

REPORT TO: Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 28 February 2018

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community & Resources

SUBJECT: ROWIP 2 Liverpool City Region Combined Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

WARD(S) Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) requires each Highways Authority to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) in order to identify changes that will "improve provision for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and those with mobility problems".
- 1.2 In order to develop a ROWIP, Highway Authorities are required to assess:
- The extent to which local rights of way meet present and future needs of the public.
 - The opportunities provided by local rights of way and in particular by footpaths, cycle-tracks, bridleways and restricted byways for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of their area.
 - The accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems.
- 1.3 Whilst there is an obligation upon Local Authorities to produce a Rights of Way Improvement plan, there is no statutory duty to deliver any of the schemes identified.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board supports the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and recommends that the Executive Board formally endorses it.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Halton Borough Council produced its first statutory Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan in 2009. This identified the use and demand of the network as well as access requirements for the less mobile. It identified the state of the network as a whole whilst questioning how successfully it linked into the wider highway system for employment, school travel and leisure. Finally an action plan was produced which targeted long, medium

and short term commitments and ambitions for the Boroughs Rights of Way. The CROW Act requires Local Authorities to undertake a review of this document every 10 years.

- 3.2 With the creation of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) it was proposed that a joint ROWIP be produced combining the individual plans of the member authorities into one detailed and all-encompassing document. It allows each authority to identify the successes of their previous individual ROWIP's whilst combining the ambitions of each member authority looking to the future.
- 3.3 It is a forward thinking, joined up approach combining common aims whilst providing a level of consistency across the region. One of the many advantages of this approach is the ability to coordinate funding bids toward common goals as well as working together to create successful, user friendly cross boundary links. It is hoped that this approach will progress economic and socio-economic targets (for example, walking and cycling strategies) whilst improving transport links and opening up sustainable travel choices across the region.
- 3.4 The ROWIP links to the LCR Transport Plan for Growth and will be produced to mirror its format to act as an associated and connected policy document.
- 3.5 A copy of the plan is attached to this report. A draft version has been previously circulated to all members of the Board and the Portfolio Holder for comments. In summary, the ROWIP is a statutory document which deals specifically with Rights of Way and traffic free corridors. The document is designed to give a forward looking vision as to how they will be used, promoted and upgraded over the next decade. The Plan aims to bring Rights of Way in line with all other Highways and include them in the LCR's overall commitment to promote and encourage sustainable travel. It is not intended as a comprehensive guide to all future maintenance and capital schemes. Instead Halton would bring forward schemes which will then be evaluated. It is the ambition of the LCR to ensure that ROWIP enhancements are linked into the mainstream delivery of a range of schemes. At present, such committed schemes being taken forward through this programme are
 - Bridgewater Canal Pedestrian and Cycle Improvements
 - Runcorn East Rail Station Access Improvements
 - Jaguar Land Rover JLR-3MG Cycle Corridor
 - A56 Sustainable Links to Sci-Tech Daresbury
 - Astmoor Business Hub Corridor

The future of funding for larger scale, cross boundary and strategic links will be prioritised based on the need and overall benefit to the community within the LCR of good, usable and sustainable transport links.

The ROWIP links directly to the Transport Plan for Growth and provides

traffic free and off road routes with equal status. It connects them across borough boundaries and provides a tangible means by which funding can be attracted to continue to improve this ever evolving network.

It is felt that the ROWIP provides sufficient links to support this Council's objectives in this area.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no specific policy implications in relation to this report although a policy framework is set out in the ROWIP.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Implications exist despite the lack of any statutory duty for the Council to act on the plan. There will be an expectation to maintaining the Council's commitments to safe routes to school, to providing and protecting traffic free routes for all and promoting sustainable travel choices.

5.2 There are also financial implications associated with the plan. The document is linked to the Liverpool City Region's Transport Plan for Growth. In order for the City Region to be able to effectively bid for available funding it is important that it can support the bids with Policy evidence. The ROWIP provides this detailed plan for sustainable transport. It documents a firm evidence base for the regions ongoing commitment to supporting cycling and walking and in improving access for the mobility impaired and encouraging healthier transport choices for all, through future funding bid packages. It will help the Borough access resources to fund such activities.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The plan identifies the need to maintain and promote safe and sustainable and where practicable, traffic free, routes to school.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None identified.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The report works hand in hand with healthy Halton identifying leisure routes and sustainable transport choices across the LCR.

6.4 A Safer Halton

The ROWIP supports safe routes to school as well as a commitment to

ensure that the rights of way are well maintained and safe.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Sustainable transport choices are key to any urban renewal. The report looks to link urban renewal to areas of employment, education and leisure and provide traffic free routes where practicable.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 None identified.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are no Equality and Diversity issues in relation to this report.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Halton Borough Council Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan.	Place of Inspection - Highways Division, Municipal Building, Widnes	Jonathan Farmer
Halton Borough Council Definitive Map	Place of Inspection - Highways Division, Municipal Building, Widnes	Jonathan Farmer
Liverpool City Region Transport Plan for Growth	Place of Inspection - Highways Division, Municipal Building, Widnes	Jonathan Farmer