from the then Parish Councils or Meetings, when the map was first drawn up.

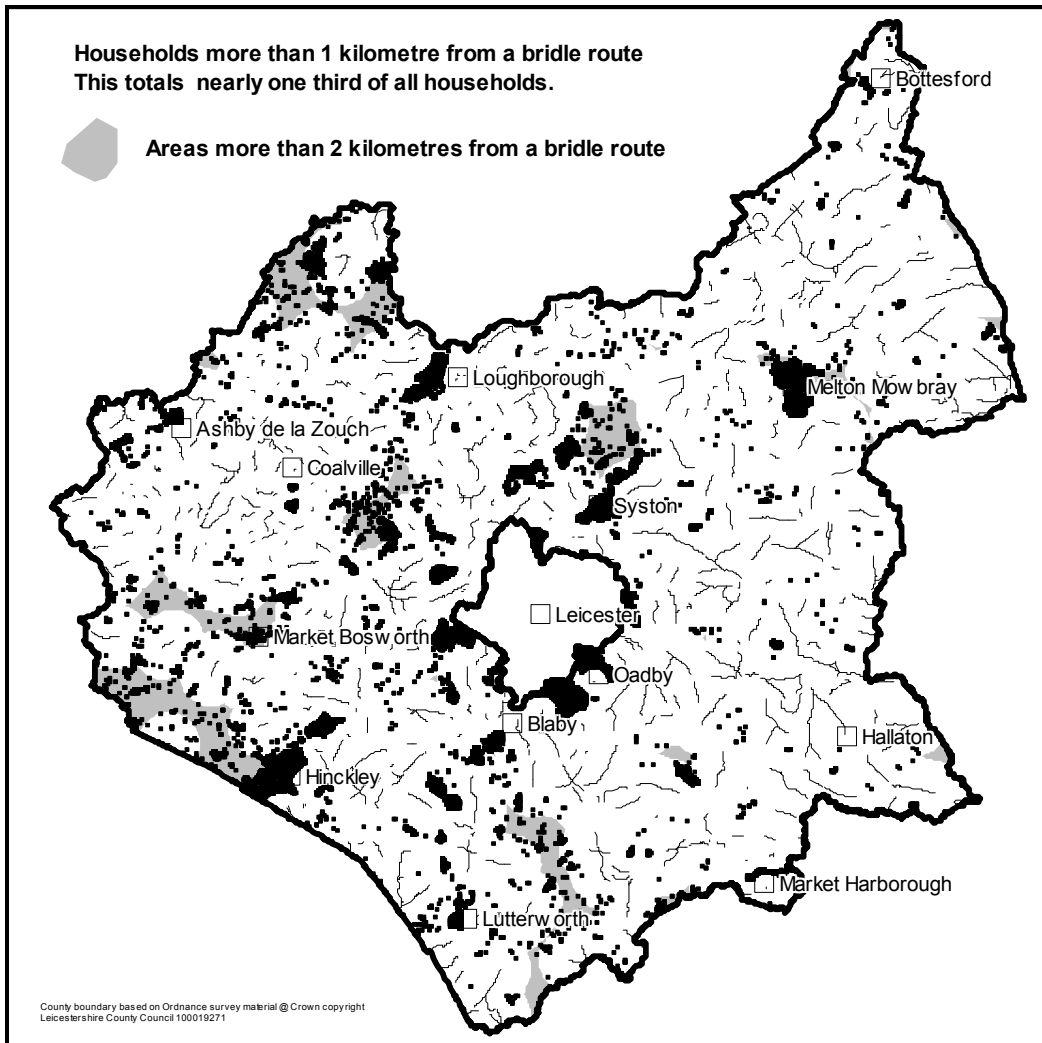
- 6.2.1.6 If there are so many paths, a perfectly legitimate question to ask is there a need for any more? With 3024 kilometres of paths, is adding a few more kilometres of path any worth? As an overall statistic the answer is a resounding no. However, the situation is somewhat more complex. Although the network is generally uniform it has holes and weaknesses in areas. Some of these coincide with areas that people want to access. Primarily, within and close to where people live. Discussed later in the document is the active maintenance, improvement and promotion of the network, including proposed detailed surveys of need and current access in selected areas. Also considered are the large number of anomalies and possible claims to changes or additions to the network.
- 6.2.1.7 Much work, in the past has needed to be done with a generally uniform approach, with little regard to actual measure of current or future use of particular parts of the network. The current legislative and financial situation means that large scale movements or additions to the network are all but impossible. That does not discount individual opportunities as and when they arise. It also does not preclude, routes identified by the Archive Research Unit (see later). More effective use and promotion will always be possible with the 3024 kilometres already in existence.
- 6.2.1.8 Most need occurs in or around population centres, where people actually live. Trying to define a reasonable measure of deficiency is more difficult. One measure of path deficiency may be properties that are beyond a certain distance from any paths.
- 6.2.1.9 Looking at the density of population in the county reveals a very different picture from the path density. The two are not statistically correlated. Conversely, since paths radiate out from settlements, to link to other settlements, opportunities do exist for most users, even those who want a rural stroll. This is also backed up by the fact that so many people do walk from the doorstep, even into rural areas. Despite the disparities between the path and population densities, 75% of people are within 250 metres of a public right of way (see figure 15). Conversely it can be stated that 25% of the population are more than 250 metres from a path. This amounts to approximately 156000 people. Whatever your perspective, paths are for the majority, available close to most peoples homes, albeit with areas of deficiency.

Figure 15 – Households more than 250 & 500 metres from any path



6.2.1.10 To calculate households most isolated from the rights of way network, the target radius can be extended. Raising the threshold to 500 metres, results in far fewer households, but pinpoints the most affected areas. This shows that nearly 6% of the population or 37,500 people are more than 500 metres from a right of way. The main areas include parts of Birstall, Mountsorrel, South Melton and Hinckley. The largest pocket is part of South Wigston, containing more than 10,000 people. Rural areas have smaller resident populations and tend to have more paths.

Figure 16 – Households more than 1 kilometre from a bridleway



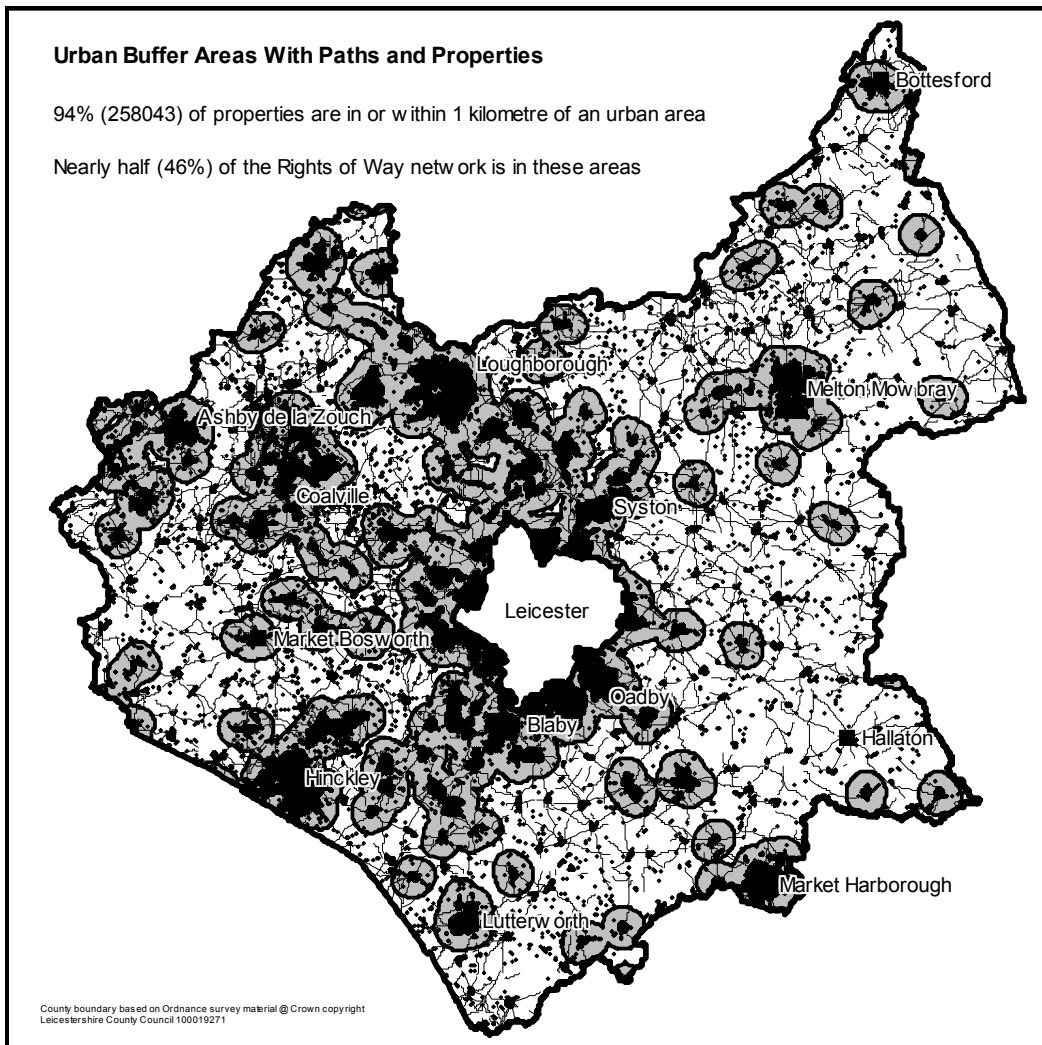
6.2.1.11 A different picture emerges for other user groups. Horseriders see a very different pattern. The pattern of routes shows a fragmented network with distinct areas that have little or no off road riding opportunities. Again, the question is does this really matter? As we examined above, the picture for horse users is slightly different. This is based on the need to stable horses. Most journeys start from the stabling point. That does not discount the urban model. Many horses are stabled locally to settlements on the urban fringe. An industry also exists based around specific liveries and stables. There is also the use of parts of the carriageway network. The bridleway network is fragmented. Using a 1 kilometre from household model, a huge number of population areas are remote from bridleways. Surprisingly this also includes parts of Melton, as well as Hincley, Earl Shilton and Wigston. An extensive area around Syston, parts of Sileby, Mountsorrel and East Goscote highlighted has a population of almost 30,000. Significant areas, as shown on the plan are more than 2 kilometres from any bridle routes. This includes

parts of Hinckley and Melton. Again, most of these areas are in the west of the county.

- 6.2.1.12 Identifying areas that suffer from recreational and utilitarian walking or riding deprivation is a subjective measure. Even if the process is developed and accurately identifies links between population, people's local needs and the network, a problem occurs. Assuming that areas are statistically identified, what can be done to address the issue? The County Council can improve and enhance paths where they exist. Adding new routes to meet need is a far longer and more difficult problem. Therefore, the areas highlighted are only partially useful in identifying exactly where improvements and promotion should be focused. The addition of routes and a further study on a link between people, paths and where to seek additions to the network, is discussed later in the Mapping Paths section.
- 6.2.1.13 It is hoped that this document will lead to priorities being set which allow further surveys to be carried out and programmes implemented. This is then intended to be fed back and reviewed at regular stages. The gradual incorporation of the Rights of Way plan process into the Local Transport Plan will enable this to take place. The Local Transport Plan currently has a five year review cycle combined with regular monitoring under the annual progress reports.
- 6.2.1.14 An initial survey was carried out in the countryside around south Leicester. It is apparent that the issues in one area are broadly similar to other parts of the county. Specifics can only be properly addressed by actual studies of each route, outside the scope of this document.
- 6.2.1.15 The Countryside Agency and consultants working with them have tried to define a series of measures that attempt to allow a measured approach.
- 6.2.1.16 The problem of how to assess the adequacy of the path network was one of the issues considered in the national Rights of Way Use and Demand Study. But while the aim was to develop a simple, cost effective methodology which highway authorities could use to assess the adequacy of the rights of way network, the task proved to be more complex.
- 6.2.1.17 The network is used by many types of users (walkers, joggers, cyclists, riders, etc) for a wide range of different journey purposes. In crude terms, one way of assessing adequacy might be simply to look at a map of the local path network and identify gaps, as above. Smaller networks covering specific areas or types of user can be judged in this way. It is all but impossible to do this on a county level considering the complexity of movements.
- 6.2.1.18 Two alternative approaches were developed and tested in the course of the Agency study. The 'numeric approach' used demographic data for the area being studied, together with information about the patterns of recreational behaviour derived from national studies. Using this information, the likely demand for the different types of route was calculated in a series of concentric zones, radiating out from each centre of population in the study area. This assessment was then compared with the provision which exists in each zone and a judgement made about the degree to which the existing

network was adequate and the degree of any shortfall. The second, a 'geographic approach', was similar but aimed to provide a stronger assessment of the access resources available to people in the areas where they live.

Figure 17 – Urban Areas With Paths & Properties



6.2.1.19 Following case studies to test the geographic and the numeric approaches in practice, a model, which combines elements of both, has been recommended by the agency. This is not a formal requirement, only a recommendation. It gives a framework. Although some of the exemplar authorities tried this in small areas as tests, the work proved huge and cumbersome. It also proved impractical to attempt on a county wide basis within the time and financial constraints for a full Improvement Plan.

6.2.1.20 The approach taken for Leicestershire is based on elements of the Countryside Agency studies with feedback from both local and national studies. It is also intended to develop these studies beyond the publication

of this plan. Built up areas of more than 2.5 square kilometres have been plotted and the network considered directly associated with those settlements. In effect this has resulted in paths that occur in the settlements and within 1 kilometre from them.

- 6.2.1.21 The main built up areas contain more than 90% of the population. The one kilometre area beyond these has a further 4% of the population. Just 6% fall outside these areas. The urban area and the one kilometre buffer around it contains 94% of the population or about 586,000 people and makes up 40% of the county area. Within this area is 46% of the Rights of Way network, more than 1400 kilometres of paths.
- 6.2.1.22 These figures do not include the urban conurbations within the city area. It does include the buffer areas around settlements in the city that extend into the county. Local usage will have little regard to boundaries.
- 6.2.1.23 This is where it is proposed to carry out further studies and surveys as the focus for maintenance, improvement and promotion schemes. The proposals that are also contained in the Local Transport Plan include a programme covering a five year period.
- 6.2.1.24 In the Plan of Action, to the rear of the document, are details of the schemes proposed over the plan period. Also shown is a preliminary outline of the stages that will be followed with each scheme. The initial work will include a detailed study of the area together with survey and consultation proposals. This will allow for further local network provision and analysis to be carried out on an area by area basis over the next five years. methodology for are set out in the Plan of action attached to the end of this document.

7 What We Do & Propose

7.1 *Looking After Paths*

- 7.1.1.1 With a network of more than 3000 kilometres of paths, the task of keeping them clear and in good order is a large one. To put this into some sort of perspective, it is the equivalent of maintaining a linear path that is far longer than the distance between Leicester and Moscow.
- 7.1.1.2 Paths vary in status, condition and between the seasons. Judging how best to look after the network is a dilemma in the light of finite resources and changing infrastructure, demands and expectations. Since 1980 a number of initiatives have attempted to bring the path networks in England to a reasonable standard. The Countryside Agency channelled some funding through Local Authorities to try to raise the bar and to provide an open network by the year 2000. While progress was made in Leicestershire, this proved an optimistic target.

7.1.2 *Best Value*

- 7.1.2.1 Government has been seeking ways to improve and modernise Local government. It has asked authorities to prepare Best Value Performance Plans to plan effectively for improvements in services. This is a framework with nationally set Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) which have been developed to enable comparisons in performance between authorities.
- 7.1.2.2 Government has set a performance indicator for the Rights of Way area of work. Best Value Performance Indicator 178⁴⁴ tries to measure the percentage of the total length of footpaths and other rights of way which are easy to use by members of the public. The Audit Commission requires this to be measured twice a year using random surveys, of at least 5% of the network. Leicestershire County Council has undertaken surveys for the last 4 years. These are let to independent consultants who randomly select sections of path to look at and then inform the authority of the results. The headline results are as follows:

Figure 18 - BVPI Figures 2002-06

Year	Length Of Paths Passed	Number Of Links Passed
2002	73%	81%
2003	69%	64%
2004	78%	83%
2005	75%	83%
2006	77%	85%

- 7.1.2.3 The results vary depending on the way in which the measure is applied. The County Council is using the percentage of the total length of paths that passed. This is a lower figure than the links method. The last four years have seen figures that roughly match. The 2003 results were lower due to

⁴⁴ <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/performance/Downloads/ACBestValuePerformanceindicators.pdf> page 192

an increase in cropping issues. Currently the failing sections of paths are largely due to difficulties with crossing points (stiles and gates) physical obstructions and missing fingerposts at the start of the route.

7.1.2.4 Policy L1

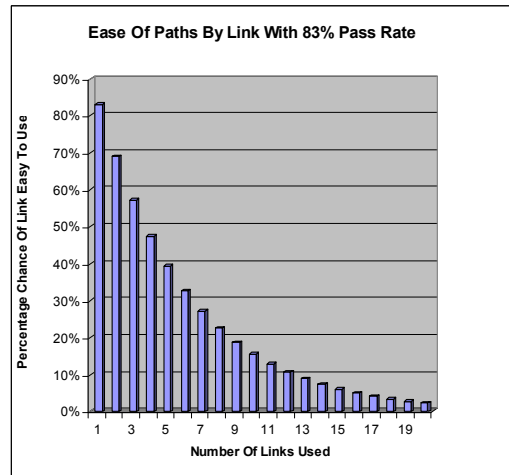
Leicestershire County Council is committed to raising the length of paths passed, using BVPI methodology, to 80% over the plan period.

7.1.2.5 This headline figure looks positive. Indeed on a national scale the County can boast being in the top performing quartile.

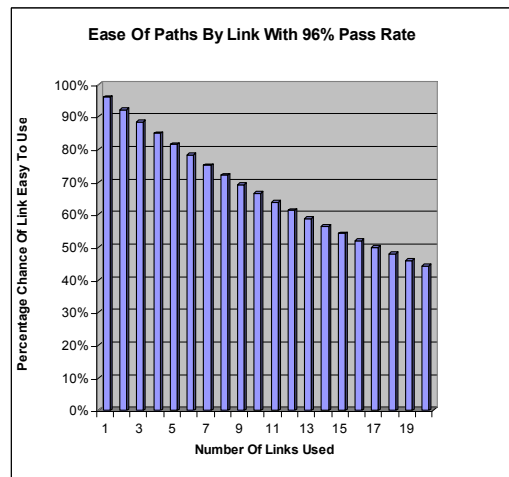
7.1.2.6 More detailed analysis does show that even this high figure can result in real problems for users on the ground. The network of paths is made up of 6790 sections of paths or links. Each link has an average length of 0.44 kilometres. On a typical five mile walk a user would use, on average 18 links, 9 on a 2½ mile walk.

Figure 19 - Ease Of Use

7.1.2.7 As the walker uses each link, the chances of using a failing link increase. The graph shows the situation with the current BVPI results. This results in just a 4% chance of a user not using a failing link on a five mile walk and 19% on a 2½ walk. This despite using the higher link pass rate.



7.1.2.8 A 100% pass rate will result in no fails. This however, would never be practical or indeed possible. Some of the fails are due to long term legal issues that can take years to resolve due to legal complexities. The Definitive Map could be challenged. Other examples include developments that have built over the line of paths. Fingerposts or waymarkers go missing or get damaged. Vegetation grows every year and fields ploughed and crops planted. A path assessed in early spring may be very different come late summer.



7.1.2.9 If a 100% pass rate is never possible to achieve, what is a reasonable target to aim at? Taking a reverse approach, it may seem more appropriate to calculate a reasonable

percentage chance of meeting a failing section on a walk or ride.

7.1.2.10 To achieve a better than even chance of not meeting a failing link on a five mile walk, a link pass rate of more than 96% is required.. With this pass rate a 2½ mile walk results in a 69% chance. To break the 50% pass mark on a 2½ mile walk you need a link pass rate of nearly 93%. The Government through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process has set an upper threshold target of 90% and a lower threshold of 50%.

7.1.2.11 Set out in this document are proposals to focus improvements to the network in specific areas. The schemes are both to encourage and provide easy to use paths close to people’s homes. It is intended to monitor the progress of these schemes and assess how best to raise the number of links that are classified as easy to use.

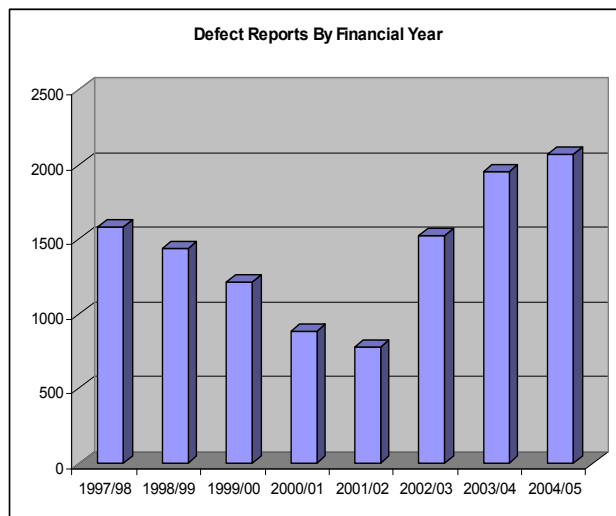
7.1.2.12 Policy L2
Leicestershire County Council will assess the BVPI 178 standard of scheme based areas in addition to the county wide survey, over the lifetime of this and the Local Transport Plan.

7.1.3 Reactive Management

7.1.3.1 Each and every day, the County Council receives defect reports from the public regarding the path network. Each of these is dealt with by an officer. The number of reports received by the authority since 1997 is shown below. The figures show what looks like a steady decline followed by a sharp rise. This appears to go against other data that shows the network is more available and widely used.

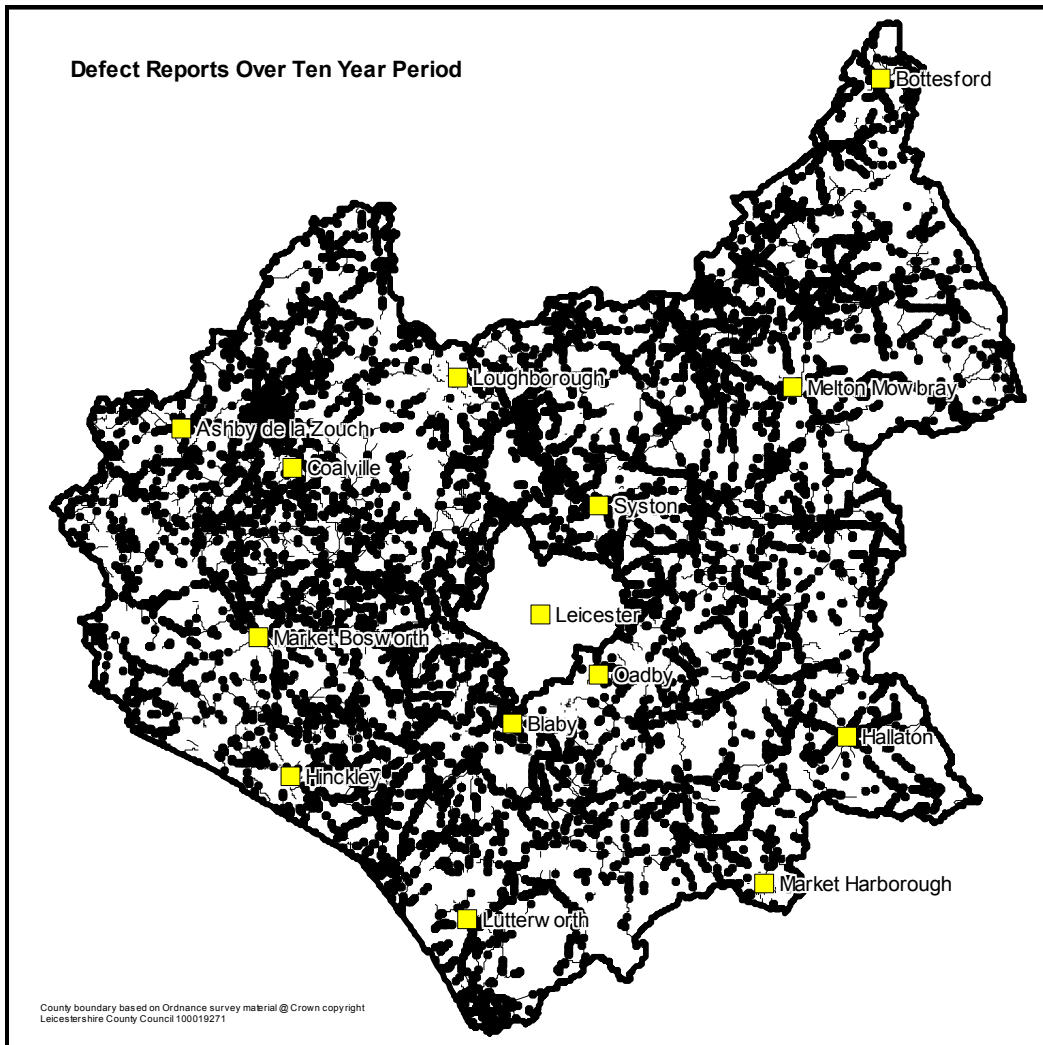
Figure 20 - Defect Reports 1997-2005

7.1.3.2 The reasons behind it are due to several factors. The large drop in the middle is the period spanning the foot and mouth outbreak. This resulted in the closure of the entire network. With users unable to use paths the number of reports collapsed. This underlines the fact that use of the network will result in reports. High figures may be simply due to more use



and importantly, higher expectations when using the network. Upon reopening the network a huge backlog had built up. Finally the County Council is attempting to make reporting issues far easier than before, and more accurately reporting all contacts from the public.

Figure 21 - Defect Reports Over Ten Year Period



7.1.3.3 The principal reports received relate to:

Figure 22 - Principal Reports Received

Signpost(s)	1435	13%
Stile(s)	1368	12%
Crop(s)	1273	11%
Not indicated on ground	943	8%
Surface vegetation	884	8%
Gate(s)	659	6%
Overhanging vegetation	642	6%
Waymark(s)	599	5%

7.1.3.4 The principal area of reports relate to signage and arable cropping issues. Signing accounts for about 18% of all reports. Arable issues amount to nearly one quarter of all reports received by the County Council. Vegetation is also a significant issue and by definition repeats every year:

Crop(s)	1273
Unlawful ploughing	426
Not Indicated On Ground	943
	2642 (23%)

7.1.3.5 Another reason for the apparent rise in reports is better recording of information and broader opportunities for contacting the Highway Authority.

7.1.3.6 People need to know that they can report problems and who to report them to as easily as possible. The County Council has begun to place waymarkers at the start of each path with contact details. It has already developed simple web reporting as well as dealing with telephone and written enquires.

7.1.3.7 Policy L3
The County Council is committed to the electronic delivery of defect reports. This includes further development of interactive reporting over the web as well as e-mail reports.

7.1.3.8 Policy L4
The County Council will promote how to report defects. This will include the posting of contact details at the start and end of all paths.

7.1.3.9 Most of the public also expect to be updated with the results of the inspection, including any action the authority intends to take. As well as the better allocation and management of resources, another benefit of electronically recording all reports is the ability to track progress. This allows for more effective reporting back to anyone that has made a report. It also gives details relating to the length of time particular types of issues take to clear up as well as overall performance in this area.

7.1.3.10 Policy L5
The County Council will seek to update all reporters that wish to be told of the results of the investigation into any enquiry.

7.1.3.11 In any large organisation, systems and staff need to communicate with each other. The County Council has been developing the electronic delivery and monitoring of reports. As well as the development of an overall Highways Management System, the rights of way service employs a fully interactive database and geographical system to manage the reporting and resolution

of problems.

7.1.3.12 Policy L6

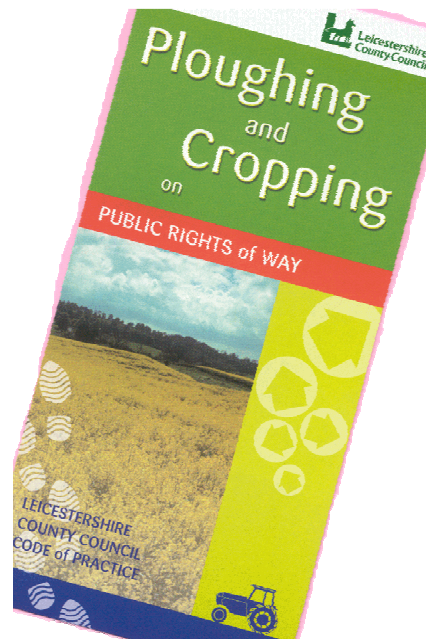
The County Council will continue to enhance defect monitoring systems, including links to the overall Highways Management System

7.1.4 Crops & Vegetation

7.1.4.1 One of the County Council's principal duties in respect of Public Rights of Way is to assert and protect the public's right to use and enjoy the network and to ensure that they remain open and usable at all times. One element of this duty is to ensure that crops or natural vegetation do not obstruct the passage of the public. More than one third of the network runs alongside a hedge or is enclosed. Monitoring results indicate that the standards required by the Rights of Way Act 1990 were far from being achieved across the County at certain times of the year and this was having a significant impact on the relevant Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI178). At one point more than one quarter of reports related to cropping activities (see above for details).

7.1.4.2 Consequently a programme of monitoring arable land crossed by public footpaths and bridleways has been carried out in Leicestershire during each spring and early summer since 2002. This has focused on improving conditions for users of the paths by working with farmers and landowners in the expectation that direct intervention by the County would only rarely be needed and that legal proceedings would be minimised.

7.1.4.3 Occupiers have been sent a Code of Practice leaflet.



7.1.4.4 Policy L7

Landowners and farmers who have public rights of way which cross land in arable cultivation will continue to be made aware of their responsibilities as set out in the Code of Practice.

7.1.4.5 Last year nearly 500 paths were inspected for crop obstructions. These paths were selected on the basis of reports of problems in previous years. Up to 120 were found to be obstructed by crops and enforcement action was

taken to have the crops removed. 81 advisory letters were issued and 45 legal notices were served on landowners and farmers. All crops were satisfactorily removed by the landowners or farmers and the County Council did not have to exercise its default powers to remove any crops. This resulted in no paths failing last years BVPI survey because of cropping obstructions.

7.1.4.6 Under the terms of the new subsidies regime farmers are required to meet conditions for agricultural and environmental protection. This process is known as “cross compliance”. One of these conditions concerns public rights of way and requires farmers to comply with their legal responsibilities described in the Highways Act 1980 and the Rights of Way Act 1990. Amongst other matters these laws require routes in arable areas to be maintained in a condition suitable for their use i.e. not obstructed by crops and reinstated following ploughing.

7.1.4.7 The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) which administers subsidy payments has asked the County Council for information and examples of cases where farmers are not complying with the law and enforcement action has been taken. Information will be forwarded to the RPA so that it can assess the nature and extent of breaches of cross compliance and initiate appropriate action. It is hoped that the exchange of information will result in many more rights of way in arable areas becoming available to the public.



7.1.4.8 Policy L8
Leicestershire County Council will respond to requests for information from the Rural Payments Agency.

7.1.4.9 A further element of this duty is to ensure that rights of way which run along field edges are kept free from surface vegetation which is likely to impede the passage of the public. As the maintenance of field edge routes is the responsibility of the County Council a Headland Management Project has been developed to encourage landowners and farmers to cut the vegetation on the Council’s behalf. Participating farmers receive a single payment when the route has been maintained in a satisfactory condition. Contractors are used to clear paths which cross land where the farmer has not joined the scheme.

7.1.4.10 There are 18 participating farmers in the Headland Management Project ranging from large estate farms maintaining more than 10,000 metres of field edge rights of way, to the smaller farmers clearing as little as 300 metres of footpath. The numbers involved are currently not sufficient to have

a major bearing on overall management.

7.1.4.11 Policy L9

The County will continue to support and develop the Headland Management grant scheme.

7.1.4.12 A number of additional farmers have expressed an interest in joining the scheme next year. This may be in response to changes to farm subsidy payments. From this year farmers receiving payment under the Single Farm Payment Scheme will no longer spray off field edges, consequently where rights of way exist along previously sprayed off routes, the natural vegetation will flourish and will therefore need to be controlled.

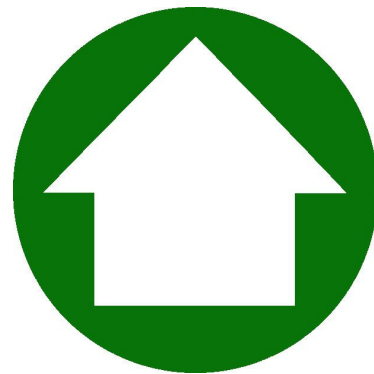
7.1.4.13 It is intended to extend headland and vegetation cuts to other pro-active schemes from this year (see below). This is already done via existing schemes. In addition the County Council has an extensive clearance schedule. This data is to be brought together and co-ordinated under the new scheme proposals. This will result in far more paths being subject to regular vegetation cuts by the County Council.

7.1.4.14 Policy L10

The County Council will begin to develop comprehensive network vegetation clearance plans within areas qualifying for funding under Local Transport Plan schemes.

7.1.5 Waymarking

7.1.5.1 Signage is a statutory requirement placed on the Highway Authority. The Countryside Act of 1968 requires all paths to be signed at their beginning, end and as far as is practically needed along the route to allow someone unfamiliar with the area to follow the path. For a new user of a route to follow it using signage requires a good deal of works. For the past 15 years Leicestershire has been subject to a comprehensive signage programme. The last 10 years has seen the majority of the work. As well as the nationally approved waymarkers, the routes also benefit from yellow topped posts. These act as a target in the distance as users cross each field boundary.



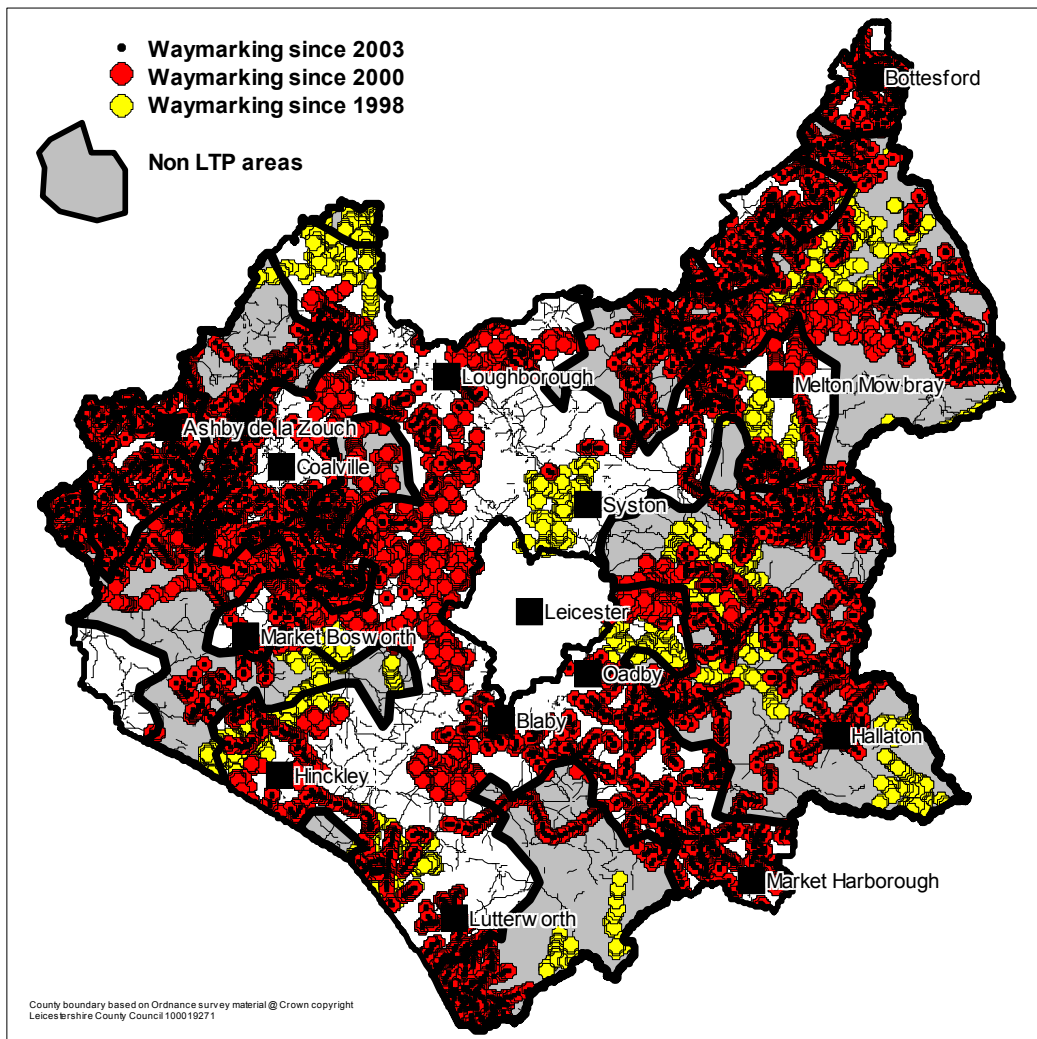
7.1.5.2 All of the works in the schemes have been recorded on internal databases and GIS systems. Currently the signs network includes:

- 7037 (approximately 850 missing) sites where start point finger posts are required.
- 11265 waymarker posts that need maintaining. Average life expectancy for each post is 15 years. After five years the post is subject to resetting and painting. About 2000 need repainting and resetting each year. 650 need replacing each year.

- More than 40000 waymarkers, with a life expectancy of 10 years. 4000 new waymarkers need to be put up each year.

7.1.5.3 The map shows the extent of the waymarking programme. The figures above indicate the level of work required just to keep signage in its current state. This amounts to a considerable maintenance programme. The County was waymarked in a systematic fashion and some areas have already benefited from rolling maintenance schemes. All items have details of original installation, together with any further maintenance visits.

Figure 23 - Waymarked Areas In Leicestershire



7.1.5.4 In addition to the standard waymarking colours of yellow for footpaths, blue for bridleways and red for byways, the County Council also signs a wide range of promoted routes. This signage includes the specific naming of some routes and themed waymarking of the rest. More detail is given below in the promotion section.

7.1.5.5 A rolling programme can be established dependent upon the target set. If posts are repainted every five years this amounts to more than 2000 posts each year and about 600 kilometres of paths being assessed each year. If

that target were raised to every 3 years the figures would rise to 3750 and 1000 respectively.

7.1.5.6 Policy L11

The County Council will continue to maintain a fully waymarked and signed network. All paths will be subject to at least 5 yearly surveys. Promoted routes will be subject to at least 3 yearly checks.

7.1.5.7 Policy L12

The County Council is committed to have roadside rights of way signs in place. By the end of the plan period it is expected that 90% of fingerposts will be in place, including where appropriate, local destination information.

7.1.5.8 In conjunction with the waymarking programme, the County Council has been undertaking a range of improvements on the network over the past ten years. These have included better crossing points, vegetation clearance and bridging schemes. To maximise value for money, these schemes, which include the waymarking, have been tendered to private contractors.

7.1.5.9 The past 10 years have seen more than 2000 stiles renewed, more than 1000 new sleeper bridges and with more open access in mind, more than 400 bridle and hand gates. Many thousands of sections of paths have been cleared of vegetation and some surfacing work put in place. The primary result and benefit of this work has been defining the routes on the ground. The paper map and the routes across the landscape are virtually co-existent. This in turn helps the public and occupiers by clearly defining where the paths are.

7.2 Broadening and Improving Access – Second Local Transport Plan

7.2.1.1 The Second Local Transport Plan offers the primary funding mechanism for path improvements over the next five years. The Draft of this document formed part of the final plan. At the heart of these proposals is the desire to provide walking and riding opportunities near to where people live. This includes offering walking and riding as real alternatives to the use of the motor car. Nearly 98% of the population live in or within 1 kilometre of urban areas. 46% of the Rights of Way network falls within these areas. Any increase in walking and riding at the expense of car travel will help towards reducing congestion, improving access to facilities and better air quality.

7.2.1.2 Policy L13

Priority improvements will be focused on the half of the network identified in conjunction with the Local Transport Plan Process, in and within 1 kilometre from urban areas.

7.2.1.3 The 1400 kilometres of paths that fall into these areas are where the County Council intends to focus improvements, promotion and maintenance. If real increases in usage are to be achieved, real infrastructure improvements need to be carried out, as well as encouragement to use the paths. Initial studies including a trial study south of Leicester, have identified a first year set of schemes. The plan of action to the rear of this document includes details of these areas as well as a provisional five year programme. Also included is a description of how schemes will be developed. The proposals will be subject to consultations before implementation, promotion and follow up studies of use and future maintenance.

7.2.1.4 With a defined network, focus has moved to make paths easier to use by the public and addressing specific local needs. The signing programme shows far better the way ahead and reduces the fear of getting lost. However, it does not broaden access to many that currently are excluded from the network. Most paths in the county are still considered inaccessible to many in the community. Nearly all paths are subject to barriers, such as stiles that do not allow disabled, the old or young with pushchairs to use. They are also an inconvenience to all that use paths. This includes many short local routes and settlement to settlement paths. The only real justification of a barrier or stile is to prevent the ingress or egress of livestock. Other solutions are now available, such as hand gates or kissing gates. Each of the schemes will attempt to systematically look at access including boundary crossing points.

7.2.1.5 Surfacing repeatedly features in surveys of people who would like to use routes but currently feel excluded. A number of link paths near settlement are under utilised because of muddy conditions during wetter periods. Some of these provide key corridors to access shops, schools and other facilities for walkers. They also offer repeat walking routes. To actively increase the number of people walking, on a regular basis, improvements need to be focused on routes that offer the greatest increases in use.

7.2.1.6 Policy L14

Where appropriate, the County Council will surface routes that offer potential for increased use, including access to facilities.

7.2.1.7 One of the key findings from the local citizen's panel survey was the importance of personal safety. This was the primary reason why people chose not to walk or ride. Fears over personal safety are not limited to crime and isolation. They also extend to safety issues, predominantly conflict with motor traffic. These are very real issues and difficult to address. On a low level the provision of adequate signage and the clearance of vegetation does help. Knowing where to go and good sight lines are important to gaining confidence. Patterns of use change during light periods. Many, particularly women, use local paths during daylight hours but are unwilling to use paths during darker periods. Street lighting has real benefits to encouraging use for all.

7.2.1.8 Traffic presents a severe curtailment on walking, riding and cycling patterns. In order to reach many paths, footways or the carriageway have to be utilised. These include the full range of traffic, including 70mph trunk roads with barriers, through to quieter country lanes. The schemes proposed will begin with site surveys to identify any issue on the ground and proposing the most appropriate solutions. This includes consultations with the local community.

7.2.1.9 Policy L15

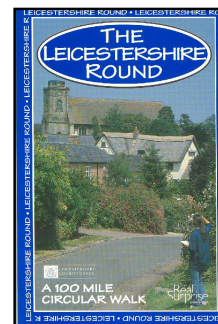
Improvement and maintenance proposals will be co-ordinated with other proposals set out in the Local Transport Plan. These include pedestrian crossing and traffic segregation schemes, as well as School Travel Plans and lighting proposals.

7.2.1.10 As previously mentioned, the County Council is developing proposals to better manage and promote the use of roadside verges for walkers and riders. Part of that process is recognition that all users are entitled to use carriageways. Much work is completed on the carriageway network every year. Opportunities do exist to improve walking and riding provision. The simple act of starting with a principle of making access available to as wide a range of the community as possible can result in more proposals being developed with foot, cycle and bridle provision.

7.3 Promoting Use

7.3.1.1 A network of more than 3000 kilometres of walking and riding opportunities already exists. Rights of Way and other walking and cycling routes are in a better condition than they were 25 years ago, and yet walking journeys have fallen by a quarter over that period. Promoting walking and riding is fundamental to increasing usage and pointing out to people the opportunities that exist. Walking and riding operate in a competitive world. Journeys to work, shops schools and other facilities can also be undertaken using the car. Even recreational walking and riding has to compete with other activities, Sunday shopping, television, computers and busier lifestyles. The older generation will recall debates in the 1970's and later about what people would possibly find to do with so much leisure time in the future. It transpires that people are very busy and have a wide range of choices in a limited amount of time.

7.3.1.2 The County Council has been raising the profile of the Rights of Way network and other recreational routes. The seemingly simple act of signing routes promotes the existence of the paths and gives confidence to users. The provision of more than 7,000 finger posts and 40,000 waymarkers is a more complex task than it first appears (see above). The County promotes three tiers of paths, longer distance paths, routes based around tourism sites or honey pot locations and local Parish Walks and rides. The map below shows just how extensive the existing promoted route network is.



7.3.1.3 The Longer distance path network extends to 342 kilometres within the county. The primary routes include:

7.3.1.4 The Leicestershire Round. This 100 mile circular walk is the premier long distance walk around the county. It has its own distinctive signing and a popular booklet describing the route.

7.3.1.5 The Ivanhoe Way is a 35 mile walk around the north west of the county. The route is split up into 7 short sections, therefore making it easy to walk as a series of short strolls. Most users of long distance walks who contact the authority, tend to split the route into a number of shorter sections, often over a day and then return home.

7.3.1.6 **Policy L16**

The County Council will continue to develop Long Distance route publications that also allow for paths to be used as day walks or rides.

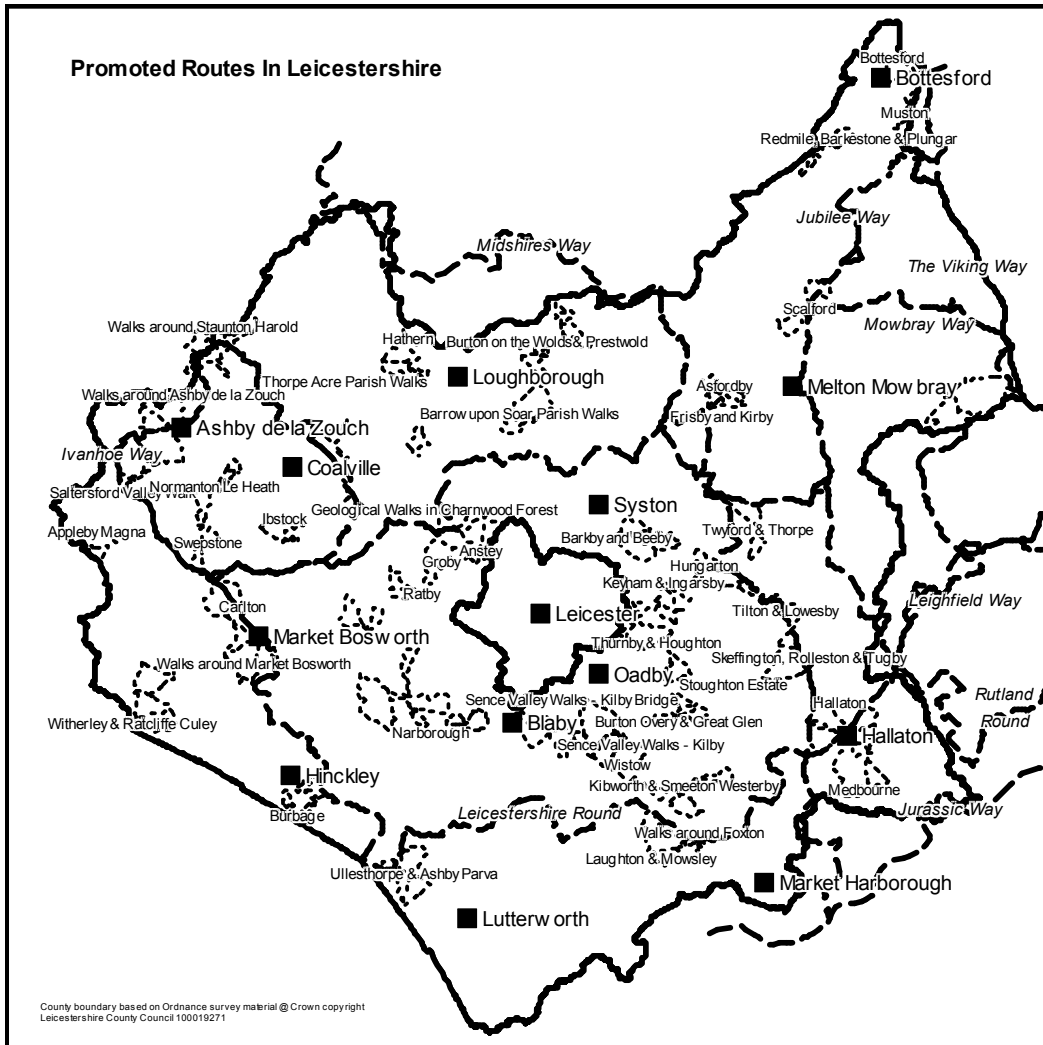
7.3.1.7 The Jubilee Way opened in 1977, to mark The Queen's Silver Jubilee. This walk totalling 20 miles starts at Burrough Hill in the south, (linking with the Leicestershire Round) and travels north to beyond Belvoir (where it meets

the Viking Way). A new booklet has been produced describing the whole route.

7.3.1.8 Since its opening in 1994, The Midshire's Way has become a popular long distance walking and riding route stretching some 225 miles across Middle England. From South to North, it crosses 5 counties: Buckinghamshire, Northamptonshire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, and the Peak District National Park, before reaching the Pennines near Stockport. The County Council is working in partnership with the other authorities to develop updated information and literature on the route.

7.3.1.9 Other sections of long distance paths provide link paths or are part of routes primarily outside the county. These include the Jurassic Way and the Viking Way.

Figure 24 - Promoted Routes In Leicestershire

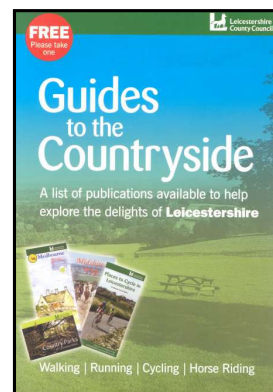


- 7.3.1.10 Any developments on these routes will need to be co-ordinated with the management plans of those authorities.
- 7.3.1.11 The County Council receives a large number of requests for walking literature close to tourist destinations. The principle of providing routes at these sites is to encourage an already captive audience into walking and taking some first tentative steps onto the Rights of Way. Sites in the 'Walks Around' series, include Foxton, Staunton Harold, Ashby and the Charnwood Forest. These routes amount to more than 150 kilometres.
- 7.3.1.12 The Parish Walks and Rides series now total 35 leaflets. All are based around village settlements, focusing on short circular walks. In total there are more than 520 kilometres of routes. These range in length from 1-9 kilometres. They are designed as local walking or riding opportunities that are spread throughout the county. Some of the publications are based on submissions from local groups or parish councils. Others are produced by the County Council in areas that have been well waymarked and have few or no local promoted routes.
- 7.3.1.13 The leaflets are very popular. The series is now so extensive that keeping them up to date and the routes properly signed and in good condition is a considerable task. It is unlikely that the number of leaflets will grow much more, although some may be replaced.

7.3.1.14 Policy L17

The County Council will have all of the Parish Walks leaflets freely available for download from the website by the end of 2006.

- 7.3.1.15 The leaflets are supplied free of charge to anyone that contacts the Council either directly or via footpaths@leics.gov.uk. A full list of publications available from the County Council is available in a single publication, 'Guides to the Countryside', also available on request. The County Council web site has full details on these as well as all other promoted routes at www.leics.gov.uk/paths. The leaflets in the series will also be available for download. They will be stored in pdf format for printing out at home.



- 7.3.1.16 The opportunities for promoted horse riding routes in the county are less developed. The Midshires Way (see above) is a regional route crossing the county. Local rides are less well promoted. The British Horse Society has published 'Leicestershire And Rutland On Horseback – A guide to 19 circular rides'. This was produced with support from the County Council and focused on the east of the county. When originally launched the Parish Walks were intended to include rides. Only a handful ever materialised. Part of the problem was the fragmentation of the network, but the other was that they focused on routes and areas not

relevant to local riders.

7.3.1.17 Policy L18

The County Council will carry out a survey of potential riding routes for publication. These will focus on stabling sites or areas.

7.3.1.18 The entire promoted path network needs to be maintained and continually promoted. As stated above, all paths in the county are proposed to be subject to 5 yearly checks. Promoted paths coincide with about 700 kilometres of Rights of Way. This amounts to nearly a quarter of the network. The rest of the promoted network runs alongside or in conjunction with the road network. It is proposed to increase the inspection frequency for promoted routes.

7.3.1.19 Policy L19

All promoted routes will be subject to comprehensive rolling three yearly checks for waymarking, signing, maintenance and accessibility. This will include the provision of distinctive signing denoting each route, as well as named wording on fingerposts. A full programme will be set out detailing when each route fits into the schedule of path maintenance and literature renewal.

7.3.1.20 Promoted paths continue to deliver a service to an already skilled and captive audience. Many people who want to walk may not have the confidence or the motivation to research and obtain a leaflet before setting off on their own. Many simply can't use a map without some form of further guidance. The waymarking helps but does not provide comprehensive guidance without some other information. Guided walks are an ideal way of encouraging and involving local users, including those new to walking locally.

7.3.1.21 The County Council has been supporting a variety of guided walking programmes for a number of years. These include programmes from Country Parks and partnership arrangements with other organisations, including the Rural Community Council. The improvement scheme proposals contained in this document are designed to increase walking and riding levels. It isn't just about providing new works, people need to be encouraged and reminded that local opportunities exist. A new area of promotional work is proposed in support of the scheme proposals (see Statement of Action).

7.3.1.22 Policy L20

Promotional work will be partly re focused to support the encouragement of walking and riding in the improvement scheme areas. This will be linked with the consultation and implementation of improvements.

This work will include a new range of themed publications which will focus on the local environment and facilities, including links to Country Parks and Nature Areas.

7.4 Open Access

- 7.4.1.1 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 introduced new rights for walkers for access over certain types of land. The Countryside Agency was tasked with identifying areas of mountain, moor, heath and down. In addition, Registered Common Land is also subject to the new provisions.
- 7.4.1.2 Leicestershire, as a lowland area, has not got large tracts of land affected by the new provisions. The process of assessing which land should be included has now been completed. The new rights came into force at the end of October 2005.
- 7.4.1.3 The County Council has become an 'Access' authority, tasked with overseeing the new provisions within the county. This includes assessments of all of the sites and putting together access management plans to consider the best way forward. This process will be an ongoing one. It will take some time to be able to accurately measure visitor demand and cater for future needs. The amount of land included within the county is:

	Number Of Sites	Hectares	Total
Registered Common Land	100		178
Open Country	14		112
Total	114		290

7.4.1.4 Policy O1

Leicestershire County Council will seek to develop and continue to monitor Access Management Plans for all relevant sites in the county.

- 7.4.1.5 In the immediate future sites need to be signed, promoted and immediate issues addressed. The access authority also has powers to create or negotiate new routes to make sites accessible or link fragmented ones.

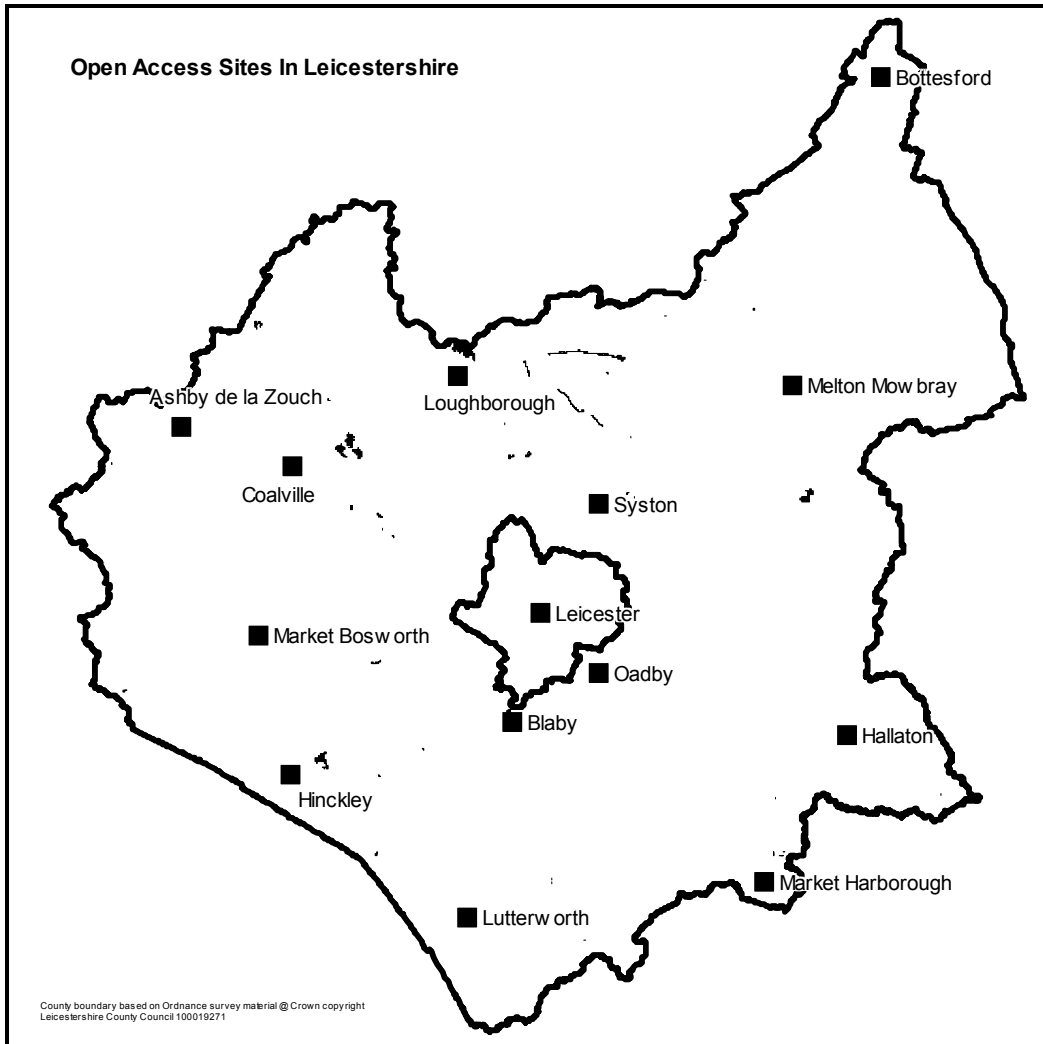
7.4.1.6 Policy O2

The County Council will seek to ensure that all sites are accessible to the public, even where no current provision exists

- 7.4.1.7 Some sites will be subject to new access where previously there was none and others may come under pressure. Many of them are Sites of Special Scientific interest (SSSI). As such a balance between access and the ecological value needs to be struck. This is particularly true of priority habitats identified in the Biodiversity Action Plan and those subject to statutory designation and protection. The County Council already manages a number of country parks that are also a SSSI. The ranger service may be needed to provide additional support, where appropriate.
- 7.4.1.8 Another important new provision in the legislation is the ability to dedicate land as open access. In a county with only small amounts of access land the

dedication of land may have a significant impact on the amount and scale of sites available. In addition, landowners can, by agreement, allow wider uses of access land, such as horse riders and other recreational users.

Figure 25 - Open Access Area Map Of Leicestershire



7.4.1.9 Policy O3
The County Council will encourage landowners to dedicate land for open access under the act. This will include assistance where appropriate.

7.4.1.10 Policy O4
The County Council will offer advice and assistance to those landowners who wish to grant broader access rights on their land.

7.4.1.11 The areas open for public access are not located near to population centres. The open access sites nationally are even more focused away from people than rights of way within the county. By definition, mountain, moor, heath

and down tends to be away from built up areas. Those that wish to visit such sites need to make, in nearly all cases, car journeys and they offer little for weekly or daily exercise, unless on the doorstep. However, they will be undoubtedly popular with day visitors and provide further local and regional tourist interest.

7.4.1.12 The Leicestershire Local Access Forum was established under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, with a role that included overseeing the introduction of Open Access and advising the County Council. This group has been commenting on which areas should be included and subsequent management plan proposals.

7.4.1.13 Policy O5

The County Council will actively seek the views of the Leicestershire Local Access forum in the development of access plans and future management of sites. This will included the formation of a sub group to oversee this work.

7.4.1.14 Access mapping can be viewed online @
http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk/where_you_can_go.php

7.5 Mapping Paths

7.5.1.1 As well as looking after paths, the County Council also records where the paths are and who is entitled to use them. This includes statutory duties as a Surveying authority.

7.5.2 The Definitive Map & Statement

7.5.2.1 The Map and Statement provide a legal record of footpaths, bridleways, byways and restricted byways. This is a very useful document in that it shows where paths are for both users and occupiers. It is conclusive evidence of the position and status of any path in the county. Definitive Maps came into being following the raft of post war legislation. The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 established both Definitive Maps and National Parks. As such it had a profound effect on access throughout the country, including Leicestershire.

7.5.2.2 The first Definitive Map published in the County was in 1952. In 1957 the County Council carried out the last full review of all paths in the county. This forms the basis of the map we have today.

7.5.2.3 Following the introduction of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA), the map is constantly updated with any changes that occur, such as diversions. Unfortunately, between 1957 and 1981 large numbers of events had occurred. This required more than 1500 legal events to be incorporated onto the map. This work has now been completed. The map can now be regarded as a true reflection of the legal position and status of any path in the county. It does not preclude higher rights existing along any route or paths not recorded that are unknown to the County Council.

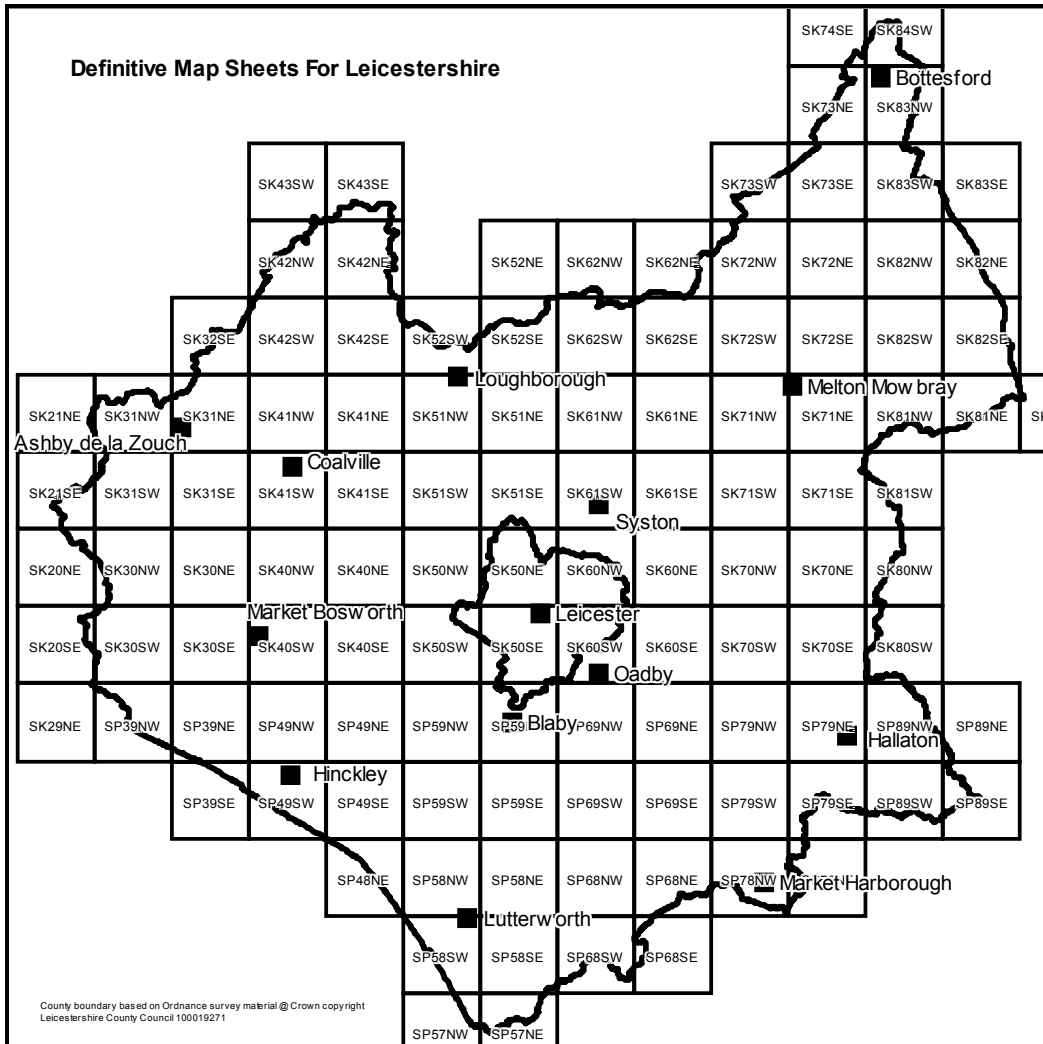
7.5.2.4 Since 1952 the County Council has maintained a paper map that is available for public inspection. A Definitive Statement that provides a written list of paths within the county supplements this. Both the map and the statement are available for inspection at County Hall, as well as copies at local District Council offices.

7.5.2.5 Policy M1

The County Council will continue to provide a paper Definitive Map under continuous review. Copies will be available at County Hall and all District Council offices.

7.5.2.6 The County Council can also provide paper copies of the map for local Parish Councils for the paths in their area. This can provide a useful resource for local residents and Parish Councils when dealing with queries from the public. It is also possible to obtain encapsulated copies for display in public places, such as libraries or Parish Council offices.

Figure 26 - Definitive Map Sheets For Leicestershire



7.5.2.7 Policy M2
The County Council will provide on request, copies of the Definitive Map to Parish Councils.

7.5.2.8 Leicestershire County Council was an early adopter of new technologies to record public rights of way. The authority has had a digital record of paths for more than a decade. This data is used to produce all mapping showing Definitive Rights of Way, including the paper copies of the map. Information in this format can be supplied to all users and kept up to date more easily. It is also possible to provide more accurate data directly to those that need it.

7.5.2.9 Traditionally the Definitive Map has been available to the public on a paper map. With the creation of a digital version, new technologies have provided opportunities to provide the information to all with those with the ability to

display digital mapping.

7.5.2.10 Policy M3

The County Council will continue to develop and maintain a digital Definitive Map.

- 7.5.2.11 Within the organisation, the mapping is now available to all groups that require rights of way mapping. This includes those dealing with searches, planning applications and highways maintenance.
- 7.5.2.12 The County Council has begun to develop a web-based solution to show the mapping online (www.leics.gov.uk/paths) This allows users to view mapping and inspect the statement. More work is required to develop broader functionality, including promoted routes and local walking and riding opportunities. Underpinning this approach is making the information available to as many people as possible, and providing better mapping. The Authority is committed to meeting electronic delivery targets and recognises future growth of this area. One facet, is the future provision of information required during the conveyance of properties.
- 7.5.2.13 In an age of increasing availability of information, the County Council is eager to make data available to other content providers, where appropriate. Most users want information and seek it through a variety of search opportunities. This will also allow Rights of Way data to reach as many people as possible. This is true for both occupiers, land managers and those that want to use paths to walk or ride

7.5.2.14 Policy M4

The County Council will seek to make Rights of Way information widely available. This includes delivery through the internet, and libraries.

- 7.5.2.15 Many customers want to see all access data for an area. They also want to be able to study or utilise access data within other information resources. The County Council is also seeking to make available and assist in the dissemination of access data for the county. This includes open access mapping, country parks, permissive paths and other access schemes, such as stewardship. Some of this information is maintained by other organisations. Greater co-ordination is required between agencies to provide more integrated information. A lead could be taken from the Rights of Way team to encourage partnership arrangements.
- 7.5.2.16 Other working agencies also use and in some cases display Rights of Way information. These vary from the Ordnance Survey which displays the information on a variety of mapping bases to consultants or organisations. The general public views much of the mapping information 3rd hand through the Ordnance Survey.
- 7.5.2.17 Digital layers can be provided to third parties where appropriate.

7.5.2.18 Policy M5

The County Council will co-ordinate with other agencies to provide access data, including the exchange of data. We will also support any development of integrated access information at a local regional or national level.

7.5.2.19 The Ordnance Survey is undertaking a Positional Accuracy Programme. All mapping within the county is being re-surveyed and as a result of newer recording techniques, more accurately mapped. This shift of data requires other data sets displayed on it to be moved also. All of the paths within the county need to under go-checks and be corrected where appropriate. This task is being undertaken in conjunction with the release of updates from the Ordnance Survey.

7.5.2.20 This process has already been underway for the past two years. It is expected to be complete by 2008. Although rather time consuming this work is vital to keep the mapping up to date and capable of being displayed alongside other people's mapping or information.

7.5.2.21 Policy M6

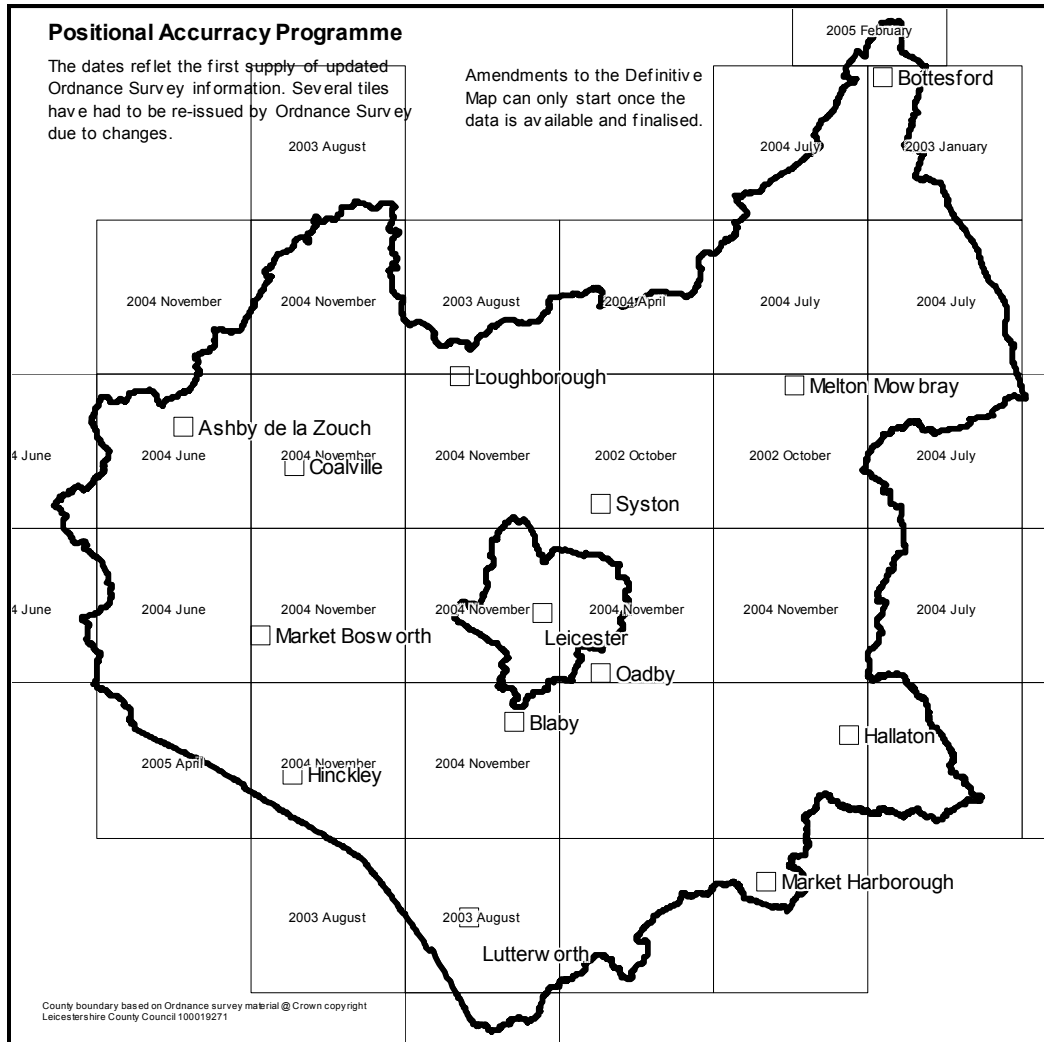
The County Council will respond to the Positional Accuracy Programme from the Ordnance survey, and update data where required.

7.5.2.22 The County Council often needs, and is asked for very detailed information on the position of paths. This includes for enforcement purposes, routes through properties or gardens, boundary disputes or statutory undertakers. Many other internal and external agencies working with the Rights of Way team use highly detailed mapping. To improve the use of the data with other users and systems the data is subject to an improvement programme. The original capture programme allowed the information to be used with 1:10000 mapping, the original scale used by the Definitive Map. The mapping is being updated to be utilised in conjunction with higher resolution mapping. This will allow for more effective supply of data to partner organisations and within the authority. This will have a direct benefit to the public including the buying and selling of properties and dealing with statutory undertakers. This process will also allow for the data to be seamlessly integrated with more modern mapping including mastermap from the Ordnance Survey. In turn this leads to better and more accurate data to be displayed through the internet.

7.5.2.23 Policy M7

The County Council will enhance the digital Definitive Map for use at scales of 1:2500 and up to 1:1250 in urban areas.

Figure 27 - PAI Programme



7.5.3 Changing the map - Modification Orders

7.5.3.1 Although the Definitive Map is 'conclusive' evidence of the paths shown on it, it can change. Paths can be created, discovered moved or deleted. The last full review of the map took place in the 1950's. A partial review was carried out in 1978, but was abandoned. The current review and improvement of the map outlined above has highlighted a large number of anomalies. In addition, changes to legislation brought about by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act have led to further studies being carried out on a national basis. These will include Leicestershire.

7.5.3.2 The map does not preclude the existence of other rights of way or paths shown as one status that may be a higher or lower status. Accordingly, the County Council is under a duty to monitor the map and see if any routes are missing from the document or incorrectly shown. Under common law the

saying 'once a highway always a highway' holds true. It is possible that a highway legally created centuries ago but not since legally stopped up, is still a highway, even if not shown on the map. This is effectively the position for all paths, prior to the Definitive Map.

- 7.5.3.3 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 sought to clarify this situation and provided a more accurate record of highways. 'Historic' paths created before 1949 and not recorded on the Definitive Map will be extinguished in approximately 20 years time.
- 7.5.3.4 In the meantime the government has committed Natural England to identify as many of these missing routes as possible so that they can be assessed and possibly added to the Definitive Map before the cut off date. This is a major undertaking. The work has been let to the Archive Research Unit (ARU). The unit is proposing to systematically carry out research around the country identifying routes that may form a claim to be added to the map. The trust was formed in 2004 and needs to consider the records for 39 historic counties. The County Council has already carried out a trial pilot area to establish the extent of the issue locally
- 7.5.3.5 The trust has already contacted the authorities that it intends to work with until June 2007. Leicestershire falls within the group of 29 counties that are yet to be allocated. This work was intended to be completed between 2007 and 2012. Due to progress on the collation and storage of data in an accessible format, and existing studies, Leicestershire is ideally placed to work with the unit. The County Council has already indicated to the ARU that it wants to become involved in the programme as soon as possible. This will allow resources to be planned effectively. The initial timetable set by the ARU has already slipped. The project is subject to a review. Currently it is not possible to state with any certainty when the trust will be working within the county.



7.5.3.6 Policy M8
The County Council will actively seek to programme a date for the work with the Archive Research Unit.

7.5.3.7 A great deal of work is required on the map over the next five years. Not all of the potential workload can be resolved within current resources. Priorities will have to be identified and consideration given to the potential benefits to undertaking any areas of work. In summary, the required stages to move this process forward are:

- An assessment of the extent of the issue
- Assess the likely resources available
- Estimate time scale of resolving the task
- Assuming a shortfall and prioritise accordingly

7.5.4 *New Claims*

7.5.4.1 The authority continues to receive Definitive Map Modification applications from the public and user groups. Anyone can make an application to the County Council to add, remove or change the status of a route shown on the Definitive Map. Currently these amount to about 10 per year. The cut off date has triggered a large number of applications in other counties. As yet this has not had a significant effect in Leicestershire.

7.5.4.2 The authority is subject to provisions (Schedule 14) that require any application to be dealt with in an appropriate time period. Anyone reporting a problem would expect to be kept up to date with the issue, including any action the authority intended to take. Order making needs to fit into the appropriate management of the network, just like any other part.

7.5.4.3 *Policy M9*
The County Council will continue to respond to formal applications for Modification Orders. These will be prioritised in conjunction with all other orders. Applicants will be contacted and updated after any application is received.

7.5.4.4 As set out above, the County Council is undertaking a digital review of the Definitive Map. The review of the map for improving accuracy has provided an opportunity for a number of anomalies and other problems to be highlighted. It is expected that this will be complete by 2008.

7.5.4.5 The areas of the map that have been subject to checks indicate that the extent of the issues identified for the county as a whole is in the region of:

Figure 28 - List Of Anomalies

- | | |
|---|------------|
| • <i>Building Obstructions</i> | <i>250</i> |
| • <i>Garden / Boundary Obstructions</i> | <i>200</i> |
| • <i>Missing Links (Historic Link)</i> | <i>350</i> |
| • <i>Unclassified County Roads under threat</i> | <i>100</i> |
| • <i>Unofficial Diversions</i> | <i>200</i> |

- 7.5.4.6 Some of these overlap with potential case files from the Archive Research Unit. The majority do not. The potential number of outstanding claims and issues from the processes outlined above, amount to more than 1000 potential cases. A large number of these could result in the need for an order. As stated above, the County Council is currently dealing with less than one claim per month. The majority of which are triggered from new claims. On current progress, the task of meeting this potential backlog would exceed 100 years.
- 7.5.4.7 The current legislative framework is complex. Making a single historic claim is time consuming and complex. The task involves extensive research, the making of an order and then in nearly all cases, a full public enquiry. It is not unusual to see a party represented by a barrister. The backlog referred to above is not uncommon nationally. The position in some counties is known to be worse. Whilst more resources could be thrown at the task this has not been a great success elsewhere. Even a doubling of resources, including legal support, would require a team working for 50 years. The only solution would appear to be a change in legislation and a different process.

7.5.4.8 Policy M10

The County Council will urge the Government to streamline the process and amend the legislation to speed up and reduce the costs of making Definitive Map Modification Orders.

- 7.5.4.9 The figures outlined above relate to the production of a 'perfect' map. This is not achievable in real terms. As a highway authority there will always be a large number of problems on the network at any one time. In dealing with these, good working practices need to be implemented allowing for the prioritisation of work. Mapping and legal records are similar and the concept of a perfect map is a myth. In trying to produce a best possible solution within the resources available some form of prioritisation system is an important step, after identifying the extent of the task.

7.5.4.10 Policy M11

The County Council will continue to review the Definitive Map to ascertain the extent of anomalies and other issues that need to be resolved.

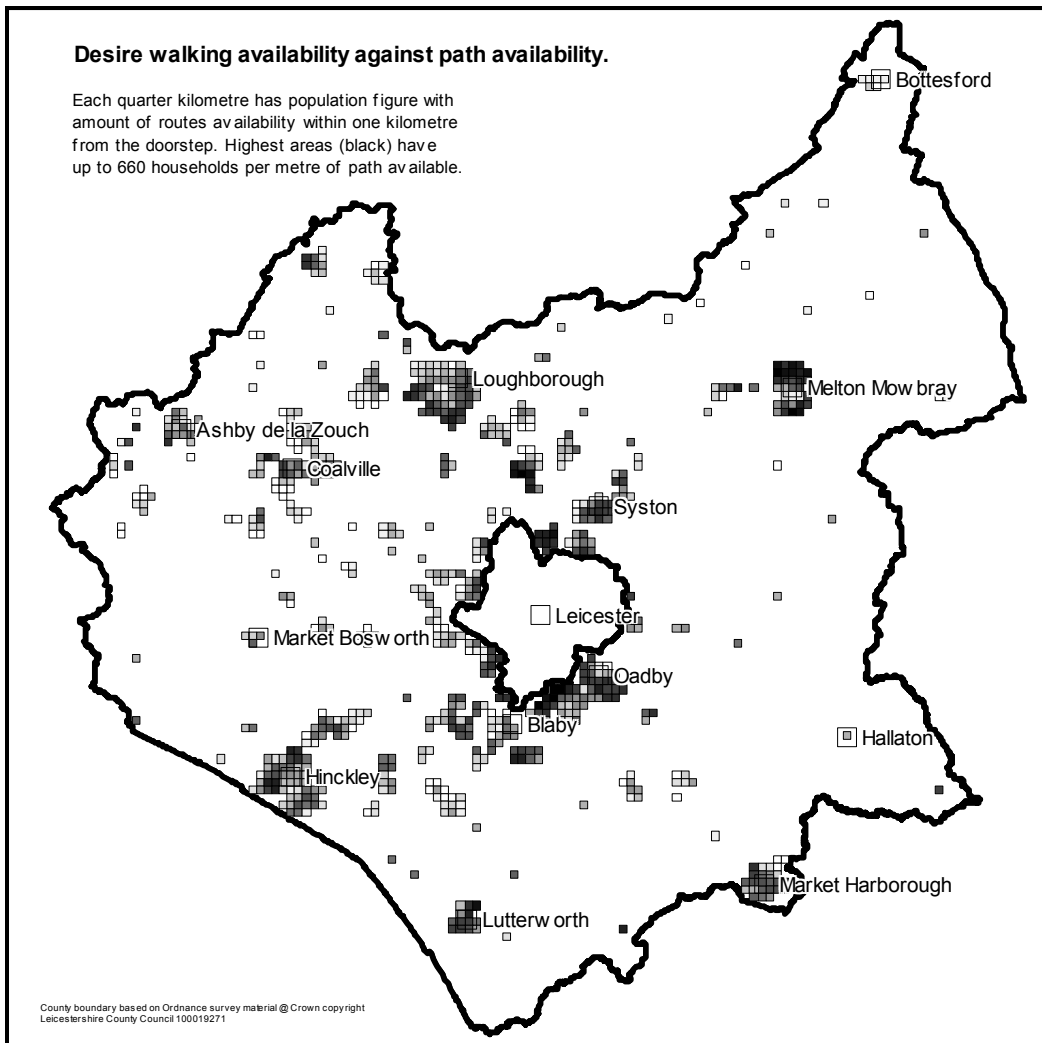
7.5.5 Priorities

- 7.5.5.1 In preparing the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Leicestershire County Council is considering: "*the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public*" and *the opportunities they provide for exercise and other forms of open air recreation and the enjoyment of the authority's area*".

7.5.5.2 The County already has more than 3000 kilometres of public rights of way. If there are three paths in the area to use, is it worth adding another? If there are no paths in an area is it worth adding one, even if no one lives nearby?

7.5.5.3 The needs of users vary, as does both the overall and local provision of paths. Both users needs and highways management have been considered in previous chapters. It is proposed that the focus on routes near to where people live is pursued as a surveying authority.

Figure 29 - Path Availability Against Demand



7.5.5.4 The provision of new paths or even the re-routing of paths is an extremely difficult undertaking. The opportunities of new routes that are not opposed by interested parties are very unlikely. Where such opportunities exist, they will be pursued. However, what seems to be a great problem for the authority of a large number of outstanding legal issues may also be an opportunity. With such a backlog of 'lost ways', and anomalies, priority could be given to match these with areas where need is identified. We have

already seen where areas of recreational 'deprivation' occur. As inferred previously, you cannot improve current provision where little or none exists. You may be able to add historic routes or resolve long term anomalies, such as paths obstructed by new development.

7.5.5.5 To adequately understand the scale of both historic and other claims and anomalies, the information needs to be compiled and recorded. The County Council has already begun to collate this data and develop internal databases to store the results. This work is not complete and will have to also await the results of the Archive Research Unit. Further recording includes the need to digitise all anomalies and claims. This can then be studied in conjunction with the current analysis of the network, including areas that are shown to have high population to available route ratios.

7.5.5.6 Part of this process is the relationship between Surveying Authority duties and actual need. Traditionally the authority has looked at cases on date of receipt and strictly within legal criteria set down. Consideration of broader access need has not dictated priorities.

7.5.5.7 Policy M12

The County Council will assess recreational and utilitarian need and benefits to help prioritise any proposals to alter the Definitive Map.

7.5.5.8 It is proposed to develop prioritisation policy further. This work is pressing and is intended to be complete within the first two years of the plan. Hopefully this will also coincide with the results of the initial recording of cases and developments with the Archive Research Unit. This work will include a number of partner groups, including the Local Access Forum and user and occupier representatives. It is intended to deal both with identifying key opportunities with the overall management of the process over the next decade.

7.5.5.9 Policy M13

The County Council will develop a prioritisation framework for all orders.

7.5.5.10 We have already looked at the relationship between population and path availability. Currently there are more than 16,000 properties in the county that are more than 500 metres from a path shown on the Definitive Map. This represents 6% of county addresses. 25% of addresses are more than 250 metres from any path. Most of these are focused in or around several urban centres. Although there are large tracts of the county that are also this distance from any path this affects very few properties. For horse riders a different set of paths are relevant. Nearly one third of properties are more than 1 kilometre from a route that could be used on horseback or pedal cycle.

7.5.5.11 It is proposed to capture all claims digitally to allow data to be analysed in conjunction with existing facilities and potential users. This includes all case

files from the Archive research unit, claims submitted by the public and potential orders generated by the digitisation programme.

- 7.5.5.12 At this time, it is unclear how the information and files from the Archive Research Unit will be passed on to the County Council. Earlier proposals for a Claims trust are still to be finalised. It is possible that The Countryside Agency or comparable body may submit claims to the authority or the Secretary of State. How this proceeds would affect any proposals to deal with this area by the County Council. The submission of claims or orders from an outside agency would undermine the ability of the authority to prioritise work.

7.5.5.13 Policy M14

The County Council will digitise all potential orders to assess the scale of the task and allow priorities to be identified.

- 7.5.5.14 Until the results of this study are known, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions. However, as a starting point, it may be beneficial to set a target for matching need with availability.

7.5.5.15 Policy M15

The County Council will seek to prioritise orders that offer walking and riding opportunities as close to where people live.

7.5.6 Registers

- 7.5.6.1 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act also placed a new duty on the surveying authority to produce three new registers including all modification orders made under S53 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act. This requires an appropriate register to be created and be available to the public, including online via the web.

- 7.5.6.2 The three registers include:
- All applications made to change the Definitive Map, including proposals to add, delete or change the status of paths
 - Declarations made to the authority from landowners under S31A of the highways act.
 - A register of S121B highways act applications for the special extinguishment or diversion of paths away from schools and certain agricultural holdings.

- 7.5.6.3 The registers provide an opportunity for the County Council to better inform the public of orders being processed by the authority and provide a fuller method of consultation.

- 7.5.6.4 This requirement coincides with the ability to provide more web based information and consultations via the web. The authority would like to

broaden the simple requirements of the act and provide more in depth information on any orders the Council is progressing.

7.5.6.5 Policy M16

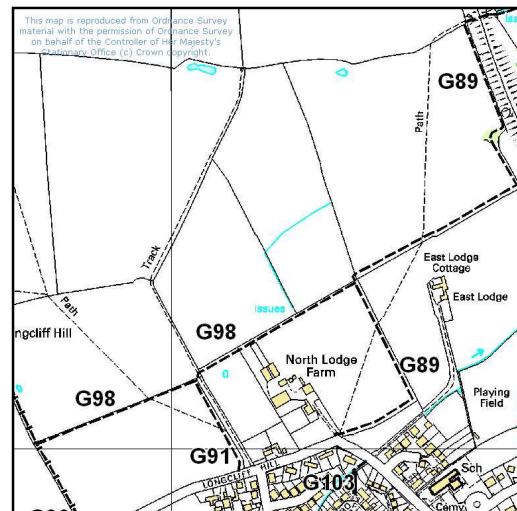
The County Council will develop the digital registers required to adhere with requirements set out in CROW and subsequent guidance. The Council will also consider including further information where appropriate.

7.6 Moving Paths

- 7.6.1.1 The majority of proposals to create, divert or close paths, result from orders made under the Highways Act and the Town & Country Planning Act. In both cases these may be made by the County Council or a District Council. In either case, the Highway Authority (County Council) would be consulted.
- 7.6.1.2 Orders made under the Town & Country Planning Act are as a result of the granting of planning permission. These need to be made by the authority granting the original permission. In the main, these are the District Councils. In the case of mineral applications, this is the County Council. We have already discussed the need for updated guidance notes in the Policy framework section, as well as relevant considerations to be made in conjunction with considering the original application. This is a very important area since most opportunities to move or create new routes in and around principal population centres stem from development pressures and proposals.
- 7.6.1.3 Orders made under the Highways Act are the principal method of diverting, closing or creating sections of paths. The County Council will have a number of orders being progressed at any one time. The process is not an easy panacea. Any order is a costly and time consuming business. All orders have to be made, consulted on, advertised and where objections received go to a full public enquiry.

Figure 30 - Rationalisation Scheme Map

- 7.6.1.4 The Rights of Way profession has seen periods where the use of orders has been far greater than today. The idea of rationalising the network has been put forward. In principle, the idea is that the current network does not meet modern needs of users or farming practices. Leicestershire County Council experimented with this approach during the 1980's and early 90's. A number of large scale diversion orders were promoted. At the time, this work made up most of the work carried out by the Rights of Way team. A number of the orders were completed. However, they were increasingly opposed by user groups and local communities.



- 7.6.1.5 As a paper network exercise some could be described as a great success, in real terms the results were far less. While the authority was focusing resources on making orders, work on the ground was less apparent. With the development of the waymarking programme in the 1990's a number of areas rationalised were re-visited for signage and clearance works. It was found that these areas had equal or greater numbers of obstructions on

routes than non rationalised areas. In addition overgrowth from the use of headland paths made many of the routes unusable. The dog leg pattern of the new paths also resulted in longer paths needing more maintenance and less attractive to users using the routes as community to community links. The statistical result was that for users, areas that had been subject to large scale rationalisations were less available than historical networks.

- 7.6.1.6 A balance needs to be sought between diverting paths on paper and the establishment of long term maintenance. This should be overarched by the needs of users and requirements of land managers. A large scale headland diversion proposal can result in several kilometres of routes being created. Assuming a larger order that creates 2 kilometres of headland bridledways, an annual grant for two cuts under the headland management scheme requires a payment from the County Council of £440 per annum, in perpetuity, if the route is kept open. Land managers continue to submit applications for diversions, including the creation of headland sections and where appropriate, the County Council continues to support proposals.

7.6.1.7 Policy D1

The County Council will consider proposals that support farming practices, including the creation of headland paths. However, such routes must not reduce the likely use and reasonable enjoyment of any path and the likely future maintenance costs will be a material consideration.

- 7.6.1.8 Diversion orders, including parts of the older schemes do have mutual benefits for all. Property owners and users feel awkward when paths pass close to homes or working areas such as farm yards. Some paths cross garden areas. Working areas, including factory premises or vehicle movement areas can raise specific safety issues.

7.6.1.9 Policy D2

The County Council will consider proposals that move paths from working areas or curtilages. In each instance, any proposal must not reduce the likely use of a path, other than those that address specific safety issues. Where an alternative route requires the path to be moved onto or close to land held by a third party, the applicant will be expected to meet all costs, including claims for compensation.

- 7.6.1.10 A major thread throughout this document is the need to encourage walking, riding and cycling. Clearly, proposals to change the network that achieve this aim will be welcome.

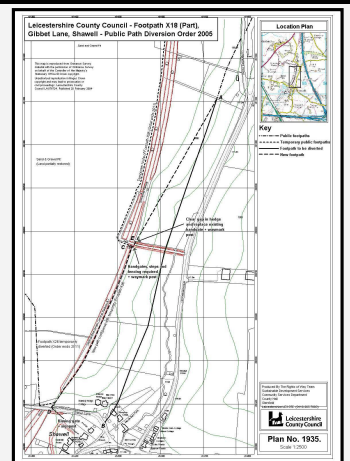
7.6.1.11 Policy D3

The County Council will consider proposals that enhance access opportunities for the public and lead to increased usage of the network. In these instances the authority will seek to support proposals, including financially. These may extend to safety proposals that move people from vulnerable locations or support broader objectives such as safe routes to schools.

7.6.1.12 The diversion of any path leads to the extinguishment of one route and the creation of another. The authority is mindful of its duties under the Disability Discrimination Act and broader objectives of improving access to more people and a wider range of the community.

7.6.1.13 Policy D4

Any new route created by a legal order, will be available to as wide a range of the community as possible. Barriers will only be authorised where livestock is an issue. In these instances self closing gates may be preferable. The surface of the proposed routes should be considered as well as future maintenance. All new routes should be adequately signed prior to becoming available.



7.6.1.14 The fencing in of certain routes that have been diverted has led to considerable difficulties for users, adjoining landowners and for highway maintenance. Further guidance is intended to be developed over the lifetime of the plan. This will include specific design criteria for signing, surfacing and layout of new routes, including those fenced in.

7.6.1.15 Policy D5

The County Council will develop guidance notes for applicants of Diversion Orders. These will also advise District Councils making orders, of the requirements of new highways. All relevant parties will be consulted in drawing up the proposals, including the Leicestershire Local Access Forum (see Statement Of Action).

7.6.1.16 It is possible for any owner of land to formally dedicate a right of way. These may be related to other proposals relating to a site, including for planning purposes. The County Council has always actively supported any beneficial proposals. Sometimes, an occupier will want to allow the use of a new route, without formally dedicating it as a public highway. In such instances the County Council can enter into a permissive path agreement. There can be problems with agreements. In order for the authority to invest public money in infrastructure along a route, a guarantee is needed that the route will be available for a minimum period. This should also cover instances of changes

in ownership.

7.6.1.17 Policy D6

The County Council welcomes and will actively support appropriate dedications to the network. This will include financial and other support.

7.6.1.18 Policy D7

The County Council will only enter into permissive path agreement after formal dedication has been considered, and the period of dedication is no less than 10 years, and preferably 25 years.

7.6.1.19 It should be noted that the development of the National Forest has seen a significant growth in public permissive access. Access has been granted in almost 80% of new forest sites, under the tender scheme. Currently, the scheme requires that access be for a minimum period of 25 years.

8 Planning For Action

8.1 Statement Of Action

- 8.1.1.1 Set out below is the Statement of action for the areas covered by the Draft Plan. Essentially, this lists what actions the County Council intends to carry out over the next five years to achieve the proposals set out in the plan.
- 8.1.1.2 The proposals are based on current and predicted budgetary and resource levels. The funding is from a number of sources and may vary depending on decisions taken by the respective bodies.
- 8.1.1.3 Each policy that requires an action is detailed in this section setting out what progress is intended to be made over the lifetime of the plan. This work will be reported back formally via Annual progress reports. Parts of these reports will be fed into Local Transport Plan process, as well as being formally reported back for consideration by the authority and the Leicestershire Local Access Forum.

8.1.2 Rights Of Way Improvement Plan

<i>Policy P1 The Rights Of Way Improvement Plan has direct links to and is being produced in conjunction with the Second Local Transport Plan published by the County Council in 2006</i>	
Consider comments from Draft LTP	January 2006
Publish Draft Plan	March 2006
Consider comments from Draft ROWIP	June 2006
Publish Full ROWIP	September 2006

8.1.3 Planning

<i>Policy P7 The County Council will produce a new Guide to Development and Rights of Way and welcomes contact from developers considering proposals within the county and other planning authorities.</i>	
Production Of Draft Guide	2007
Seminar with District Planners & Developers	2007
Incorporation with LDF process	2007
Developer advice and support	2006 - 2011

<i>Policy U9 In considering improvements to local path networks, the County Council will work with adjoining authorities, in particular, Leicester City Council. The County Council will also have regard to the needs of communities accessing paths that live outside the county area.</i>	
Continuing linkage of Local Transport Plan schemes with City	2006 - 2011

8.1.4 Health and Accessibility

<p>Policy U10 The County Council will work with The Primary Care Trusts, Education providers & The Countryside Agency and other partners to assess how the Rights of Way network and other access facilities can contribute to improving health and to addressing partners health improvement targets.</p> <p><i>This planning exercise will be followed by the development of a programme of promotional and infrastructure initiatives designed to contribute to wider developments, including Healthy walking proposals.</i></p>	
Continuing development of Local Area Agreement Proposals	2006
Formulation of Healthy walking officer group including District and PCT membership, including possible bids for funding a co-ordinator post(s).	2006 - 2007
Develop formal promotional programme to encourage walking and riding with LTP improvement areas	2006 - 2011

<p>Policy U6 The County Council will seek to make all routes available to as wide a range of the community as possible, with regard to location and costs.</p> <p>Policy U7 The County Council will seek to have all routes as free from barriers as possible. The County Council will presume that all paths should be open. A barrier shall only be allowed where the control of livestock or vehicular movements is an issue. If a barrier is authorised it should be as widely accessible as possible, such as a hand gate or kissing gate.</p> <p>Policy U8 Help, including installation will be available from the County Council to replace existing stiles with easy access gates, where resources allow.</p>	
Improvement schemes (set out below)	2006 -2011
New routes via orders	2006 -2011
Ongoing support to request from occupiers	2006 -2011
Dealing with daily reports	2006 -2011

8.1.5 Cycling

<p>Policy U2 The County Council will prioritise the development of links to the National Cycle Network and the development of routes within the Local Transport Plan priority areas.</p> <p>Policy U3 The County Council will complete the development of a County Cycling Plan and promote its use by all Planning Authorities and developers when dealing with applications and consents.</p> <p>Policy U4 The County Council will create a schedule of off-road and on-road cycle routes for immediate future development to provide recreational and other travel opportunities for all.</p>	
---	--

Active programme with regular reporting process	2006 - 2011
Complete Cycle Plan	2007
Initial Schedule	2006

8.1.6 Best Value

Policy L1 Leicestershire County Council is committed to raising the length of paths passed, using BVPI methodology, to 80% over the plan period.	
Twice yearly surveys during plan period to assess progress	2006 - 2011

Policy L2 Leicestershire County Council will assess the BVPI 178 standard of scheme based areas in addition to the county wide survey, over the lifetime of this and the Local Transport Plan.	
Additional scheme specific surveys carried out on yearly basis	2006 - 2011

8.1.7 Dealing With Problems

Policy L3 The County Council is committed to the electronic delivery of defect reports. This includes further development of interactive reporting over the web as well as e-mail reports.	
Further development of web forms to link back to problem management systems	2007

Policy L4 The County Council will promote how to report defects. This will include the posting of contact details at the start and end of all paths.	
Ongoing programme linked to overall path surveys and schemes. Due to be complete by 2010 with ongoing maintenance thereafter	2006 - 2011

Policy L5 The County Council will seek to update all reporters that wish to be told of the results of the investigation into any enquiry.	
Additional development of in house systems to enable tracking of reports	2006 - 2007
Development of formal targets for response procedures	2007

Policy L6 The County Council will continue to enhance defect monitoring systems, including links to the overall Highways Management System	
Assessment of other systems available nationally	2006
Additional development of Report monitoring systems.	2006 - 2011

Policy L7 Landowners and farmers who have public rights of way which cross land in arable cultivation will continue to be made aware of their responsibilities.	
Policy L8 Leicestershire County Council will respond to requests for information from the Rural Payments Agency.	
Ongoing promotion of crop enforcement policy, including information leaflet	2006 - 2011
Ongoing crop monitoring programme following those policies with end of year reports	2006 - 2011
Development of links with RPA and cross compliance	2006

Policy L9 The County will continue to support and develop the Headland Management grant scheme.	
Continuing support of grant programme	2006 - 2007
Review of scheme in light of development of comprehensive programmes	2008

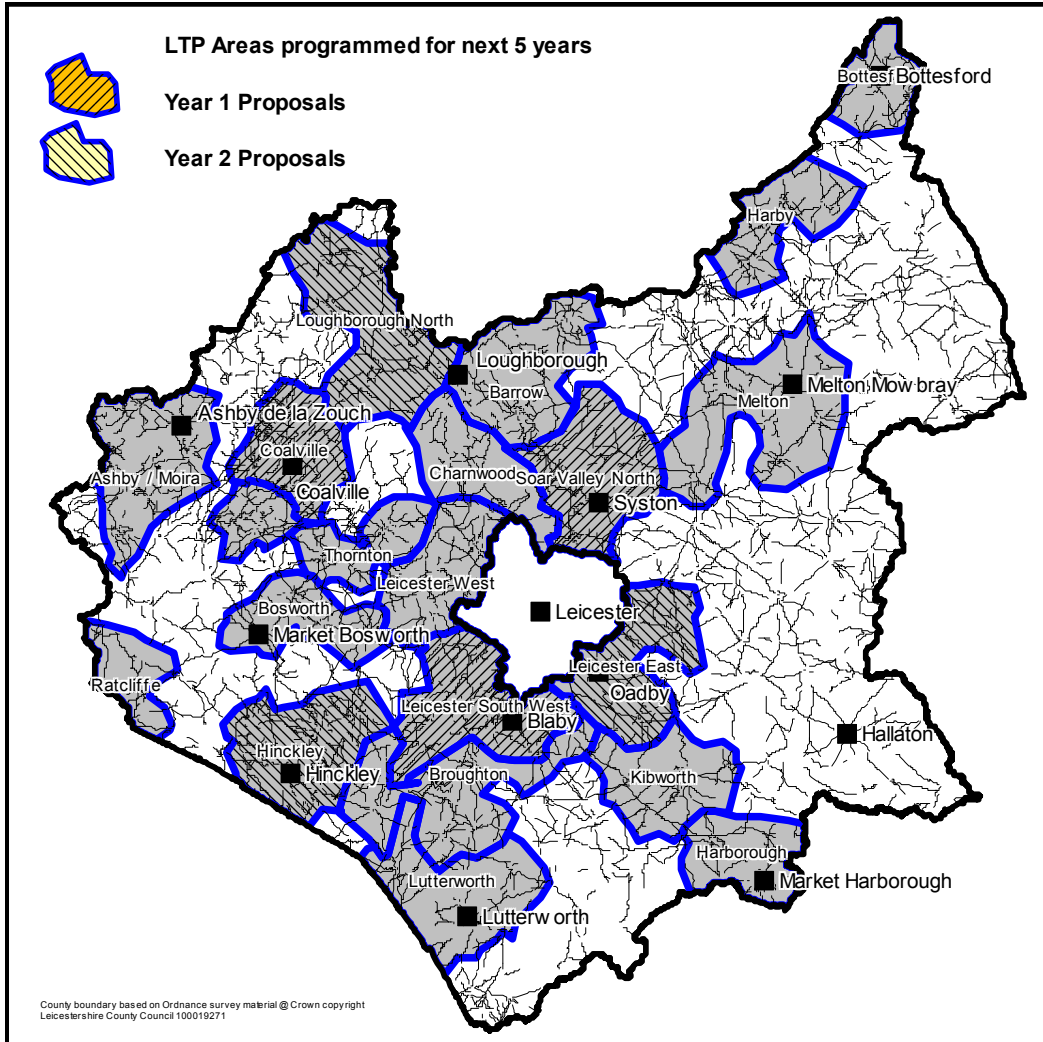
Policy L10 The County Council will begin to develop comprehensive network vegetation clearance plans within areas qualifying for funding under Local Transport Plan schemes.	
Scheme by scheme development	2006 - 2007
Review of progress and consideration of county wide programme	2008

8.1.8 Near Urban Area Schemes 2006 – 11

Policy L13 Priority improvements will be focused on the half of the network identified in conjunction with the Local Transport Plan Process, in and within 1 kilometre from urban areas.	
Policy P2 As well as consulting on this document, the County Council will seek the views of any local communities involved in schemes developed from the Local Transport Plan and develop future projects accordingly.	
Details set out below	2006 - 2011

Policy L56 Improvement and maintenance proposals will be co-ordinated with other proposals set out in the Local Transport Plan. These include pedestrian crossing and traffic segregation schemes, as well as School Travel Plans and lighting proposals.	
Policy L14 Where appropriate, the County Council will surface routes that offer potential for increased use, including access to facilities.	
Continuing consultations and communication with other LTP areas	2006 - 2011

Figure 31 – Map Of LTP Areas For 2006-2012



8.1.8.1 Detailed below are the areas that are proposed for schemes over the life of the plan. These are funded through proposals set out in the Local Transport Plan. First and second year areas are identified. These effectively cover urban areas and 1 kilometre beyond. Within these areas are 94% of the population and nearly half of the 3000 kilometre network.

8.1.8.2 The area schedule is likely to be the following. This is dependent on funding and may be subject to changes over the life period of the plan:

Figure 32 - List Of LTP schemes 2006-2012

Name	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Coalville					
Leicester South West					
North Soar Valley					
Leicester East					

Hinckley					
Loughborough North					
Leicester West					
Charnwood					
Melton					
Broughton					
Thornton					
Ashby					
Barrow					
Bosworth					
Kibworth					
Loughborough					
Harborough					
Lutterworth					
Harby					
Bottesford					
Ratcliffe					

8.1.8.3 The schemes will consider improvements, maintenance and promotion. The proposed stages for each scheme, that will be followed is set out below. This will be developed over time as lessons are learned.

Figure 33 - LTP Programme Stages

Example of Improvement and Maintenance Area Scheme Programme		
Stages	Tasks	Month
Identification of the extent of scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify routes involved Producing appropriate mapping 	• 1
Prioritise routes involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of complaints database Analyse past works Paper study of network Schools information Workplace information Public Transport availability Existing promotional opportunities 	• 1
Establish internal scheme group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To discuss initial proposals before survey Identify works from other initiatives during scheme period Identify current headland maintenance Identify current surface cut regime Identify Enforcement programme overlap Identify existing promotional information Identify ongoing legal issues Identify links to other schemes, safe routes to schools, general highways schemes and street lighting 	• 2
LAF sub group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline initial proposals Seek views of group Possible site visits 	• 3
Initial Survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Area survey based on above 	• 4

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DDA assessment to be developed • Identify in perpetuity headland maintenance • Identify in perpetuity surface cuts • Identify roadside signage requirements to be fed back to single system • Identify roadside improvements • Identify waymarking requirements along routes • Consider 'easy access' opportunities • Assess all crossing points • Identify surface improvements and maintenance • Initial asset management survey to be set within Highways dept guidance • Identify suitable promotion opportunities • Identify counter opportunities and assess current use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5
Landownership survey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go through existing survey records • Write to Parish Councils introducing scheme and seeking ownership details • Contact inspector and area officer to seek ownership details • Continue efforts to develop broader ownership database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 • 6
Feedback Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess proposed programme of works • Consider in perp proposals for cuts and maintenance • Prioritise surface improvements and maintenance • Identify lead officers and budgets for above • Asses Promotion Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6
LAF Sub Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess proposed programme • Input agreed amendments • Discuss consultation support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7
Consultation Period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish Councils • User Groups • Landowners / Occupiers • Local Access Forum • Internal • Area Offices • Open Meeting or other local publicity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 • 8
Pre Letting Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider consultations alongside proposals • Suggest amendments • Final Checks • Agree ownership of proposed works • Agree enforcement programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8
Letting of works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract tendering of main works • Formal inclusion of headland and surface cuts in perp schemes • Surfacing works schedule • Fingerpost order from centre 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9
Contract Monitoring and checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint contractor • Carry out initial checks • Offer support facilities and monitor contractor • Agree monitoring by inspectors on specific works 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All routes to be re surveyed to assess works and sign • Agree amendments 	
Other Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring fingerpost installs • Monitoring headland and surface let works • Enforcement follow up where appropriate after works are in • Monitoring of surface improvements and repairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 • 10
Promotion and publicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active promotion of completion of scheme • Press releases • Information back to consultees re completion • Publicise initial launch walk • Involvement of LAF • Availability of literature on one or more routes • Formal links and information to other service providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11
Follow Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of use of routes after scheme • Counter or survey measures • Programme maintenance schedules for all level of works • APR report summary • Review scheme and lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12

8.1.9 Rural Waymarking and signing 2006 – 09

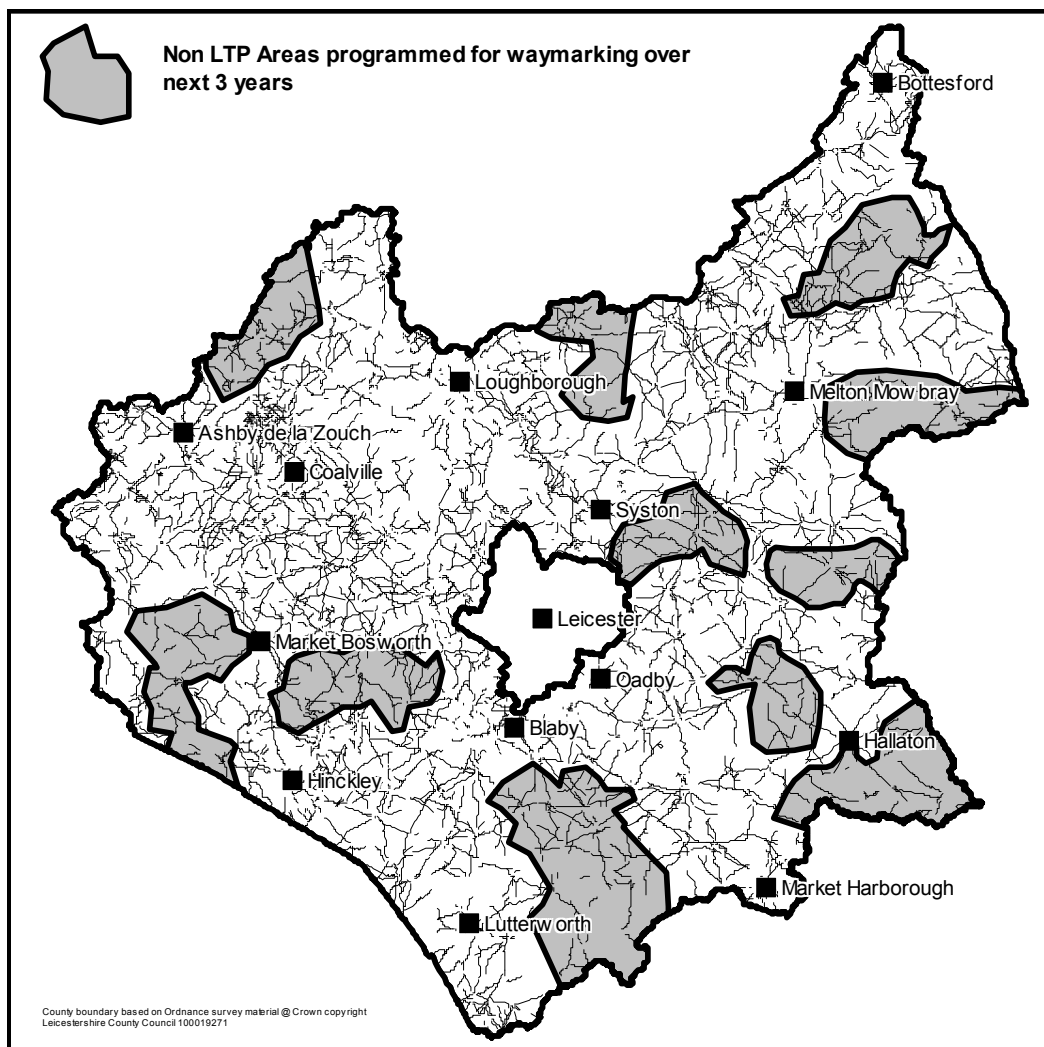
<p>Policy L11 The County Council will continue to maintain a fully waymarked and signed network. All paths will be subject to at least 5 yearly surveys. Promoted routes will be subject to at least 3 yearly checks.</p>	
Comprehensive planned programme. Linked to schemes and promotion programme.	2006 - 2011

<p>Policy L12 The County Council is committed to have roadside rights of way signs in place. By the end of the plan period it is expected that 90% of fingerposts will be in place, including where appropriate, local destination information.</p>	
Comprehensive planned programme. Linked to schemes and promotion programme.	2006 - 2011

Detailed below are the areas that are proposed for schemes over the next three year period. Works include broader crossing maintenance and improvements. Enforcement policy items will also be included as well as further development of listed scheduled cuts where appropriate. These are likely to be focused on near village and village to village links.

Figure 34 - Rural Waymarking Programme 2006-2010

Name	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Stapleford			
Wymeswold			
Breedon			
Wellsborough			
Barkby, South Croxton			
Owston			
Slawston			
Arnesby			
Bruntingthorpe			
Husbands Bosworth			
Branston			
Kirkby Mallory			
Goadby Marwood			
Great Easton			



8.1.9.1 Further schemes will be scheduled to ensure that any path has been surveyed for problems, and waymarking and signing renewed at least every five years.

8.1.10 Promoted Routes and Publications renewal schedule

Policy L16 The County Council will continue to develop Long Distance route publications that also allow for paths to be used as day walks or rides.	
Revision study and survey of Leicestershire Round	2006
Publication of new booklet linked with maintenance programme	2007

Policy L17 The County Council will have all of the Parish Walks leaflets freely available for download from the website by the end of 2006.	
Completion of programme	2006
Ongoing maintenance and review of leaflets	2007 - 2011

Policy L18 The County Council will carry out a survey of potential riding routes for publication. These will focus on stabling sites or areas.	
Survey and study	2008
Publication window	2009

Policy L20 All promoted routes will be subject to comprehensive rolling three yearly checks for waymarking, signing, maintenance and accessibility. This will include the provision of distinctive signing denoting each route, as well as named wording on fingerposts. A full programme will be set out detailing when each route fits into the schedule of path maintenance and literature renewal.	
Ongoing programme	2006 - 2011

Policy L20 Promotional work will be partly re focused to support the encouragement of walking and riding in the improvement scheme areas. This will be linked with the consultation and implementation of improvements.	
This work will include a new range of themed publications which will focus on the local environment and facilities, including links to Country Parks and Nature Areas.	
Linkage to scheme programme (see above)	2006 - 2011

8.1.11 Open Access

Policy O1 Leicestershire County Council will seek to develop and continue to monitor Access Management Plans for all relevant sites in the county.	
Initial raft of plans	2006
Reviews on site by site basis	2006 - 2011

Policy O2 The County Council will seek to ensure that all sites are accessible to the public, even where no current provision exists.	
Ongoing process, including broadening access on principle sites	2006 - 2011

Policy O3 The County Council will encourage landowners to dedicate land for open access under the act. This will include assistance where appropriate.	
Policy O4 The County Council will offer advice and assistance to those landowners who wish to grant broader access rights on their land.	
Ongoing process, also requiring active encouragement of opportunities	2006 - 2011

Policy O5 The County Council will actively seek the views of the Leicestershire Local Access forum in the development of access plans and future management of sites. This will included the formation of a sub group to oversee this work.	
Formulation of sub group	2006
On going involvement of the Forum with the development and management of sites	2006 - 2011

8.1.12 Mapping and Orders

Policy M1 The County Council will continue to provide a paper Definitive Map under continuous review. Copies will be available at County Hall and all District Council offices.	
Policy M2 The County Council will provide on request, copies of the Definitive Map to Parish Councils.	
New release of map for all of county	2006
Ongoing process of supplying Parish requests	2006 - 2011
Ongoing process of supply sheets to authorities	2006 - 2011

Policy M3 The County Council will continue to develop and maintain a digital Definitive Map.	
PAI programme dictated by Ordnance survey.	2006 - 2008
Improvements to scale of map	2006 - 2009
Anomaly survey linked to above	2006 - 2009

Policy M4 The County Council will seek to make Rights of Way information widely available. This includes delivery through the internet and libraries.	
Policy M5 The County Council will seek to make Rights of Way information widely available. This includes delivery through the internet and libraries.	
Continuing development of current web module	2006 - 2008
Work with Ordnance Survey with supply of data for mapping range	2006 - 2011
Work constructively with any agencies, to supply access data, including new developments	2006 - 2011
Links to all new systems and portals developed from the County Council	2006 - 2011

Policy M8 The County Council will actively seek to programme a date for the work with the Archive Research Unit.	
Continuing discussions with the unit to encourage a timescale for work in the county.	2006
Having ready and in correct format any pre requisites the ARU request before beginning work	2006 - 2007
Digital capture of Parish returns and 1929 Local Government Plans	2006 - 2007

Policy M10 The County Council will urge the Government to streamline the process and amend the legislation to speed up and reduce the costs of making Definitive Map Modification Orders	
Make representation to Defra after consultation with Local Access Forum	2007

8.1.13 Modification Orders

Policy M13 The County Council will develop a prioritisation framework for all orders.	
Policy M12 The County Council will assess recreational and utilitarian need and benefits to help prioritise any proposals to alter the Definitive Map.	
Policy M9 The County Council will continue to respond to formal applications for Modification Orders. These will be prioritised in conjunction with all other orders.	
Policy M14 The County Council will digitise all potential orders to assess the scale of the task and allow priorities to be identified.	
Policy M15 The County Council will seek to prioritise orders that offer walking and riding opportunities as close to where people live.	
Initial work on a Draft priority system	2007

Consultations and adoption of system	2007
Capture of all claims digitally	2006 - 2008

<i>Policy M16 The County Council will develop the digital registers required to adhere with requirements set out in CROW and subsequent guidance. The Council will also consider including further information where appropriate.</i>	
Initial publication on web of register in flat format	2006
Development of back end databases of registers	2006 - 2007
Expansion of information in registers to include all pertinent information public may want	2007 - 2011

8.1.14 Moving Paths

<i>Policy D5 The County Council will develop guidance notes for applicants of Diversion Orders. These will also advise District Councils making orders, of the requirements of new highways.</i>	
Confirmation of policies relating to diverting paths	2006
Draft proposals for guidance notes	2007
Publication and promotion of guidance within and without organisation	2008

9 Policy List

9.1 *Planning*

Policy P1

The Rights Of Way Improvement Plan has direct links to and is being produced in conjunction with the Second Local Transport Plan published by the County Council in 2006.

Policy P2

The County Council will seek the views of any local communities involved in schemes developed from the Local Transport Plan and develop future projects accordingly.

Policy P3

Developers will be expected to maximise the potential for access within, to and from new development by walking and cycling. This should include links to travel plans and public transport.

Policy P4

Infrastructure assessments to access new development sites, including developer contributions, should include foot and cycle proposals.

Policy P5

Consideration should be given to linking new housing sites into the surrounding recreational networks or where there isn't one, creating routes that link to surrounding path networks, communities or facilities.

Policy P6

Where development proposals affect public rights of way, the development must ensure the existing or diverted route is both convenient and safe in order to encourage its future use.

Policy P7

The County Council will produce a new Guide to Development and Rights of Way and welcomes contact from developers considering proposals within the county and other planning authorities.

9.2 Users And Needs

Policy U1

The County Council, in conjunction with the Leicestershire Local Access Forum, will develop guidance notes and proposals for improved use of roadside verges for walkers and riders.

Policy U2

The County Council will prioritise the development of links to the National Cycle Network and the development of routes within the Local Transport Plan priority areas.

Policy U3

The County Council will complete the development of a County Cycling Plan and promote its use by all Planning Authorities and developers when dealing with applications and consents.

Policy U4

The County Council will create a schedule of off-road and on-road cycle routes for immediate future development to provide recreational and other travel opportunities for all.

Policy U5

The County Council will continue to develop and improve the information supplied to The Ordnance Survey for use with the Explorer sheets. This includes other routes with public access.

Policy U6

The County Council will seek to make all routes available to as wide a range of the community as possible, with regard to location and costs.

Policy U7

The County Council will seek to have all routes as free from barriers as possible. The County Council will presume that all paths should be open. A barrier shall only be allowed where the control of livestock or vehicular movements is an issue. If a barrier is authorised it should be as widely accessible as possible, such as a hand gate or kissing gate.

Policy U8

Help, including installation will be available from the County Council to replace existing stiles with easy access gates, where resources allow.

Policy U9

In considering improvements to local path networks, the County Council will work with adjoining authorities, in particular, Leicester City Council. The County Council will also have regard to the needs of communities accessing paths that live outside the county area.

Policy U10

The County Council will work with The Primary Care Trusts, Education providers & The Countryside Agency and other partners to assess how the Rights of Way network and other access facilities can contribute to improving health and to addressing partners health improvement targets.

This planning exercise will be followed by the development of a programme of promotional and infrastructure initiatives designed to contribute to wider developments, including Healthy walking proposals.

Policy U11

The County Council will seek out and realise opportunities to raise the profile of Leicestershire as a recreational walking, riding and cycling destination.

Policy U12

The County Council is committed to increasing the levels of walking and cycling and the use of public transport, through the Local Transport Plan process.

Policy U13

The County Council is committed to reducing road casualties through local safety schemes and speed management activities as well as road safety education, training and publicity campaigns.

Policy U14

The County Council aims to have travel plans for all 304 schools in the county by 2011.

9.3 Looking After Paths

Policy L1

Leicestershire County Council is committed to raising the length of paths passed, using BVPI methodology, to 80% over the plan period.

Policy L2

Leicestershire County Council will assess the BVPI 178 standard of scheme based areas in addition to the county wide survey, over the lifetime of this and the Local Transport Plan.

Policy L3

The County Council is committed to the electronic delivery of defect reports. This includes further development of interactive reporting over the web as well as e-mail reports.

Policy L4

The County Council will promote how to report defects. This will include the posting of contact details at the start and end of all paths.

Policy L5

The County Council will seek to update all reporters that wish to be told of the results of the investigation into any enquiry.

Policy L6

The County Council will continue to enhance defect monitoring systems, including links to the overall Highways Management System

Policy L7

Landowners and farmers who have public rights of way which cross land in arable cultivation will continue to be made aware of their responsibilities.

Policy L8

Leicestershire County Council will respond to requests for information from the Rural Payments Agency.

Policy L9

Leicestershire County Council will continue to work with the Rural Payments Agency to ensure that compliance with the law in respect to rights of way is considered when dealing with subsidy applications

Policy L10

The County will continue to support and develop the Headland Management grant scheme.

Policy L11

The County Council will begin to develop comprehensive network vegetation clearance plans within areas qualifying for funding under Local Transport Plan schemes.

Policy L12

The County Council will continue to maintain a fully waymarked and signed network. All paths will be subject to at least 5 yearly surveys. Promoted routes will be subject to at least 3 yearly checks.

Policy L13

The County Council is committed to have roadside rights of way signs in place. By the end of the plan period it is expected that 90% of fingerposts will be in place, including where appropriate, local destination information.

Policy L14

Priority improvements will be focused on the half of the network identified in conjunction with the Local Transport Plan Process, in and within 1 kilometre from urban areas.

Policy L15

Where appropriate, the County Council will surface routes that offer potential for increased use, including access to facilities.

Policy L16

Improvement and maintenance proposals will be co-ordinated with other proposals set out in the Local Transport Plan. These include pedestrian crossing and traffic segregation schemes, as well as School Travel Plans and lighting proposals.

Policy L17

The County Council will continue to develop Long Distance route publications that also allow for paths to be used as day walks or rides.

Policy L18

The County Council will have all of the Parish Walks leaflets freely available for download from the website by the end of 2006.

Policy L19

The County Council will carry out a survey of potential riding routes for publication. These will focus on stabling sites or areas.

Policy L20

All promoted routes will be subject to comprehensive rolling three yearly checks for waymarking, signing, maintenance and accessibility. This will include the provision of distinctive signing denoting each route, as well as named wording on fingerposts. A full programme will be set out detailing when each route fits into the schedule of path maintenance and literature renewal.

Policy L21

Promotional work will be partly re focused to support the encouragement of walking and riding in the improvement scheme areas. This will be linked with the consultation and implementation of improvements.

This work will include a new range of themed publications which will focus on the local environment and facilities, including links to Country Parks and Nature Areas.

9.4 Open Access

Policy O1

Leicestershire County Council will seek to develop and continue to monitor Access Management Plans for all relevant sites in the county.

Policy O2

The County Council will seek to ensure that all sites are accessible to the public, even where no current provision exists.

Policy O3

The County Council will encourage landowners to dedicate land for open access under the act. This will include assistance where appropriate.

Policy O4

The County Council will offer advice and assistance to those landowners who wish to grant broader access rights on their land.

Policy O5

The County Council will actively seek the views of the Leicestershire Local Access forum in the development of access plans and future management of sites. This will included the formation of a sub group to oversee this work.

9.5 Mapping Paths

Policy M1

The County Council will continue to provide a paper Definitive Map under continuous review. Copies will be available at County Hall and all District Council offices.

Policy M2

The County Council will provide on request, copies of the Definitive Map to Parish Councils.

Policy M3

The County Council will continue to develop and maintain a digital Definitive Map.

Policy M4

The County Council will seek to make Rights of Way information widely available. This includes delivery through the internet and libraries.

Policy M5

The County Council will co-ordinate with other agencies to provide access data, including the exchange of data. We will also support any development of integrated access information at a local regional or national level.

Policy M6

The County Council will respond to the Positional Accuracy Programme from the Ordnance survey, and update data where required.

Policy M7

The County Council will enhance the digital Definitive Map for use at scales of 1:2500 and up to 1:1250 in urban areas.

Policy M8

The County Council will actively seek to programme a date for the work with the Archive Research Unit.

Policy M9

The County Council will continue to respond to formal applications for Modification Orders. These will be prioritised in conjunction with all other orders. Applicants will be contacted and updated after any application is received.

Policy M10

The County Council will urge the Government to streamline the process and amend the legislation to speed up and reduce the costs of making Definitive Map Modification Orders.

Policy M11

The County Council will continue to review the Definitive Map to ascertain the extent of anomalies and other issues that need to be resolved.

Policy M12

The County Council will assess recreational and utilitarian need and benefits to help prioritise any proposals to alter the Definitive Map.

Policy M13

The County Council will develop a prioritisation framework for all orders.

Policy M14

The County Council will digitise all potential orders to assess the scale of the task and allow priorities to be identified.

Policy M15

The County Council will seek to prioritise orders that offer walking and riding opportunities as close to where people live.

Policy M16

The County Council will develop the digital registers required to adhere with requirements set out in CROW and subsequent guidance. The Council will also consider including further information where appropriate.

9.6 Diverting Paths**Policy D1**

The County Council will consider proposals that support farming practices, including the creation of headland paths. However, such routes must not reduce the likely use and reasonable enjoyment of any path and the likely future maintenance costs will be a material consideration.

Policy D2

The County Council will consider proposals that move paths from working areas or curtilages. In each instance, any proposal must not reduce the likely use of a path, other than those that address specific safety issues. Where an alternative route requires the path to be moved onto or close to land held by a third party, the applicant will be expected to meet all costs, including claims for compensation.

Policy D3

The County Council will consider proposals that enhance access opportunities for the public and lead to increased usage of the network. In these instances the authority will seek to support proposals, including financially. These may extend to safety proposals that move people from vulnerable locations or support broader objectives such as safe routes to schools.

Policy D4

Any new route created by a legal order, will be available to as wide a range of the community as possible. Barriers will only be authorised where livestock is an issue. In these instances self closing gates may be preferable. The surface of the proposed routes should be considered as well as future maintenance. All new routes should be adequately signed prior to becoming available.

Policy D5

The County Council will develop guidance notes for applicants of Diversion Orders. These will also advise District Councils making orders, of the requirements of new highways. All relevant parties will be consulted in drawing up the proposals, including the Leicestershire Local Access Forum (see Statement Of Action).

Policy D6

The County Council welcomes and will actively support appropriate dedications to the network. This will include financial and other support.
Policy D7
The County Council will only enter into permissive path agreement after formal dedication has been considered, and the period of dedication is no less than 10 years, and preferably 25 years.