

‘Countryside Access; Our Way Forward’



HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH COUNCIL PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2007

HARTLEPOOL
BOROUGH COUNCIL

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درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔ (Urdu)

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan includes appendices and supporting information which is available at www.hartlepool.gov.uk then following the links to the Rights of Way improvement Plan. The Council appreciates that not everyone will have access to the internet, and so paper copies of the appendices are available on request. If you would like a copy of any appendices or would like to discuss the ROWIP, please contact the Countryside Access Team at:

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FOREWORD



The Tees Valley Local Access Forum welcomes this Rights of Way Improvement Plan as a significant step in the future development of rights of way and other access opportunities to meet the demands of the 21st century, and seeks to continually improve provision for recreation, work and commuting.

It has never been more important to understand that this access network provides an infrastructure that is not only of high value and potential in its own right, but also links to other key areas that affect society. It is well documented that going into the countryside has significant benefits on health through increased physical activity and better mental wellbeing. Similar examples can be given showing contributions (real and potential) to tourism, planning, transport etc.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan is not only about lines on the ground, but also deals with links to these other issues, and looks to make the most of the countryside and coast in the Tees Valley to provide a quality resource we can all enjoy.

Steve Scoffin

Tees Valley Local Access Forum Chair

TEES VALLEY JOINT LOCAL ACCESS FORUM

Aims

- ◆ To promote an interest in public rights of way and access to the countryside, towns and coast in our area.
- ◆ To examine how our local authorities manage the rights of way, and put forward ideas about how improvements can be made.
- ◆ To seek to influence local, regional and national government and planning proposals.
- ◆ To balance the needs of land management and the desirability for recreation, conservation and biodiversity in the region.
- ◆ To broaden our understanding and experience of issues affecting the Tees Valley.
- ◆ To identify missing access links and other improvement works including access points and signage within the local rights of way network. These would be raised with local authorities who would look to undertake the work as and when funding was available.
- ◆ To utilise the forum working groups to develop proposals and recommendations, bringing them to the main forum meetings for approval. The forum will then inform the local authorities, aiding their decision making

FOREWORD



It is useful to consider that most people will, at some time, access or want to access the countryside on their doorstep, for what ever reason. To this end the process of research, consultation leading to the production of Hartlepool's Rights of Way Improvement Plan, creates a strong opportunity to improve and expand on the opportunities for access into the Countryside.

Hartlepool's rights of way network runs through both urban and rural environments of the Borough. These vital links into and out of the Town are constantly being improved to provide positive access for a wider community of people. This network of paths reaches beyond the Borough and into a wider network, covering the whole of England and Wales.

Our network of footpaths, bridleways and byways attracts visitors from outside the region as well as users from close at hand. It is an economic and tourism asset as well as being an important section of the Council's highway infrastructure. This Plan links these two important aspects of its role and provides sensible and attainable short and long-range improvements that will be of positive benefit to all who use, will use or might use these routes in the future.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan shows Hartlepool Borough Council's commitment to the future of its local rights of way network, showing it to be a strong sustainable asset for everyone to use, now and in the future.

Councillor Victor Tumilty
Portfolio Holder – Culture, Leisure and Tourism
Hartlepool Borough Council



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



As with all other Highway Authorities throughout England, Hartlepool Borough Council has been required under Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, to develop and produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan by November 2007.

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (the Plan) establishes a framework for local rights of way and countryside access work, over the next ten years, by identifying the key issues and pressures which affect countryside access and local rights of way around Hartlepool Borough and setting out in clear terms the Council's aims and objectives for itself, its partners and the wider public.

The legislation requires us to prepare a plan, which considers local rights of way (defined as including cycle tracks) in the context of:-

- How local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public.
- Opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of their area.
- Accessibility of the local rights of way to blind or partially sighted people and those with mobility problems.

Scope of The Plan

It is expected that all rights of way improvement plans will seek to link more closely with the Local Transport Plan (LTP). At present, full integration is not required although it is planned that the Rights of Way Improvement Plan will be strongly linked with the next LTP, which could to be written in 2011.

Although the Plan sets out actions and priorities, work programs for the next ten years. It is intended to constantly review the Plan within that time, so as to coincide with the publication of the next LTP. This would bring the review and production of the plan inline with the same timescale. The plan would then be reviewed either every five or ten years thereafter.

Whilst the Public Rights of Way network forms the most significant resource, which enables members of the public to access the countryside, looking at this network alone would not show the full picture of access to the countryside.

There are many other routes and sites that are used by the general public for recreational countryside access that are not legally recorded on the Definitive map, as public rights of way, but which complement the rights of way network extending and improving access to the countryside.

As a result, the Plan considers the whole network of off-road routes, public open spaces, country parks and green corridors, including the potential of 'Open Access', as well as public rights of way and highways.

The Process (How The ROWIP Has Been Developed)

The Council has drawn on a variety of sources during the development of the Plan, including statutory guidance, countryside agency advice (now part of Natural England), public consultation, officer discussions, national research, network surveys and audits as well as the state of our network in relation to meeting Access for All standards.

In order to identify the issues that have shaped the Plan, the Council began by consulting with a wide range of groups including those listed below:-

- Landowners
- General Public
- User Groups
- Hartlepool Access Forum
- Tees Valley Local Access Forum
- Black Minority Ethnic Forum

The responses gained from this wide-ranging consultation have been the foundation by which the Council has been able to produce a Statement of Action. This statement lists all the key objectives that will form the basis of improvements to the local rights of way for the future, as well as the potential funding routes that have been identified as being essential for the success of each objective.

We have also worked with the Tees Valley Local Access Forum to ensure that its members have had the opportunity to feed into the Plan at every stage. As the forum is a statutory body it is relied upon to identify and discuss issues and provide advice as to how the council should move forward to improve countryside access for everyone. The Council must take notice of this advice and where possible act upon it, as and when necessary.

The Forum will continue to be involved with monitoring the progress made towards the Plans targets.



The Next Step (The Way Forward)

It is clear that many of the points identified require much time and funding to deliver, for example the definitive map work, in which cases will be identified where progress can be made within a shorter timescale and within current resources.

The implementation of certain key actions will be more visible to users such as furniture improvement compared to say definitive map work. However, it is important to keep in mind that definitive map work must be completed in its entirety before the 2026 cut off date implemented by the CROW ACT 2000.

Although this work will take the longest to complete, due to its complexity and cost, it should nevertheless be given a high priority.



CONTENTS

VISION STATEMENT	1
1. INTRODUCTION	3
Legislative Background	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Hartlepool’s Plan	4
Aims	4
Objectives.....	5
Partnership Working	5
Durham Heritage Coastal Partnership (DHCP)	5
Considerations in the Writing of the Plan.....	7
Sustainability Appraisal Summary	7
2. CHARACTERISTICS OF HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH	9
General Characteristics	9
Social Characteristics	10
3. POLICY CONTEXT	13
Local Development Framework.....	15
Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)	15
Hartlepool Local Plan	16
Hartlepool Local Transport Plan (LTP2 - 2011)	17
Tees Valley Cycle Strategy (1998)	18
Tees Valley Equestrian Leisure Sector Strategy	19
Tees Valley Tourism Strategy & Tees Valley Area Tourism Management Plan	19
Tees Forest Plan (2000).....	20
Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan	21
North East England Tourism Strategy	21
Coastal Arc	22
4. RIGHTS OF WAY AND THEIR USERS	23
Benefits of Rights of Way	24
Walkers	25
Mobility and Visually Impaired Users.....	25
Horse Riders.....	26
Cyclists	26
Motor Vehicles.....	27
5. CURRENT PROVISION	29
Access Provision in the Borough of Hartlepool.....	29
Resources and Duties	31

	Budget and Income	34
	Partnerships	35
	Advisory Bodies.....	35
6.	ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION.....	37
	Viewpoint Survey.....	37
	Countryside and Rights of Way Quiz.....	38
	Use and Demand Surveys.....	38
	Tees Valley Equestrian Study.....	42
	Additional Consultation.....	42
	Network Audit	Error! Bookmark not defined.
	Recreation Audit	43
	Conclusions Drawn from Public Consultations and Surveys	45
7.	STATEMENT OF ACTION	47
8.	CONCLUSIONS	61
9.	GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS.....	63
10.	REFERENCE AND BIBLIOGRAPHY	65
11.	MAPS (linked to Recreation Audit - Appendix 5)	69

VISION STATEMENT

“To maintain, develop and promote countryside access, through partnership working with landowners, users and the general public to meet the needs of those who use or wish to use the local access network”.

Local rights of way are, once again, becoming an important part of the wider transport infrastructure. The implementation of this Rights of Way Improvement Plan will assist the Council and its partners in achieving their overall vision and aims.

Hartlepool Borough Council will look to:-

- Be guided by the principle that priority should be given to actions within the Plan that give the most benefit to the users and potential users.
- Increase the public's enjoyment of, and benefit derived from open spaces, the local countryside and access to the coast.
- Encourage visitors to the Borough for the purpose of countryside access and recreation.
- Work internally with the Local Transport Management Team to help find ways for improving the Borough's Cycleways, Bridleways and Access for All routes, throughout the Borough.
- Link strategically with its immediate neighbours, through improved connections to their National Routes/Trails.

This will be achieved by:-

- Consulting and working with all disability users and groups to improve countryside access facilities.
- Consulting with and improving access for all legal users of the local rights of way network.

Improvements will be monitored against the targets, during the ten year life of the Plan.

Throughout the development of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Hartlepool Borough Council has taken into account the related regional policies and national government aims and objectives for:-

- Safe, easy and sustainable travel/transport.
- Healthy living.
- Improved and sustainable quality of the environment.

1. INTRODUCTION



1.1 Legislative Background

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (hereafter referred to as 'the CRoW Act') introduced a new statutory duty, on every Local Authority, to prepare and produce a plan for improving local rights of way. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (hereafter referred to as 'the Plan') is therefore designed to assess:-

1. The extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public
2. The opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of their area
3. The accessibility of local rights of way to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems

(Defra 2002)

As a 'four star CPA rated Authority', Hartlepool Borough Council could have applied for exemption from the requirement to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The exemption is stated under the provisions of *The Local Authorities' Plans and Strategies (Disapplication) (England) Order 2005*. The Council elected to produce a Plan in the belief it will enhance its delivery of service in this area.

Section 60(5) of the Act defines 'local rights of way' as including footpaths, cycle tracks, bridleways, and restricted byways within the Authority's area and the ways within the Authority's area, which are shown on the Definitive Map and Statement as restricted byways or byways open to all traffic.

The Borough is well served by a network of paths, recorded as public rights of way on the Definitive Map and Statement. There may well be unrecorded paths and tracks that the public should have access to, which are not yet recorded on the Definitive Map. This is an issue which is being addressed by Natural England's 'Discovering Lost Ways' project. There are a large number of open spaces within the town, as well as a number of parks and walkways used for recreation. For this reason, the Plan considers the whole of the local access network, not just that provided through statute.

After publication of the Plan, the Council will be required to reassess and review it within ten years. Thereafter, review of the plan is required at not more than ten yearly intervals.

The Plan is a strategic document and forms part of the Council's Local Access and Transport Policy. The Plan is therefore the first stage of an ongoing assessment and review of Hartlepool's local access network.

The Council has followed the 'Statutory Guidance for Highway Authorities in England, November 2002' (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) in the preparation and publication of its Plan.

1.2 Hartlepool's Plan

Hartlepool's Plan is intended to identify improvements to the local rights of way network in order to meet the Government's aim of better provision for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and people with disabilities, improving health and quality of life and supporting rural economies and tourism.

The Plan comprises of two main elements:-

- **An Assessment** - the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public has been assessed.
- **The Statement of Action** - addresses the identified issues and outlines strategic actions that will be used to bid for resources.

The Council has ensured, in accordance with DEFRA guidance that the Plan builds upon the existing Council statutory duties to maintain the public rights of way network, ensuring that it is adequately signposted, maintained and free from obstruction and to keep the Definitive Map and Statement under continuous review.

1.3 Aims



Hartlepool Borough Council aims to provide a wide range of improvements to the local rights of way network. It would be too easy to create a 'wish list' of projects that may look impressive on paper, but cannot be achieved within a reasonable period of time. The list of improvements included in the Plan will be diverse and include small scale, as well as long-term improvements. This will help to make the network more accessible to a wider range of current and potential users.

The Council considers the needs of all disabled people when carrying out works. Through the Plan, the Council will actively change the character of the access

facilities across the Borough. Improved countryside furniture (gaps, barriers, gates and stiles etc.) and surfacing will be incorporated, where possible, taking into consideration the needs of both landowner and user. This will provide a range of 'paths' that are more accessible to those with extra requirements, who wish to access more of the countryside, both in the urban fringe and more rural areas.

1.4 Objectives

The Plan provides a long-term strategy to create a network of routes that suits everyone's needs and will enhance co-operation between neighbouring authorities. This will be in addition to improving the existing network to incorporate new legislation and successive guidance.

The Plan reflects the needs of the community by ensuring it encompasses the priorities and objectives of existing policies, namely:-

- Local Development Framework
- Hartlepool Local Plan 2006
- The Local Transport Plan
- Community Strategy
- Walking the Way to Health Initiative
- The Local Strategic Partnership
- Cultural Strategy
- The Tourism Development Plan

1.5 Partnership Working

The Council will build relationships and work with partners to achieve common objectives.

The Tees Forest

The Tees Forest is one of twelve community forests in England. It was set up as a result of the 1989 'Forests for the Community' programme and covers 136 square miles of the Tees Valley.

The aim is to provide appropriate access to land, air and water facilities for recreation and to ensure adequate support mechanisms to encourage and enable people to use these facilities.

Since 1991, The Tees Forest Partnership has successfully established a number of countryside recreational facilities, including woodland parks, walkways, amenity woodlands, formal parks and nature reserves.

Tees Valley Local Access Forum

Hartlepool Borough Council is a partner in the Tees Valley Local Access Forum, along with Stockton Borough Council, Darlington Borough Council and Middlesbrough Council. The four Authorities advise the Tees Valley Local Access Forum and have worked closely with each other to ensure a cohesive approach in both the actions suggested and the way individual Plans are written.

Hartlepool has also ensured that, by taking a consistent approach when consulting with our neighbouring Authorities of County Durham and Stockton, the Tees Valley Local Access network does not become isolated, but becomes a strong element in the future of a broader Countryside Access.

Durham Heritage Coastal Partnership (DHCP)

Consists of fourteen separate bodies/agencies, who are concerned with the management of the defined area of Heritage Coast in County Durham and Sunderland. Whilst Hartlepool Borough Council is one of the partners, at present, the Durham Heritage Coastal path does not extend into Hartlepool Borough. It is expected that this will change in the near future, with the path extending down towards, if not to, The Headland.

The DHCP have six main management objectives that look to capture and improve all that is best about the Heritage Coast. This includes the natural, as well as man-made features that are terrestrial, littoral or marine, in aspect. It also looks to improve the Recreational, Touristic and Economic aspect of the local community and to look to integrate with adjoining areas to actively promote Integrated Coastal Zone Management.

Sustrans

Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity. It looks to improve the choice that people can make when travelling; in ways that benefit and improve their health and the environment. Sustrans looks at working on practical and innovative ways of dealing with the model challenges that transport creates and affects everyone. One of the important ways that Sustrans partnership helps and improves access in and around Hartlepool is through their partnership working and funding of projects that meet their aims. There have been improvements to walkways and cycleways throughout the borough that could not have been as fully delivered or delivered at all if Sustrans funding was not available. The Council continue to work with Sustrans to look at schemes that actively improve Access for All. Within the Plan, there are actions/projects that are suited to the aims of Sustrans and will look to seek partnership funding to achieve their completion.

Tees Valley Wildlife Trust

The Tees Valley Wildlife Trust is an independent, local charity working to create a better environmental future for wildlife and the public.

The Trust manages approximately 120 hectares (300 acres) of land within the Tees Valley. These include Nature Reserves and land that, once improved, will see the return of wildlife. Its work involves partnerships with communities and schools, as well as with Local Authorities.

Increasingly, Hartlepool Borough Council is looking to work in partnership with the Trust in the maintenance and management of its countryside and access areas. Some of this work will involve direct contractual work on specific sites, as well as volunteer work across the Borough.

1.6 Considerations in the Writing of the Plan



Biodiversity

In accordance with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (section 40), the Council will have regard to conserving biodiversity when carrying out its duties. This will be a strong element of any improvements to the local access network and will also be linked to the Sustainability Appraisal.

Crime and Disorder Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 promotes the practice of partnership working to reduce crime and disorder and places a statutory duty on the Council to develop and implement a strategy to tackle crime and disorder in its area. The Council will work with agencies, including the Police, local public, private, community and voluntary groups and with communities themselves. The Countryside Action Team will consider the effects of its actions on crime and will consult with the relevant agencies to reduce or remove the potential for crime and disorder.

1.7 Sustainability Appraisal Summary

Although there is no statutory remit to carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, as a document linking to the Local Plan (LP) and the Local Development Framework (LDF) the Council considered it relevant to appraise the document in line with other approved and adopted Plans.

The SA looks at the broader implications of delivering the Plan, ensuring that it can be delivered in a sustainable way with regard to the corporate Environmental, Social and Environmental objectives.

When producing the SA, the Countryside Access Team looked at the 9 themes that form the Plan's Statement of Action. These themes were appraised using the 15 sustainable objectives agreed upon corporately as the basis by which all Council SA's would be appraised.

The first stage in producing the SA was to set out a Scoping Report on the range of the appraisal and on what it would be based. As well as the objectives the report included Baseline information and the Plans and Policies that were relevant to the report and subsequent SA. The full process resulted in a Sustainability Appraisal that reflects the relevance of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and its Statement of Action. In essence this process has

shown that the Plan makes even more sense becoming a sustainable working document, capable of being monitored and reviewed in a more relevant way. This will be reflected in the simplicity by which the Publics needs and perceptions can be incorporated into the Plan as it is re-assessed or reviewed in the future.

Overall the Plan and its Statement of Action have been shown to have positive sustainable themes that look to supply the improvements planned for. At no time has the process show any negative outcome. Both the Economic and Social appraisals showed strong links to the Plan, with the Environmental appraisals, whilst positive, showing more marginal results. This does not mean that there is a need for better environmental objectives, but that when tested the objectives could not be improved upon at this time. It is likely that future reviews of the Plan will look to strengthen these objectives appraisal criteria and so make the Plan a more significant working document.

Go to www.hartlepool.gov.uk/rightsofwayimprovementplan to view and download the SA.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF HARTLEPOOL BOROUGH



The local access network in Hartlepool Borough is both a significant part of our heritage and a major recreational resource. It enables people to get away from roads used mainly by motor vehicles and enjoy large parts of the countryside otherwise difficult to access. The access network also helps to boost tourism and contribute to rural economies. Local rights of way can also provide a convenient means of travel, particularly for short journeys, in both rural and urban areas. They are important in the daily lives of many of Hartlepool's residents.

There are many routes and sites used by the general public for informal countryside access, for example, access land under the CRoW Act and permissive access. Therefore the Plan includes the whole network of off-road routes and public open spaces, both rural and urban.

Hartlepool has approximately 100 km (60 miles) of Recorded Public Rights of Way, 37 km (23 miles) of Permissive Rights of Way and 10 km of promoted routes and Regional Trails.

2.1 General Characteristics

Hartlepool is situated on the coast at the North of the Tees Valley sub-region. Neighbouring Authorities are Easington District to the North and West, Sedgefield Borough Council to the West (although Highway Authority duties fall to the County Council of Durham), Stockton Borough to the South and Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council to the South East. Hartlepool is a major retail and commercial town with light industry close by. South of the sea-side town of Seaton Carew lies the heavy industry, which extends further South, through Stockton and Billingham to the River Tees. The town was once a major North-East sea port and remains rich in maritime and industrial businesses. Recent businesses attracted to the area include call centres and visitor attractions, such as the Hartlepool Maritime Experience which have opened at the Marina.

The Borough covers an area of 9,390 hectares (approximately 36 square miles) with a population of 90,161 (Mid 2003 - Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit). The character of the Borough is more rural than urban with the town located on the coast.



From the coast at Crimdon Beck Westwards and then Southwards to Wynyard, a number of wooded beck valleys border the Northern and Western edges of the Borough. Local access routes run through these areas, which are valuable habitats for a wide range of animals and plants.

The main road network, which provides connections locally, regionally and nationally, comprises the A19, A689, A178 and A179. These roads run both North to South and East to West, providing connections to York, Gateshead, Newcastle, Middlesbrough, Stockton, Sedgefield and the A1.

On a more local scale, there are a number of corridors providing access from the town into the countryside, which link with the local rights of way network. For example, one well developed route runs through Burn Valley Gardens. This route supports a cycle track, as well as pedestrian walkways. From Burn Valley, the route carries on to and through Summerhill Countryside Park. To the North of the town is a similar type of walkway that allows both cyclists and pedestrians to access the countryside and other walkways. This is the well used and popular Hart to Haswell Walkway. To the South are access links to one of Stockton Borough's countryside parks - Cowpen Bewley Countryside Park.

Hartlepool is served by a coastal rail link that runs northwards to Newcastle and South to Thornaby and Middlesbrough.

There is a reasonable network of bus and coach routes throughout Hartlepool providing services to local centres as well as the wider Tees Valley area.

2.2 Social Characteristics

Hartlepool's population of 90,161 is diverse with between 1.5 - 2% (close to 2,000 people) from black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Origins vary from Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Indian, Chinese, Korean, Philipino to Kurdish, Somali and more recently, Polish and Romanian, as well as other European countries. Twenty six languages are spoken throughout the town.

The split in gender is roughly equal with 52% male and 48% female. The population breakdown is typical of most of the Tees Valley with 32% under the age of twenty four and an elderly population of 19% over the age of sixty five.

As with other Local Authority areas, Hartlepool has an ageing population. This population is, according to the latest statistics, likely to continue to rise for the foreseeable future. The shift in the proportion, composition and expectations of the older age group has profound implications for public services.

Particular concern has been the steady increase in the amount of overweight children and the widely held perception that children are, on the whole, less active than previous generations. This perception has, in turn, caused alarming forecasts regarding the health problems being stored up for these young people later on in life.

Statistical information concerning Hartlepool indicates that it has poor health indicators in most of the key areas monitored to determine the general health of the local area. Although instances of all cancers, coronary heart disease, heart attacks, strokes and chronic liver disease are all close to the Standard Mortality Rates for England, in both men and women, there are initiatives being considered to help reduce the effect of these diseases through exercise. One such is the Green Exercise Initiative, which is funded through the Big Lottery Fund.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

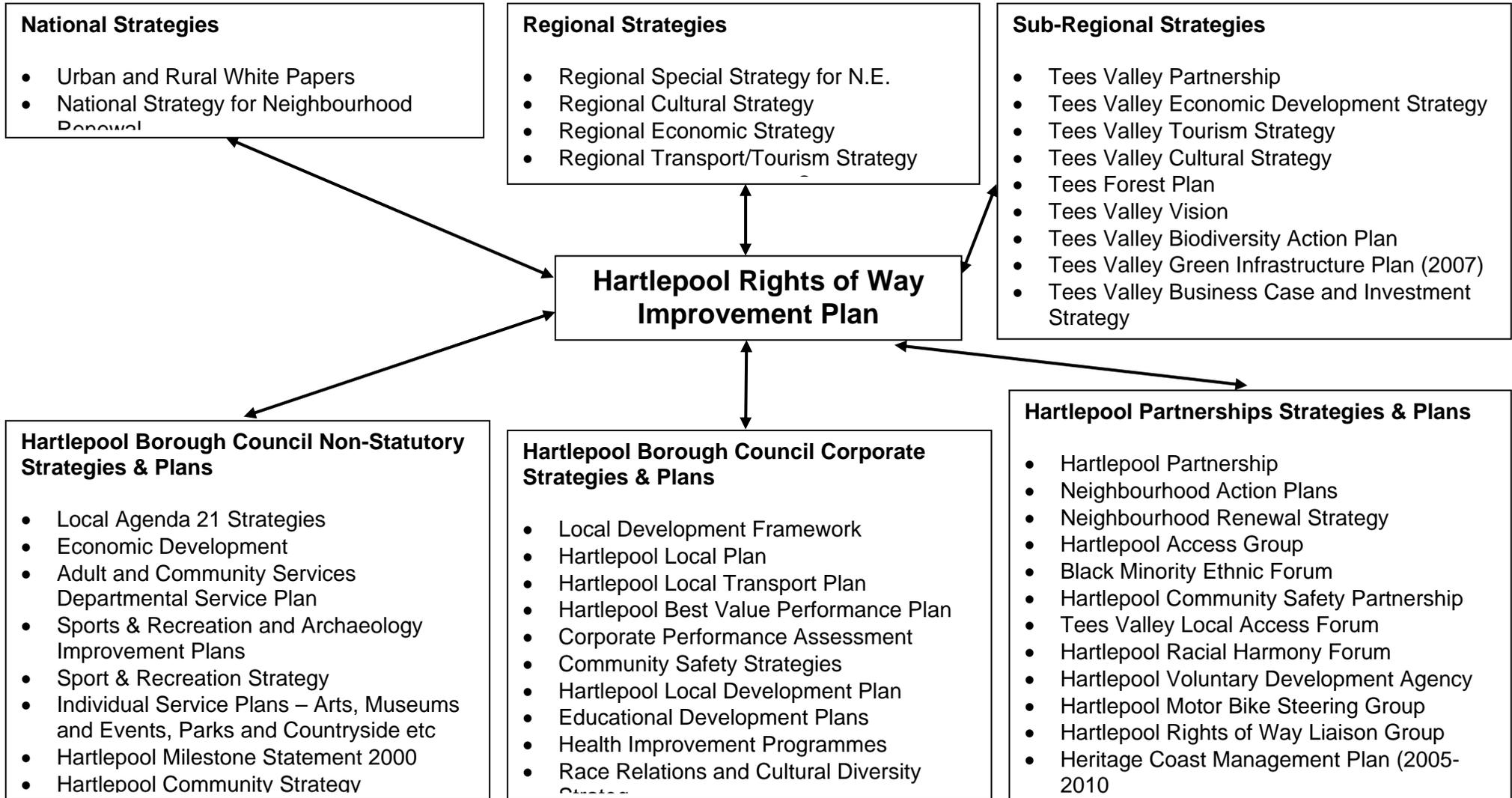


The Plan links strongly into key themes of existing policies and strategies associated with Hartlepool. It also links into national, regional and sub-regional strategies and plans.

As the Plan's outcomes will deliver objectives in these policies and strategy documents, this document is intended to be used to seek funding for projects and schemes. It will also assist in identifying opportunities for partnership working and joint projects.

Policies and strategic documents relevant to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan are shown in **Fig 1**.

Fig 1 Linkages between Strategies and Plan



Key points of relevant strategic documents



3.1 Local Development Framework

The Local Development Framework (LDF) comprises of a portfolio of Local Development documents, which will together, deliver the spatial planning strategy for the Hartlepool area. The LDF also includes saved policies from the Local Plan and the Structure Plan.

The main documents that comprise the LDF include:-

- The Local Development Scheme
- Development Plan Documents, which comprises of:-
 - ~ Core Strategy
 - ~ Site Specific Allocations
 - ~ Action Area Plans
 - ~ Proposal Maps
- Supplementary Planning Documents
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Annual Monitoring Report

3.2 Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

Objectives.

The RSS is expected to:-

- Establish a 'spatial' strategy for a region (Hartlepool sits within the North East region).
- Outline housing figures for the distribution to unitary Authorities to take forward in their LDF's.
- Establish regionally specific policies which are expected to add to rather than replicate national ones.
- Define the 'general extent' of the Green Belt.
- Produce a regional Transport Strategy as part of the wider special strategy, which should outline key priorities for investment in order to support spatial growth.

They are subject to a Strategic Environment Assessment (see point 1.6 of Chapter 1 - Introduction).

In the case of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, the fifth objective ties in strongly with the Plan and its own broad objectives.

3.3 Hartlepool Local Plan

The Hartlepool Local Plan has four main functions:

- Development - shows precisely on a map base the areas of land indicated in the structure plan as locations for major development or subject to specific policies.
- Guidance - for the control of development by defining precise policies on land uses and on selected matters of design so that potential applicants for planning permission are aware of the planning requirements for the locality.
- Guidance - for regeneration and other investment opportunities; enables other 'planning' bodies to phase service and market sites based on known criteria on land availability. Financial resources can then be targeted more effectively: and
- Consultation - brings local and detailed issues to the attention of the public so that there is full involvement in the discussion, and input to, planning the future of the Borough.

Throughout the Hartlepool Local Plan there are strong links with local access and the countryside and more specifically rights of way.

Below are listed the areas where the Local Plan links to local access and the countryside:

- General Environmental Principles
- Tourism
- Transport
- Recreation and Leisure
- The Green Network
- Wildlife
- Conservation of the Historic Environment
- The Rural Area

In the last category alone, there are ten policies that have a direct impact on Rights of Way and the Countryside.

These are:-

- | | |
|-------|---|
| Rur 6 | Development in the Countryside |
| Rur 7 | Prior notification for Agricultural Development |
| Rur 8 | Protection of Agricultural Land |

Rur 14	Tees Forest
Rur 15	Small Gateway Sites
Rur 16	Recreation in the Countryside
Rur 17	Strategic Recreational Routes
Rur 18	Rights of Way
Rur 19	Summerhill to Cowpen Bewley Greenway
Rur 20	Special Landscape Areas

In addition to the direct impact policies, there are important links with areas other than the Rural Area.

1. *General Environmental Principles*

- GEP1 - where rights of way affected by proposed development is a material consideration.
- GEP9 - developer contribution including negotiation for improvements to pedestrian and cycleway network and other community facilities deemed necessary as a result of the development.

2. *Transport*

- Tra7 - Pedestrian Linkages - Town Centre/Headland/Seaton Carew (including new pedestrian bridge at Victoria Harbour).
- Tra8 - Pedestrian Routes - the need to provide links to and within residential areas.
- Tra19 - Provision for alternative means of transport.

3. *Recreation and Leisure*

- Rec9 - Recreational routes, including the Coastal Walkway.

3.4 Hartlepool Local Transport Plan (LTP2) (2006 - 2011)

The LTP is a statutory document that is used by the Department for Transport to allocate capital funding to local transport authorities for integrated transport and maintenance works. The latest LTP has been developed in accordance with the Government's 'Guidance on Local Transport Plans Second Edition (December 2004)'.

The local transport strategy and plan is built on the success of the first LTP, which extended to 2005/06. There is a new focus on delivering the shared priorities for local government, contributing to achieving the aims and objectives of the Hartlepool Community Strategy and reflecting regional and local land use plans and economic development and regeneration priorities.

The transport strategy sets out Hartlepool's local transport vision, strategic aims and objectives that have been developed through effective consultation and involvement with people and organisations across the Borough over the

past 2 years. This partnership working will be maintained to deliver a wide range of transport improvements over the next five years and beyond.

Since the development of Hartlepool's first LTP, there have been significant changes in national and regional policies as well as changes to local policy aims, objectives and outputs of the local corporate planning framework. These changes have demanded a new approach to ensure that the development and delivery of transport strategies and initiatives are consistent with, and will continue to influence, the wide range of regional and local level priorities and policies.

The key improvements that these national agendas are trying to achieve include:-

- Improved health and reduced obesity
- Increased educational attainment at all ages
- Reduced unemployment
- Creating safer and stronger communities
- Reducing social exclusion

The Plan and the LTP will form part of the Government's vision of the Council producing a more integrated Access and Transport Policy.

3.5 Tees Valley Cycle Strategy (1998)



The objective of the strategy is to encourage more cycling, as part of an integrated land-use and transport strategy to:

- Improve mobility for people, not movement of vehicles
- Improve road safety
- Improve the environment
- Improve the health of the community

There are five policy areas:-

- Providing cycle facilities, such as routes and parking
- Incorporating the needs of cyclists into alterations and additions to the highway network
- Promotion, awareness and safety

- Local authorities and their role as major employers – setting a good example
- Monitoring and implementation

3.6 Tees Valley Equestrian Leisure Sector Strategy

The objectives of the strategy are:-

- To increase understanding and raise the profile of the equestrian sector within the Tees Valley sub-region.
- To increase awareness amongst Local Authority planning and transport staff about the needs and demands of the equestrian leisure sector.
- To highlight the need for greater acknowledgement within the local planning structure of the ability of the equestrian leisure sector to contribute to the social cohesion, wellbeing and environmental sustainability of rural and urban fringe areas.
- To enable more effective targeting and wider publicity for the opportunities afforded through the Single Payments Scheme (Environmental Stewardship) and the Rural Development Scheme.

For further information regarding this strategy, please refer to **Appendix 1** for details of the recommendations

The above summary shows that:-

- There is considerable support for Rights of Way and the access network from the policy framework within Hartlepool.
- There is significant potential for the Plan to contribute to the delivery of other policies within Hartlepool.

As with present policies and strategies there will be a need for full consultation with the Countryside Access Team on any future policy/strategy/plan that could impact upon access in the countryside.

3.7 Tees Valley Tourism Strategy & Tees Valley Area Tourism Management Plan

This strategy was produced for the Tees Valley Partnership in February 2003. While this is the current Tourism Strategy its objectives do not neatly coincide with those of the new North East Tourism Strategy, and the position in relation to product development within the Tees Valley has moved on considerably over the past 3 years. A new tourism strategy is to be developed by the Area Tourism Partnership in 2007.

3.8 Tees Forest Plan (2000)



The vision for the Tees Forest is to 'create a well-wooded landscape that is worked and lived in'. The Forest will have a variety of habitats and deliver social, economic and environmental benefits. This will be achieved by means of Community Forests.

'Forest Strategy' shows the geographical location of the proposed new woodland and other habitats. Access to the Tees Forest will include a network of 'Greenways' and 'Forest Gateways' and there will be good links direct from urban areas.

The Plan has a number of 'Local Management Zones'. Zones 1, 2 and 3 are related to Hartlepool (Zone 1 – Hartlepool Rural Fringe, Zone 2 – Greatham Corridor and Zone 3 – Wynyard). The relevant proposals for these zones are as follows:

Zone 1

- Maximise the use of Summerhill, the primary gateway site which links the town and the countryside and seek extension of its planted area.
- Woodland management will be focused on habitat corridors and areas of older woodland.

Zone 2

- Improve the green character of the eastern part of the zone, particularly the Greatham to Seaton corridor and nearby brownfield sites.
- Work with farmers and landowners to diversify land-use, enhance biodiversity and provide new and improved access routes.
- Establish a greenway between Summerhill and Cowpen Bewley and provide links to the International Nature Reserve

Zone 3

- In addition to existing permissive routes, creation of a boundaried Greenway route through Wynyard to allow managed recreational access.

3.9 Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan

Hartlepool subscribes to the Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan, which was produced in 1999.

The plan identifies twenty five broad, priority and local habitats and six species, for which action plans have been or are being prepared. The priority habitats and species are as follows:

Priority Habitats

- Ancient and/or species-rich hedgerows
- Coastal floodplain grazing marsh
- Coastal salt marsh
- Coastal sand dunes
- Lowland heath
- Maritime cliff and slopes
- Reed beds
- Upland heath

Priority Species

- Corn bunting
- Tree sparrow
- Grey partridge
- Water vole
- Otter
- Pipistrelle bat

The implication for the Plan is that the management, improvement and extension of the access network should have no negative impacts on the condition of priority species and habitats and should seek to impact in a positive manner.

3.10 North East England Tourism Strategy

The North East Regional Tourism Strategy sets out several principles for tourism in line with the Regional Economic Strategy. The vision of the strategy is to make the North East a desired destination which meets both tourist and business visitors' expectations. It lays out a number of principles which will be used to achieve this, the most important of these in relation to local access:

“We will expand our tourism industry without putting our natural environment and built heritage at risk.”

The strategy aims to add to the sustainable development of the North East. It highlights the importance of the rural environment in attracting visitors to the area and how this must be conserved and managed.

3.11 Coastal Arc Strategy

The Coastal Arc is a joint regeneration initiative between Hartlepool and Redcar & Cleveland Councils. The Strategy concentrates on the ‘Renaissance, Revival and Regeneration’ of the Coastal Arc Spatial Zone.

The Tees Valley Investment Plan recognises the significance of the Coastal Arc in the business case and the development of the City Regions concept.

The Coastal Arc will have a major impact on the service delivery and potential influence for major investment as part of the ‘Tees Valley City Region’.

4. RIGHTS OF WAY AND THEIR USERS



Local rights of way within Hartlepool Borough include footpaths, cycle tracks, bridleways and byways. The assessment looks at users who can legally access these types of rights of way - public or permissive. Listed below are simple definitions of the path types and who can use them.

The Plan must assess the opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of their area



Public Footpath

The right of way is on foot only. The pedestrian can take 'usual accompaniments' onto the footpath. These are taken to be pushchairs and dogs. Motorised and non motorised disabled equipment are more fully explained in point 4.2



Public Bridleway

The right of way is on foot, horseback and pedal cycle. Cyclists were granted the right to use bridleways in 1968.



Public Byway

The right of way is on foot, horseback, carriage, cycle and in a mechanically propelled vehicle. Many byways have Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) on them to restrict the use of mechanically propelled vehicles.



Permissive Path

The route is by permission of the landowner. Permission is usually for use on foot but if cycles, horses or vehicles are allowed this will be indicated on the route.



Cycle Track

The right of way is on a cycle or possibly on foot, the right varies depending on how the cycle track was created and whether it is a right or by permission. The right can belong exclusively to cyclists. Alternatively it can be along with other users by the permission of the landowner or through conversion of a footpath under the Cycle Tracks Act.

Hartlepool Borough Council will consider the rights of legal users, dependant on the status of the path that they can legally use.

4.1 Benefits of Rights of Way



As long as there has been a rights of way (ROW) network, there have been people wanting to use it for different reasons, ranging from exercising the family pet, access to work or shops, exercise or purely recreation; a chance to visit the countryside and to experience what is out there, be it natural or man made.

The 2005 Countryside Agency report on “Economic and Social Benefits of Countryside Access Routes in the North East” states that:-

“There is a ‘hard core’ of public rights of way users who use routes every day for recreation. Overall, 20% of resident’s cycle and 50% undertake recreational walking more often than once a month. In total, about 220 million recreational trips are made each year by residents of the region”.

It is probable that this figure could increase as more and more people use the local access networks and experience the benefits to them.

These benefits range from improved health, respect for the countryside and all it offers, a chance to meet people with similar recreational needs, or it maybe a chance to experience the beautiful solitude of the wide-open areas outside the towns and villages.

As well as healthy benefits, there are the benefits of economy, i.e. if people use the paths, then ultimately they will need: - food, overnight rest, appropriate clothing and footwear, maps, cycles, equestrian equipment. This list, while not endless, is vast. Their needs fuel the local economy of all communities, so by bringing employment, wages/salaries to many who serve these growing industries.

Sitting alongside this is the growth in tourism. Attracting people to visit your area brings in visitors who, again, need the services of the above mentioned businesses. It also provides employment to the people who look after the countryside, countryside parks, attractions etc. that people visit.

All in all, the existence of rights of way, be they public or permissive, provided for the needs of many ultimately benefit a wider community associated directly as well as indirectly with it.

4.2 Walkers



Walking is a very popular form of transport and recreation. A recent UK wide survey in 2005 found that for visits/activities on a trip; walking accounts for a large proportion of trips under 70 miles (55%), compared with cyclists (5%) for the same distance travelled. (England Leisure Visits - Technical Report for 2005 Survey - ELVS consortium).

When looking at the main form of transport for distances less than 70 miles the same report showed that, after the car/van (73%), the main form of transport was walking (20%) with the bicycle/mountain bike showing next at 4%.

4.3 Mobility and Visually Impaired Users

The Plan must consider the accessibility of local rights of way for all disabled users.

It is recognised that improvements to the local access network must be made so that people with a disability can more easily access the countryside. Since the enactment of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 a legal responsibility rests with the Local Authority as a service provider.

Hartlepool Borough Council is committed to carrying out improvements to the local access network so that people with a disability can enjoy access to the countryside.

Wheelchairs and motorised scooters for use by those with mobility impairments are permitted on all Public Rights of Way.

4.4 Horse Riders



Increasing amounts of research are being carried out in the area of Equestrianism, nationally a Strategy for the Horse Industry in England and Wales has been produced by the British Horse Industry Confederation (2005), and locally the Tees Valley Authorities have jointly funded a Tees Valley Equestrian Study (McAuley-McGee Associates, 2005). The full Tees Valley Equestrian Study is included in **Appendix 1**.

The Strategy for the Horse Industry included a number of aims with Aim 5 addressing equestrian access issues, the specific targets were;

- Increase access to off-road riding and carriage driving and ensure a joined up and well maintained network of public rights of way.
- Increase provision of other off-road equestrian routes and of areas with Equestrian open access.
- Continue safety education for motorists, riders and carriage drivers.
- Ensure urban and suburban riding and carriage driving is promoted and improved.

4.5 Cyclists



Cycling is permitted on Public Bridleways and Byways and these contribute to the cycling network in the Borough. The main routes developed for cyclists are known as 'Cycletracks' and are under the control of the Local Transport Team, these may be solely for use on cycles, alongside a pedestrian footway or a designated lane on a road.

Cycling is increasingly important as a sustainable mode of transport and as such is as a separate strategy in the latest Local Transport Plan (2006-2011). The Rights of Way Improvement Plan includes schemes that contribute towards the objectives of the Hartlepool Cycling Strategy and cyclists were included in consultations as a 'User Group'.

4.6 Motor Vehicles

Mechanically propelled vehicles have the right to access Public Byways. Within the Borough there are only a few byways available for legal users. Some have Traffic Regulation Orders placed upon them reducing the level of use to that of a Bridleway.

The Council has no plans to increase the provision for motor vehicle users for the foreseeable future. The policy not to increase the provision for motor vehicles is in line with public priorities, as revealed by research carried out for the Plan.

5. CURRENT PROVISION



The Plan must assess the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public.

5.1 Access Provision in the Borough of Hartlepool

Hartlepool Borough covers an area of 9,390 hectares excluding tidal waters and has a population density of 9.4 people per hectare compared with 3.5 people per hectare average in England and Wales (Census 2001).

The landscape varies dramatically across the Borough, with arable farmland on the alluvial floodplains in the west, wooded denes in the north and rare dune systems on the coast. To the south of the Borough is an estuary renowned as an important place for over-wintering migrant birds and for seals to haul out at low tide.

Just as important is the industrial landscape, through which some of the network runs. The industry runs from light to heavy, chemical/petrochemical to nuclear and is centred around Hartlepool and to the south of Seaton Carew.

Archaeology is important part of experiencing the Countryside. In recent years Romano-British habitation remains – Catcote Village - have been regularly researched, at Summerhill Country Park. Other sites are found throughout the countryside, ranging from medieval manorial and ridge and furrow field systems to World War II emplacements near to and along the coastal areas.

Hartlepool has a wide range of parks and open spaces as well as recreational facilities. These range from the formal Ward Jackson Park to the open spaces of Seaton Park. Throughout the Town there are small recreational open spaces among the streets and housing estates.

There is very little public rights of way provision for motor vehicle users. Of the five Public Byways, three have Traffic Regulation Orders placed upon them, restricting the user level to that of bridleway status. The remaining two byways are fully available for motor vehicle use but are cul-de-sacs.

The majority of vehicular access, throughout the Borough, is via the adopted carriageway network. Due to the limited nature of the Public Byway network and the fact that most are regulated, the Council is unlikely to look at increasing the provision above the present level.

Hartlepool's local access network comprises of the Public Right of Way and the permissive access network.

Public Rights of Way – within Hartlepool Borough

Public Footpaths	93 footpaths with a total length of 86.2 km (53.7 miles)
Public Bridleways	6 bridleways with a total length of 5.8 km (3.6 miles)
Public Byways	5 byways with a total length of 5.7 km (3.5 miles)
Permissive Access	13 routes with a total length of 20.71 km (12.9 miles)

Permissive Access Routes – within Hartlepool Borough

Name	Route	Distance (km)
Hart to Haswell Walkway	From Hart Station to the Borough boundary at Crimdon Beck (with Easington District)	1.60
Castle Eden Walkway	West of Wynyard Village - This small section of the full length of the Walkway is managed by Hartlepool Borough Council	0.36
Seaton Walkway	from Seaton Lane to Brenda Road, this walkway is a permissive bridleway	0.89
Summerhill Multi-User Route	Within Summerhill Country Park	1.80
Summerhill to Brierton Lane	from the south eastern end of Summerhill southwards to Brierton Lane	0.75
Springwell Community Woodland	West of Clavering, North Hartlepool	1.2
Hartmoor Farm	North of the A179, west of Hart Village	4.7
Family Wood	West of Burn Valley Gardens	1.8
The Howls	North East of Dalton Piercy Village	0.99
Middle Warren	A new Green wedge within the new housing development	1.2
Spion Kop Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	Old Cemetery Road, the Headland	0.72
Hart Warren Dunes LNR	Coastal region next to Hartlepool Golf Course, North Hartlepool	2.1
North Hart Farm Bridleways	North of Hart Village	2.6

5.2 Resources and Duties

Staff

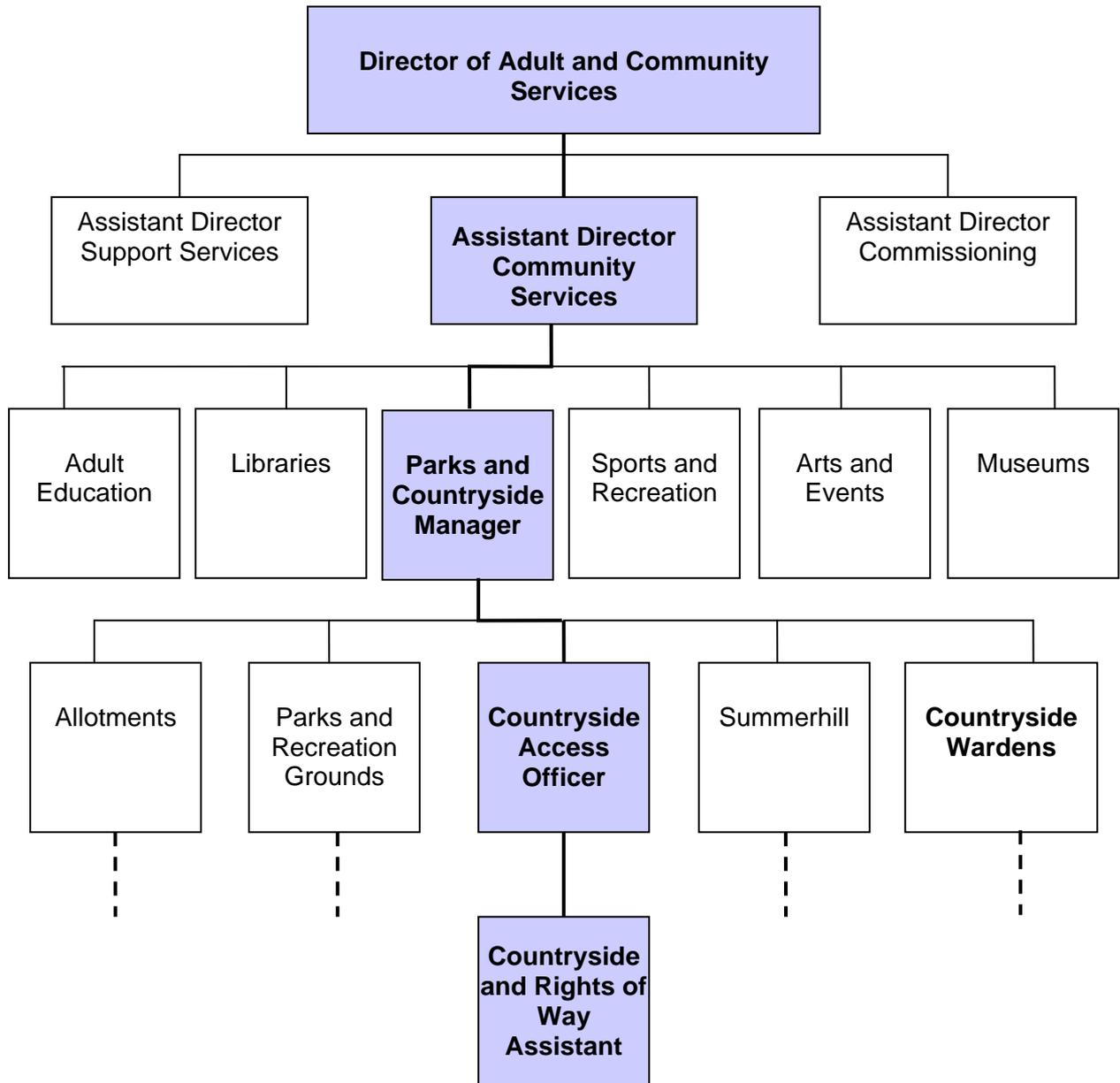
The management of countryside access within Hartlepool is placed within Adult and Community Services Department. Within this department the Parks and Countryside Business Unit manages directly the staff and resources.

At present, there is one full-time Countryside Access Officer and one full-time Countryside and Rights of Way Assistant working on all aspects of rights of way management, promotion and improvement.

Through co-funding from four Local Authorities (Middlesbrough, Stockton, Hartlepool and Darlington), the post of Local Access Forum Development Officer sits within the same team as the above two officers. This new post will assist in the development of and administration of the Tees Valley Local Access Forum.

The Countryside Access Team receives legal advice and assistance from Legal Services in the making and managing of legal orders.

Technical Services maintain and edit the Definitive Map and have powers to instruct Legal Services to carry out all works in relation to notices for legal orders.



Statutory Duties

The Council has the ongoing duty of maintaining the accuracy of the Definitive Map. This is usually carried out every two years, when a Legal Event Order is made to update the legal copy of the Map. The Council also maintains the accuracy of the working copy of the Map. This map is used on a day to day basis by the Countryside Access Team and shows a more up to date version of the rights of way network.

The existing Definitive Map has some anomalies whereby what is represented on the map is different to what is actually visible on the ground. These may be due to map drawing errors over a period of time or may simply be errors that were not noticed when the first Definitive Map was published in 1952. In most cases the use of public path orders and definitive map modification orders can address and rectify these errors.

The Council is required to process applications for changes to the Public Rights of Way network within set time limits. Examples are;

➤ Public Path Orders

These are Legal Orders used by the Council to divert, create and extinguish public rights of way.

➤ Definitive Map Modification Orders

These orders are used when a modification to the Definitive Map and Statement is made. The orders are made as a result of either claims of new rights of ways that are applied for or there is evidence researched/ discovered to support historic rights of ways (and higher rights).

Internal Duties

The Countryside Access Team liaises with the Planning Section, to advise on planning applications which may have an impact on the Rights of Way Network.

Increasingly there is a need to protect all legal users from Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and the illegal use of motor vehicles. The Public Rights of Way Network as well as on other sites, such as open spaces, sand dunes and private land are all affected. The Council has therefore established the Motor Bike Steering Group. The group is looking at the growing crime of illegal use of vehicles (mainly motorbikes) and will seek to produce a policy that will look at police enforcement and anti-social behavioural aspects of the issue, and also increased provision for this growing recreational sport. Another focus of the group will be raising awareness of the issue through education and promotion. This includes going to schools and talking to young people and also making retailers and users aware of the damage these vehicles can cause.

The Team is also in constant consultation with Council and Police Anti-Social Behaviour Officers to find ways to combat countryside related anti-social behaviour at its source.

In December 2000 the Government published new and revised Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) in line with its programme to modernise local government. Local authorities are under a duty to seek continuous improvements in the way in which they deliver services and BVPI's provide a method of reporting progress.

Consequently a Best Value Performance Indicator has been developed to look at the Public Rights of Way. BVPI 178 covers aspects of a highway authority's rights of way. The indicator is a measure of 'ease of use' of an authority's network and is described in full below. The BVPI is used to look at year on year trends and to compare performance between Highway Authorities.

Under the definition of the indicator the Government states that surveys to assess ease of use should use the methodology developed by the County Surveyors Society and the Countryside Agency (now part of Natural England) a national standard.

BVPI 178 in full reads:-

“BVPI – The percentage of total length of footpaths and other rights of way which were easy to use by members of the public.

‘Easy to use’ means:-

- (i) signposted or waymarked where they leave the road in accordance with the authority’s duty under s.27 of the Countryside Act 1968 and to the extent necessary to allow users to follow the path (a public right of way wholly within a built up area and with a hard surface provided along its complete length and with a clearly defined route may be excluded from measurement);
- (ii) free from unlawful obstructions and other interference, (including overhanging vegetation) to the public’s right of passage;
- (iii) surface and lawful barriers (e.g. stiles, gates) in good repair and to a standard necessary to enable the public to use the way without undue inconvenience.

The BVPI results for 2006/2007 were 96.93% ‘Easy to use’.

5.3 Budget and Income

The Countryside Access Team has a Rights of Way budget of approximately £26,000 to spend on all rights of way functions (excluding staffing costs and overheads).

In addition to the Rights of Way Budget, there is a Local Access Forum Budget (£5,000) used to support the Local Access Forum and in the production of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

There is no separate budget to implement the Plan and any action within the Plan initially has to be met from within the ROW budget. The Council then looks towards the LTP for additional funding to support the improvements. However, it should be realised that by producing a ROWIP, the Council should be in a stronger position when looking to attract funding from other sources.

5.4 Partnerships

It is clear that a number of policies and actions could be delivered through partnership working or through funding bids for stand-alone projects. Section 2.4.7 of the DEFRA Guidance to Local Authorities on RoWIP states that:-

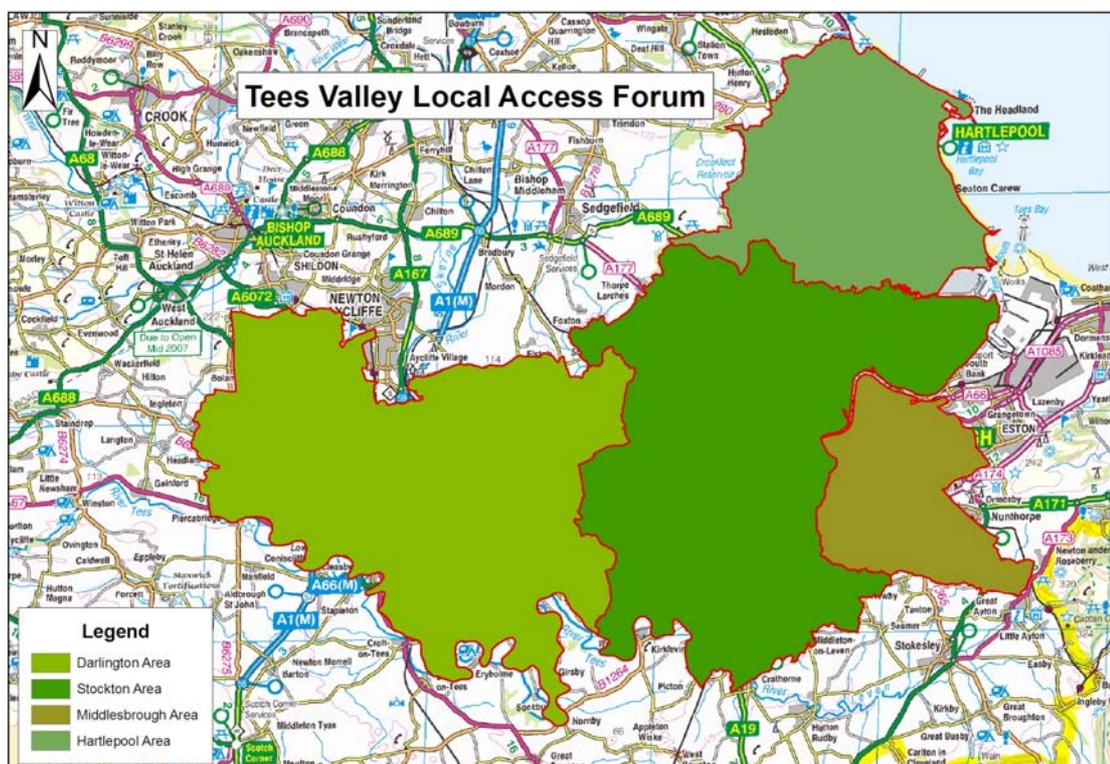
“Both capital and revenue funding will be required to put improvements into practice and to ensure long-term maintenance. Highway authorities are encouraged to be innovative in sourcing funds to support improvements”

The Local Transport Plan has and will continue to support the local access network infrastructure through surface and furniture improvements to public rights of way.

Other partners include; The Tees Forest, Durham Heritage Coast, Defra, Environment Agency, Natural England, Sustrans and Tees Valley Local Access Forum.

5.5 Advisory Bodies

The Tees Valley Local Access Forum (TVLAF), was established under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 Section 94(6)(c). A decision was taken at an early stage for Hartlepool to work in partnership with three other Local authorities – Darlington BC, Stockton BC and Middlesbrough C.



TVLAF is a statutory advisory body to the four appointing authorities and has 14 members, who represent a wide variety of countryside and access interests across the Tees Valley. The Forum has been informed and

consulted at different stages during the preparation of this document and will continue to be consulted as the Plan is implemented.

As well as being an advisory body, the TVLAF are also a potential partner in funding bids for future schemes.

The Rights of Way Liaison Group is made up of a wide range of Council Officers, partners and user groups. The Group consults with the Countryside Access Team on general issues related to local access.

6. ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION



6.1 Viewpoint Survey

Hartlepool Borough Council regularly carries out surveys to involve local people in the governance of the Borough using a statistically balanced panel representative of the Hartlepool community as a whole. This is known as the Viewpoint Survey and was last carried out regarding rights of way in August 2004. This survey provides a useful view, as surveys relating to access usually involve only known users or interested parties. Nine questions relating to rights of way were asked, the responses to which are summarised below. Full responses can be found in **Appendix 2**.

The majority of respondents to this survey (69%) were not really sure where their local rights of way were. This seems a high percentage, however, in a later question 64% of people had heard of the Hart to Haswell Walkway and 46% had used a public right of way in the last 12 months. It could be that terminology used could have caused confusion and that people use rights of way without being aware they are doing so. Equally it is also possible that people knew only where a small number of the most heavily promoted rights of way are.

The activities carried out by the people who had used rights of way in the last 12 months were similar to those found in other surveys, with walking being the most common at 80%, 34% cycling, 3% running and 2% horse riding.

When asked what prevented them from using rights of way, 28% of people gave not knowing where to go as the reason. More than 50% of people would use them if more information were available to them; this was more applicable to younger users than older users.

The most popular way of deciding where to go in the countryside was by word of mouth, with brochures and leaflets being the next most popular. The way in which the Council could best improve access to the countryside was, people responded, by publishing more leaflets.

Making paths suitable for pushchairs and all users including people with disabilities was also popular on the list of how the Council could improve access to the countryside. Maintaining and improving existing rights of way, creating new and circular routes and creating better links from urban areas into the countryside were also frequently cited.

When asked what would encourage greater use of rights of way, the majority of people responded that facilities such as seating and toilets were most important to them. Circular routes, then presence of wildlife and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), were closely followed by pub or café on route and provision of car parking.

6.2 Countryside and Rights of Way Quiz

The Countryside Access Team devised a quiz for schoolchildren aged 11-16 with the aim of promoting public rights of way and countryside issues. Its purpose was also to give an insight into their awareness of the issues and to help devise potential education projects.

The quiz showed very little awareness of rights of way with only half of children recognising the waymark showing a yellow arrow as a footpath and very few recognising those for bridleways and byways.

For more details please see **Appendix 3**.

6.3 Use and Demand Surveys



Two slightly differing questionnaires were sent out to Landowners and User Groups to obtain views from people who were more likely to have some knowledge of access within the Borough. The response rate was 28% for Landowners and 25% for User Groups. The full results of both questionnaires can be found in **Appendix 4**.

These surveys highlighted the need for more promotion work to ensure people know what rights are available on different types of routes. Most landowners and more than half of users were confident as to the location of local rights of way. However 45% of

user group respondents were not really sure where their local rights of way were and 72% agreed or strongly agreed that they would use more public paths if there was improved information about them.

The Hart to Haswell Walkway was the most well known route in the Borough with 82% of Users having heard of it and 76% having used it, 60% of Landowners had also heard of the route.

Despite lacking confidence as to the location of local rights of way, 89% of people had used routes around the Borough in the last 12 months with 74% of these journeys being for leisure as opposed to functional purposes. Walking was the most popular activity preferred by 89% of people and 91% stated the usual distance as less than 7 miles (49% <3miles and 42% 4-7 miles). Rural footpaths were the preferred type of route.

The main reasons people visited the countryside were to enjoy nature, walk, and for health, fitness and relaxation. The preferred types of countryside were woods/forests and waterside. Preference for routes through woodland, along beaches and shorelines and routes through hill or moorland areas were the top three choices with routes to shops and local services being preferred least.

Maps were the most important source of information for people in deciding where to visit the countryside with brochures/leaflets being the next most important.

Most people were generally satisfied with information, signing and ease of use of the paths, though failure to cut paths leading to people straying was a complaint made. Overgrown paths were also mentioned as the most frequently encountered hazard by 69% of users. Muddy/boggy/flooded routes were the second most frequently encountered by 59%. Encouragingly, 62% of Users believed that the routes and land to which they had access met their current needs. The main reasons given for Users not participating in recreational activity as often as they would like to were being too busy, not knowing where to go and lack of available routes.

To improve access to the Hartlepool countryside, the top five suggestions were:-

1.	Maintain existing rights of way
2.	Improve existing rights of way
3.	Make paths more suitable for pushchairs and for people with mobility problems
4.	Improve signs and waymarking
5.	Create circular routes

The most important issues to users which would encourage them to use rights of ways were:-

1.	Circular routes
2.	Facilities e.g. seats, toilets etc
3.	Wildlife
4.	Sites of special interest on route
5.	Trees/forests
6.	Access for people with mobility and visually impaired problems

Opinions about the most important way the Council could improve the access network varied between Landowners and User groups. User groups named making routes more suitable for prams and people with mobility impairments as the highest priority with improving existing rights of way and creating new routes to walk along making up the top three. Landowners named maintaining existing routes as the most important, together with improving the signs and waymarking and improving existing rights of way.

Landowners and Users ranked circular routes as being the most important feature of the countryside to them, Landowners rated sites of interest on route and wildlife next with Users having obstruction free paths and trees/forests making up the top three.

When questioned about verbal abuse 39% and 26% of landowners and user groups respectively replied that they had suffered verbal abuse connected with rights of way with 11 and 8 people giving details. For both groups misuse and illegal use were the main causes of conflict. The cause of abuse towards landowners was mostly from people straying from the paths; either people hunting hares with lurchers (5) or those straying and leaving gates etc open and damaging fences (3). People failing to keep their dogs under control and dog-fouling of grazing land (1) were also triggers for conflict as were cyclists and horse-riders illegally using footpaths (2). Users reported aggressive farmers telling them to keep off land (2) where footpaths were blocked (1) or gates chained (1) or when they were on the wrong path (1). Of 5 comments reporting verbal abuse by farmers, two said not recently and one reported an incident in 1997. Other abuse suffered by users was; from young people (1), from motorists while cycling (1) and from youths on mopeds (1).

Of the respondents from the User group consultation 32% stated that their mobility was restricted by either sensory or physical disability or long-standing illness. Within this group of respondents, 6% stated that they had a sensory impairment and 94%, a physical one. These respondents were asked to prioritise a list of improvements given in the questionnaire.

Top of the list were four improvements that, between 50 and 85% of the replies felt, were the most important. These were:-

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1. | Make paths suitable for pushchairs and people with mobility difficulties |
| 2. | Ensure obstructions are removed from public rights of way |
| 3. | Improve existing rights of way |
| 4. | Create new routes to walk on |

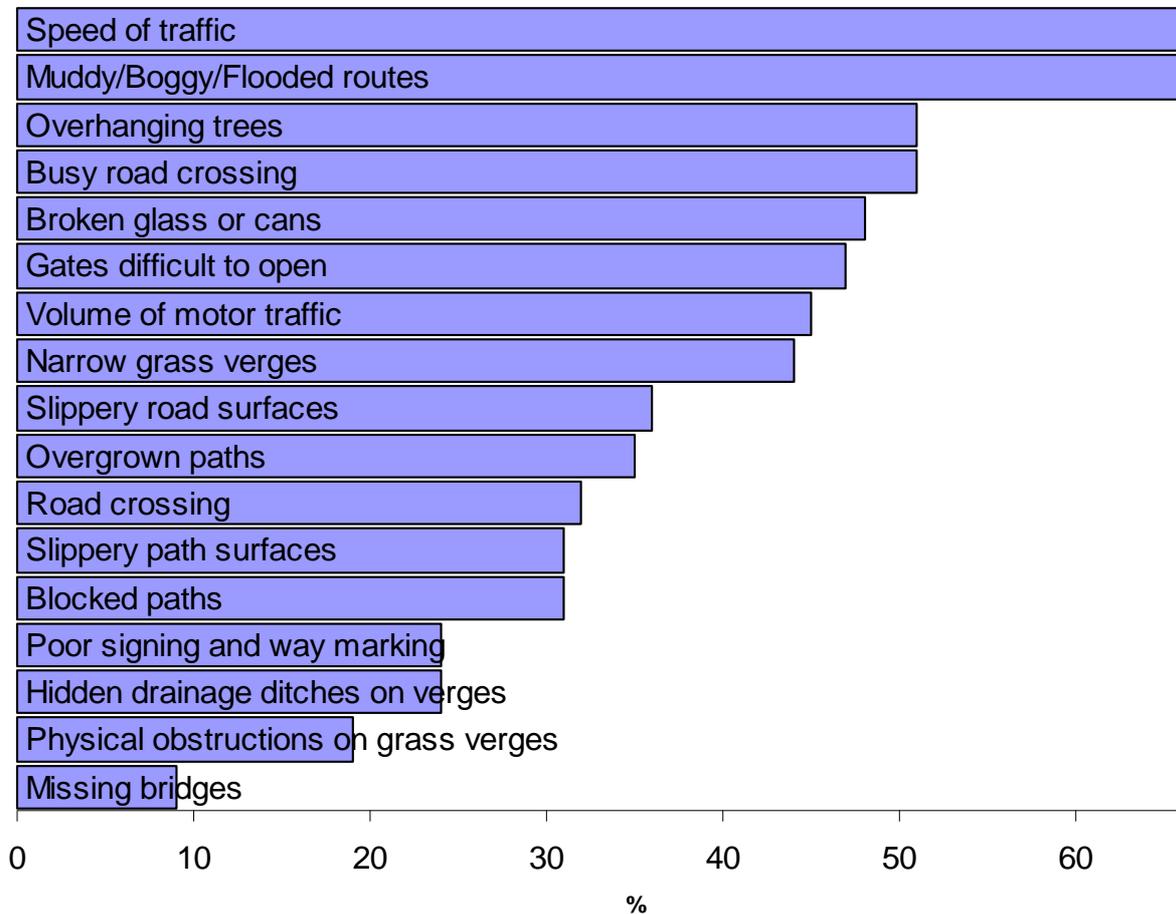
The remainder of the improvements are listed below in order:-

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 5. | Link more paths together |
| 6. | Create circular walks |
| 7. | Replace stiles with gates |
| 8. | Maintain the existing rights of way |
| 9. | Improve signs and waymarking |
| 10. | Create better links from the urban areas into the countryside |
| 11. | Create new paths to use with bicycles |
| 12. | Publish more leaflets |
| 13. | Improve parking facilities |
| 14. | Create more paths to use with horses |
| 15. | Safe road crossings |
| 16. | Provide more events e.g. Guided Walks |

The Council has an ongoing program to make the public rights of way network more accessible and considers accessibility issues in all improvement and maintenance work.

6.4 Tees Valley Equestrian Study

The Tees Valley Equestrian Study carried out a consultation with riders, the responses gained from the question “What problems do you encounter in exercising your horse?” are summarised in the chart below.



The issues raised cover several Council departments and working with our internal partners is important in raising awareness of equestrian access issues. Some of the issues, such as overhanging trees and slippery surfaces, are more maintenance based and addressed in measures such as creating safe verges for horse riders. Speed and volume of traffic are issues which can be addressed in conjunction with the Highways Section who can implement traffic calming measures on the most important routes.

There is no doubt that interest and participation in equestrian activities are increasing and it is clear that the static nature of the public rights of way network means that it is necessary to look at all options to meet this increasing demand.

6.5 Additional Consultation

‘Talking with Communities’ is a consultative forum. It is made up of members of the black minority ethnic community. It recently met to discuss the Plan and made some simple but sensible suggestions. These centred around the need for better promotion and availability of countryside access literature/information.

All those who received questionnaires as well as other organisations were also asked for general comments regarding rights of way and how they would like to see the network improved. Several areas were highlighted by different groups in terms of specific projects; these schemes have been incorporated into the LTP and are published as part of this plan.

6.6 Network Audit

The network serves most of the Borough well; however areas have been identified where better access is desirable. These areas are:-

South and South West of Red Gap Moor towards Wynyard
North of Newton Bewley Village
North of Elwick Village, in the Whelly Hill area

Rights of way were mostly claimed in the 1950s. Since this time an increase in traffic has meant that some routes have become difficult to use as roads are dangerous to cross. The main carriageways sever much of the countryside into isolated islands. In the case of the A19, 12 Public Footpaths have, in effect, become dead ends. With this severing of the network, the Council will consider whether to look at the possibility of creating informal parking. At present, it is realised that higher priority schemes will be considered before this proposal is researched further.

The Council will be consulting with landowners in these and other areas to find ways to improve and create access. These consultations will be aimed at looking at all the potential access options that would be suitable for the location(s). They will look at informing the landowners of how they can positively contribute to the existing Local Access Network and, at the same time, have some measure of control in how this can be achieved. This may be through Public Path Order Creation agreements, Permissive Path agreements or through Agricultural Environmental Stewardship schemes. By creating additional access the Council can improve the existing network and link more effectively with neighbouring local authorities.

6.7 Recreation Audit

The opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of their area

Hartlepool's local access network is small but fairly well spread across the Borough with footpaths and bridleways linking most recreational sites. Where sites are located within the urban area of the Town adopted highways (including footways next to roads and paths) become the direct links for people to use. Most parks, open spaces, recreation grounds and allotments have indirect links to rights of way but are accessed by using adopted footways that run throughout the Town.

This audit looks at how the existing network links to and with different sites of interest. It shows links to historical, archaeological and coastal sites as well as parks, local nature sites, countryside parks etc. From this the Council can identify where additional access is required. See **Appendix 5**.

Historical	Brus Wall, Hart Saxon Church, Hart to Haswell Walkway, Route of Old Sunderland Road, Headland, Old Cemetery, Windmills
Archaeological (including Industrial)	Elwick Manor and Fish Ponds, Hart Manor and Fish Ponds, Amerston Manor and Fish Ponds, High Burntoft, Salt Production at Seaton Common, Brine Pumping Area south of Greatham, WWII Pill Boxes and Tank defences, Catcote Romano-British Village
Industrial	Magnesite/Steetley/Britmag, Phillips Petroleum Storage Facility, Corus Pipe Mills
Coastal	North Sands, Headland, Carr House Sands, Seaton Sands, Marina, Long Scar and Little Scar Rocks
Parks	Burn Valley Gardens, Rossmere Park, Seaton Park, Ward Jackson Park
Recreation Grounds	Grayfields, Rift House, King George V, Central, Friar Terrace, Town Moor, Staby House, Rossmere Way, Dodds Field
Allotments	Brierton Hospital, Briarfields, Burn Valley Gardens, Catcote, Chester Road, Greatham, Haswell Avenue, Nicholson's Field, Olive Crescent, Station Lane, Stranton, Thompson Grove, Thornhill Gardens, Throston, Waverley Terrace, Woodcroft
Local Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest	Hart to Haswell Walkway, Hart Warren Dunes Spion Kop, Seaton Dunes & Common, Greatham Beck, Summerhill
National Nature Reserves	Teesmouth (including Seal Sands)
Countryside Parks	Summerhill (Hartlepool Borough Council), Cowpen Bewley (Stockton Borough Council)
Villages	Hart, Elwick, Dalton Piercy, Greatham, Newton Bewley
Farming Hamlets	Brierton
Areas of Special Landscape	The Denes - Hart, Thorpe Bulmer, Nesbitt Amerston/Embleton, High Burntoft

Private Nature Reserves	The Howls, The Batts, Crookfoot Reservoir
Burns, Becks Streams and Creeks	Bellows Burn to Crimdon Beck
	The Burn
	Hart Beck to Middle Warren Beck to The Slake
	Char Beck and Boggle Beck to Dalton Beck to Greatham Beck to Greatham Creek
	Amerston Beck to Close Beck to North Burn to Claxton Beck to Greatham Creek

6.8 Conclusions Drawn from Public Consultations and Surveys

Comments gathered from surveys and consultations have been used to produce the Statement of Action (P48-60). The main points gained are that people would like more information and that better promotion of the local access network is required.

Provision of information appears to be the key in assisting people to make use of rights of way. One of the main reasons given for not utilising the rights of way network was lack of information and people would use the network more if more information were provided. Although libraries and Council offices hold copies of maps detailing rights of way there appears to be a need to provide this information in more widely used areas to ensure all potential users are reached. Brochures and leaflets are a popular and more accessible way of informing people about where they can go, possibly with advertising by eye-catching posters. Information in a format more appealing to younger people also needs to be provided; this makes a strong case for continued development of an informative website which could also link into school education programs.

Since the Viewpoint survey was carried out a pack of 10 Healthy Walking leaflets has been published and well received. These leaflets have been reprinted and are also available for download at www.hartlepool.gov.uk/walk-leaflets. A sample leaflet is included in **Appendix 6**.

A full list of current publications promoting access around the Borough can be found in **Appendix 6**. Some or all of these are available from Council buildings, libraries, the tourist information centre and the Council's website.

Among people already using rights of way, maps were the most popular method of deciding where to go. Ordnance Survey produce the most widely available maps, OS Explorer 306 and OS Landranger 93 cover the Borough of Hartlepool. The Countryside Access Team works with Ordnance Survey to map the rights of way accurately by advising them of legal changes to the network and of errors that have arisen during printing.

Among schoolchildren and from the User survey there was confusion as to who the legal users of different types of rights of way were. A poster campaign providing basic visual information would be a good introduction. This could be linked to the Countryside Code, which is already a much higher profile campaign.

Information collected about people's preferences with regard to length of walks and type of countryside preferred will be used to devise guided walks and self-guided walking leaflets to suit preferences and satisfy the greatest demand.

Preference of activities on rights of way is undoubtedly for walking however current Government targets for sustainable transport means the Council must take into consideration the needs of a wider range of users, to increase the availability of public rights of way for cycling and for use by horses.

The Council has taken into consideration the opinions of the people questioned during this consultation when prioritising schemes for inclusion in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Many comments were received regarding the severance of public rights of way and the problem of crossing the A19 and indeed this is a high priority for the Countryside Access Team as well as the Local Transport Team. Work is ongoing to put in place additional and higher right access either side of the A19 to make a strong case for the building of a multi-user bridge crossing the road in the Elwick area. The bridge scheme is in the LTP and there is a prospect of funding being sourced for its planning and construction, once other multi-user schemes are in place.

7. STATEMENT OF ACTION



Throughout the whole process of researching, consulting and assessing Hartlepool's local access network, emerging themes have developed as indicators of how best the Plan will function as a live and workable document.

The following themes have been used to develop the Statement of Action. The statement sets out the areas of work and, more specifically, priorities and projects that will be carried out to help improve Hartlepool's local access network.

As part of this process, Hartlepool has recognised that to be able to improve the network, we must appraise and report on the sustainability of the developing works that make up the statement of action. This appraisal connects with the need to write and produce a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the Plan. The SA looks at how the Plan measures up to the SA's objectives, showing how it will deliver and bring about improvements to the local access network. A summary of the SA is shown on page 7, Section 1.7.

Summary of Statement of Action Themes			Page
AA	1-5	Access for All	48
ASB	1-3	Anti-Social Behaviour	49
BC	1-3	Bridleways and Cycling	50-51
DM	1-5	Definitive Map	52
HR	1-2	Higher Rights	53
ID	1-2	Internal Duties	54
IM	1-7	Improvements and Maintenance	55-56
IPS	1-6	Information Resources	57
PN	1-9	Promotion	58-59

Theme 1 Actions Proposed : To Consult On, Develop and Deliver Access for All Improvements						
Issue	Ref	Proposed Action	Relevance to Other Policies and Legislation	Funding Sources	Estimated Timeframe	Partners
Training	AA 1	All staff and Countryside Volunteers to have good level of understanding of the range of disability issues	HBC - CPD and HR Training	Rights of Way	Ongoing	HAG, Havelock Centre, Social Services, Human Resources
Standards	AA 2	Aspire to meet British Standard 5709:2001 for gaps, gates and stiles subject to consideration of landowners requirements, local character and accepted practice at any location	Rights of Way Strategy	Rights of Way	Ongoing	Landowners, HAG, Social Services, NFU, CLA
Inclusion	AA 3	Ensure consideration of access issues in all decisions and consultation with access groups as a matter of course throughout work	Rights of Way Strategy	N/A	Ongoing	Hartlepool Access Group
Access Provision*	AA 4	Provide circular walks suitable for all users*	Local Transport Plan	Local Transport Plan	Ongoing	Local Transport Plan, HAG, Social Services, Access Groups
	4.1	Summerhill Circular - Improvement of present circular route upgrading surface and facilities, making it an Access for All route				
	4.2	Circular Access for All Routes				
Local Access Forum	AA 5	Recruit members from Access Groups etc., including users, landowners and other groups with an interest in Local Access initiatives	CRoW Act	Local Access Forum Budget	Annual	ROW Officers throughout Tees Valley - Middlesbrough Council, Darlington Borough Council, Stockton Borough Council, Hartlepool Borough Council

* The level of access provision will look to set its goals as set out in the standards issues by the Fieldfare Trust's 'Good Practice Guide for Disabled People's Access to the Countryside' publication and The Countryside Agency's "by all reasonable means - inclusive access to the outdoors for disabled people" - CA215.

Theme 2 Action Proposed : To Deter Anti-Social Behaviour						
Issue	Ref	Proposed Action	Relevance to Other Policies and Legislation	Funding Sources	Estimated Timeframe	Partners
Mechanically Propelled Vehicle Trespass	ASB 1	Ensure appropriate signage and furniture to allow only those with a legal right to gain access	Highways Legislation, Rights of Way Strategy	Rights of Way	Ongoing	Police and Community Safety
Dog Fouling & Littering	ASB 2	Campaign for dog and litter bins where desired, provide scoops and publicise	Crime and Disorder Act, Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act	Rights of Way	Ongoing	All Departments and Partnership Agencies
Intimidation	ASB 3.1	Promote safety of users, landowners and those residing close to a ROW	Crime and Disorder Act, Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act	Rights of Way	Ongoing	Police and Community Safety
	ASB 3.2	Work with partners to disperse gatherings at points along ROW	Crime and Disorder Act	Community Safety	Ongoing	Police and Community Safety
	ASB 3.3	Through effective signage prevent the risk of trespass and resulting conflict	Highways Legislation, Rights of Way Strategy	Rights of Way	Ongoing	Path Monitors and Countryside Access Staff

Theme 3

Actions Proposed :To Identify, Develop and Deliver Bridleways and Cycling Provision

Issue	Ref	Proposed Action	Relevance to Other Policies and Legislation	Funding Sources	Estimated Timeframe	Partners
Equine provision	BC 1.1	Identify possible bridleway links through creations/diversions or ROW upgrades	Local Transport Plan	ROW Budget	Regular Audit and review Ongoing	Tees Forest Equine Study, Stables /Horse Owners, User Groups, Landowners, Sustrans, One NE Tees Forest Equine Study, Stables /Horse Owners, User Groups, Landowners, Sustrans, One NE Technical Services Section and Road Safety Unit, One NE
	BC 1.2	Identify opportunities to provide bridleway links from urban fringe to rural areas	Local Transport Plan	N/A		
	BC 1.3	Identify key roadside verges where additional provision would link with bridleways	Local Transport Plan	Local Transport Plan	2008	
	1.3.1	A19				
	1.3.2	A689				
	1.3.3	Butts Lane				
	1.3.4	Coal Lane				
	BC 1.4	Create bridleways in areas of greatest need	Local Transport Plan	Local Transport Plan	Ongoing	
	BC 1.5	Safe crossings in place for busy roads and safer access along feeder routes (See IM 2.1)	Local Transport Plan	Local Transport Plan	Continuous review	

Theme 3		Actions Proposed :To Identify, Develop and Deliver Bridleways and Cycling Provision				
Cycling Provision	BC 2	Look at providing scheme to create and improve cycling provision	Local Transport Plan	Local Transport Plan	Ongoing	Local Transport Plan, Sustrans, One NE
	2.1	Cycle links to Summerhill - provide off road cycle links by upgrading public footpaths to bridleway status				
	2.2	Links to the West - New Bridleways and cycle links, including A 19 Bridge				
	2.3	Greatham to Seaton - New cycle route/bridleway from Graythorp Common to Seaton Lane				
	2.4	Hartlepool 35 improvement - Lengthen northwards				
	2.5	Middlethorpe Farm - 2 new footpaths, new cycleway, link to Hart to Haswell Walkway				
Environmental Stewardship*	See also IM 2.2.2, IM 3.1.2					
	BC 3.1	Produce database of 'missing links' that could be requested on stewardship applications*		N/A	Continuous review	Defra, Landowners, FWAG, Tees Forest, Natural England
	BC 3.2	Approach landowners for concessionary routes and dedication of routes	Rights of Way Strategy		Ongoing	Landowners, Defra

* At all times, Hartlepool Borough Council continues to maintain the correct procedures with regard to Data Protection as laid down in the Data Protection Act 1988.

Theme 4 Actions Proposed : To Develop, Assess and Maintain the Definitive Map and Statements						
Issue	Ref	Proposed Action	Relevance to Other Policies and Legislation	Funding Sources	Estimated Timeframe	Partners
Creations and Diversions	DM 1.1	Process all outstanding creations and diversions with regard to issues of Plan policies	Local Transport Plan	Rights of Way (where applicable)	Ongoing	Landowners, Utilities, User groups
	DM 1.2	Assess creations and diversion proposals and offer reduced costs where changes contribute to Plan policies	Rights of Way Strategy	Rights of Way	Ongoing	Landowners, Utilities, User groups
	DM 1.3	Apply mobility and visually impaired accessibility guidance to creations and diversion routes	Local Transport Plan	Rights of Way	Ongoing	Landowners, Legal Services, Access Groups, Social Services
DMMO Claims (Definitive Map Modification Order)	DM 2.1	Identify historic routes which may be potential DMMO claims	CRoW Act	Rights of Way	2026	Discovering Lost Ways Project, Landowners, User Groups
	DM 2.2	Process DMMO claims as required by law but having regard to the matters identified as contributing to Plan policies	Highways Legislation	Rights of Way	Ongoing	User Groups, Access Groups, Landowners
Anomalies	DM 3	Research and initiate relevant Legal Orders to correct anomalies found on the Definitive Map and Statement	Highways Legislation	Rights of Way	Ongoing	Legal services
Accuracy	DM 4	Maintain accuracy of the working copy of the Definitive Map	Rights of Way Strategy	N/A	Ongoing	Legal services
GIS	DM 5.1	Digitise HBC Public ROW network	Rights of Way Strategy	N/A	Ongoing	Technical Services
	DM 5.2	Digitise HBC land covered by Highways Act 1980 31/6	Rights of Way Strategy	N/A	Ongoing	Legal Services

Theme 5						
Actions Proposed : To Raise Awareness of Illegal Use and Maintain Higher Rights (Mechanically Propelled Vehicles) and Prevent or Reduce Illegal Use of the Access Network						
Issue	Ref	Proposed Action	Relevance to Other Policies and Legislation	Funding Sources	Estimated Timeframe	Partners
Awareness and Illegal Use	HR 1.1	Liaise with user groups to educate members of the public to prevent illegal use of network	Rights of Way Strategy, Crime and Disorder Act and other Traffic Enforcement Legislation	Rights of Way, Community Safety	Ongoing	TRF, LARA, Other user groups, HAG, Police
	HR 1.2	Liaise with police to ensure effective enforcement to deter dangerous and/or illegal use of network	Rights of Way Strategy, Crime and Disorder Act and other Traffic Enforcement Legislation	N/A	Ongoing	Police, Countryside Wardens, User Groups
	HR 1.3	Identify and list privately run facilities for motorised users throughout region for advertisement and distribution	Motor Bike Strategy - in the process of being produced	N/A	2008	TRF, LARA, Landowners, Auto shops, Countryside Wardens, Police
Maintenance	HR 2	Develop byway maintenance policy in line with 'Making the best of Byways' and HBC Highways Inspection Regime	Highways Legislation	N/A	Continuous Review	Defra, Landowners, Technical Services

Theme 6		Actions Proposed : To Carry Out Internal Duties in Co-operation with other Council Departments				
Issue	Ref	Proposed Action	Relevance to Other Policies and Legislation	Funding Sources	Estimated Timeframe	Partners
Planning	ID 1	Liaise with Planning Dept to advise on developments that may impact on rights of way	PPG 13, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21	N/A	Weekly review (One Stop Shop)	Planning and Regeneration
Local Transport Plan	ID 2	Production of submission to Local Transport Plan to improve access network	PPS 1, 7, 9 Local Transport Plan	N/A	2006 (then every 5 years as with Local Transport Plan reports)	Technical Services

Theme 7						
Actions Proposed : To Develop, Audit and Deliver Improvements and Maintenance of the Local Access Network						
Issue	Ref	Proposed Action	Relevance to Other Policies and Legislation	Funding Sources	Estimated Timeframe	Partners
General	IM 1.1	Develop improvement programme as guided by HBC Condition Survey/Audit	Accessibility, Congestion, Air quality, Quality of life, Walking the Way to Health	N/A	Continuous review	Rights of Way Officers, Landowners, Sports Development
	IM 1.2	Develop programme to monitor and maintain publicised routes to high standard	Rights of Way Strategy	N/A	Rolling Programme	Countryside volunteers, Landowners
	IM 1.3	Set targets to achieve continued improvement through Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI-178) and Local Indicators	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	N/A	Ongoing (Annually)	Chief Executives Department
	IM 1.4	Use audit of network to provide information about path condition and identify routes with the potential to have access improvements undertaken – in terms of furniture and surface	Disability Discrimination Act, Rights of Way Strategy	N/A	2008 then review annually	Hartlepool Access Group (HAG)
Safety	IM 2.1	Identify dangerous crossing points, find suitable crossing solutions to reduce danger to users	Local Transport Plan	Local Transport Plan	Continuous review	Technical Services
	2.1.1	A179 safe crossing - Safe Crossing Area between Worsett Lane and Hart Moor Farm				
	2.1.2	A19 multi-user bridge - Safe crossing of A19 and linking of paths severed when road built				
	2.1.3	A689 Safe Crossing - Provide off-road link to pedestrian controlled crossing at Sappers Corner				
	2.1.4	Newton Bewley safe road crossing - Linked to the Newton Bewley links with other ROW				
	IM 2.2	Safe paths close to road side access				
	2.2.1	Elwick - Safe link of rights of way				
	2.2.2	Link to Hart - New link from Hart 3 to Hart 17				

Theme 7		Actions Proposed : To Develop, Audit and Deliver Improvements and Maintenance of the Local Access Network				
Improved linkage of Networks - HBC and Neighbouring Authorities	IM 3.1	Join up paths where currently no links	Local Transport Plan, Rights of Way Strategy	Local Transport Plan Rights of Way	Ongoing	Technical Services
	3.1.1	Newton Bewley link to Greatham				
	3.1.2	Newton Bewley link to North				
	3.1.3	Middlethorpe Farm link to Hart to Haswell Walkway. 2 new footpaths and new cycleway				
	IM 3.2	Link to neighbouring Local Authorities	Local Transport Plan, Rights of Way Strategy	Rights of Way	Ongoing	Stockton Borough Council, Durham County Council, Easington District Council
	3.1.1	Hart to Durham CC (incl IM 3.1.3)				
	3.1.2	High Burntoft to Stockton BC				
Guidance for maintenance workers	IM 4	Provide guidance for maintenance staff to ensure new maintenance is in line with Defra guidelines on reduced mobility and impaired vision policy, and nature conservation	Rights of Way Strategy	N/A	Review Annually	Countryside Volunteers, Countryside Wardens, Access Groups
Volunteers	IM 5	Publicise volunteer service to the public, provide training, feedback and events for volunteers	Rights of Way Strategy	Rights of Way	Ongoing	Youth Organisations, e.g. Duke of Edinburgh's Award, General Public
Strategy	IM 6	Work with outside agencies to generate grant aid for works additional to maintenance that are intended to contribute to an improvement to the network	Local Transport Plan	External funding partners	Ongoing	Landowners, User Groups, Technical Services, One NE
Landowners guidance	IM 7.1	Clarify what assistance can be provided to landowners in the management of rights of way	Rights of Way Strategy	N/A	Ongoing	Landowners, CLA, NFU
	IM 7.2	Produce countryside information and leaflets for landowners on website and in electronic form	Rights of Way Strategy	Rights of Way	Ongoing	Landowners, CLA, NFU

Theme 8 Actions Proposed : To Develop, Improve and Communicate Information Resources

Issue	Ref	Proposed Action	Relevance to Other Policies and Legislation	Funding Sources	Estimated Timeframe	Partners
Delivery	IPS 1	Re-evaluate current methods of information distribution and develop a strategy for information provision to reach all sectors of society	Rights of Way Strategy	ROW and others (unknown at this date)	2010 review	Tourism, Leisure Services, User Groups, Marketing services, One NE, Natural England
Electronic Information Minority Groups	IPS 2	Develop website and link with other relevant organisations and sources of information	Information Technology	Rights of Way	2008	Northgate, Chief Executives Department
	IPS 3	Work with ethnic and minority communities to identify and reduce perceived barriers to access	Rights of Way Strategy	N/A	Ongoing	Talking with Communities, Black, Minority Ethnic Forum
Access for All	IPS 4	Produce grading system for ease of use of routes to enable members of the public to make own decisions about suitability of route for individual ability	Rights of Way Strategy	Rights of Way	Ongoing Review 2008	Access Groups, User Groups
New Rights	IPS 5	Inform public about new and existing rights under Environmental Stewardship, Woodland Grant Access, Community Woodland Access	N/A	Rights of Way	Ongoing	Defra, Forestry Commission
Consultation	IPS 6.1	Work with neighbouring authorities to provide joined up network	Rights of Way Strategy	N/A	Ongoing	Durham County Council, Easington District Council, Stockton Borough Council, One NE
	IPS 6.2	Consult with TVLAF, ROW Liaison Groups etc	Rights of Way Strategy	N/A	1-3 meetings / group/year	TVLAF, Rights of Way Liaison Group
	IPS 6.3	Liaise with horse riding representatives to agree key roadside verge improvements	Rights of Way Strategy	N/A	Ongoing	BHS, Local Horse Riding Facilities/Stables, Technical Services
	IPS 6.4	Continue to meet and liaise with neighbouring Local Authority ROW officers to look at standardising varying aspects of ROW management and maintenance e.g. Signage, furniture etc	N/A	N/A	Every 2 months	Darlington Borough Council, Middlesbrough Council, Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council and Stockton Borough Council

Theme 9		Actions Proposed : To Promote and Publicise the Local Access Network					
Issue		Ref (PN)	Proposed Action	Relevance to Other Policies and Legislation	Funding Sources	Estimated Timeframe	Partners
Awareness of rights		PN 1.1	Produce display / poster / leaflet detailing type of rights on each class of right of way	Local Transport Plan	Rights of Way	2008	Tourism, Leisure Services, User Groups, Marketing Services, Access Groups
		PN 1.2	Produce landowner pack detailing rights and responsibilities	Rights of Way Strategy	Rights of Way	2008	
Network Availability		PN 2	Provide information about the availability of all routes in the Borough	Information Technology	Rights of Way	Continuous updating and promotion of information	Northgate
Self-guided / Circular routes		PN 3.1	Promote those already in existence, review and update those out of print, identify new routes to promote	Rights of Way Strategy	Rights of Way, Sports Development, Access Groups	Review continually	Tourism, Leisure Services, User Groups, Marketing, Access Groups
		PN 3.2	Identify and publicise 'Access for All' opportunities within self-guided and circular routes	Rights of Way Strategy	Rights of Way, Sports Development, Access Groups	Continuous review	Access Groups
Features of Interest		PN 4.1	Promote routes along coast, through nature reserves, on sites with archaeological / geological / natural history interest; create new routes allowing access to such features	Rights of Way Strategy	Rights of Way	Continuous review	Tees Archaeology, Landscape and Conservation Section, Natural England, Interest groups
		PN 4.2	Provide on-site interpretation boards	N/A	Rights of Way	Continuous Review	Tees Archaeology, Landscape and Conservation Section, Natural England, Interest groups
		PN 4.3	Seasonal press releases to encourage use of rights of way on regular basis	N/A	N/A	Continuous review	HBC Press Office, Hartlepool Mail, Radio Cleveland

Theme 9		Actions Proposed : To Promote and Publicise the Local Access Network				
Health	PN 5	Sustain and increase healthy walking initiatives	Health Initiative	N/A	Continuous review	Sports Development, Adult and Children's Services, NHS, PCT, One NE
Public Transport Links	PN 6	Increase number of routes and events that link with public transport provision	Local Transport Plan	Local Transport Plan	Continuous review	Public Transport Service Providers, Technical Services
Countryside Code	PN 7	Promotion to the General Public, in Schools and to Organisations - Walking Groups etc	Rights of Way Strategy	Natural England	Continuous review	Natural England, Education Dept, Adult and Children's Services, User Groups, Access Groups
Conservation	PN 8	Work with bodies responsible for SSSI's, NNR's, LNR's etc to develop a promotion campaign consistent with their policies, management plans, and objectives	CRoW Act, Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act	N/A	Continuous review	Natural England, Countryside Wardens, Landscape and Conservation Section, Local Nature Groups
Economics	PN 9	Work with tourism and Rural Development Agencies to promote value of countryside access to small businesses	Tourism, Economic Regeneration, HBC Local Plan	N/A	Continuous review	Defra, NFU, CLA, Natural England, Tourism

8. CONCLUSIONS



Hartlepool, along with the other Tees Valley Councils of Middlesbrough, Stockton, Darlington and Redcar & Cleveland are responsible for the implementation of their Plans. The Council will work with them and other partners, such as TVLAF, to deliver a consistent approach.

The Council will actively consult on improvement projects to the public rights of way and local access network with key stakeholders such as Parish Councils, landowners, user groups and members of the public. The Council also intends to involve the existing Rights of Way Liaison Group.

The Plan is intended to build upon the existing duties and improve the effectiveness with which they are carried out. The Council will look to secure additional sources of funding to implement fully the policies and actions of the Plan.

The Council is investing in a more inclusive approach to access, so that people from all communities can, in the future, access the countryside and enjoy their experiences. These differing users and groups include the mobility and visually impaired, those from diverse backgrounds, the young and the old. Continual consultation is one of the keys to help unlock the improvements that are asked for.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires a review of the Plan within 10 years, however it is intended that the first review will be sooner to bring it in line with Hartlepool's Local Transport Plan timetable, which is an important source of funding.

9. GLOSSARY AND ACRONYMS



BHS	British Horse Society
CLA	Countryside Landowners Association
CRoW Act	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
Definitive Map	The legal record of Public Rights of Way
Defra	Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DMMO	Definitive Map Modification Order
FWAG	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group
LARA	Land Access and Recreational Association
LDF	Local Development Framework
LP	Local Plan
LTP	Local Transport Plan
NACRO	National Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders
NFU	National Farmers Union
Permissive Right of Way	A path over which a landowner permits public use
PPO	Public Path Order
Private Right of Way	A way over which an individual or a group, other than the public at large, have use
Public Right of Way	A way over which all members of public have a right of passage

RA	Ramblers Association
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
The Plan	The Rights of Way Improvement Plan, sometimes known as the ROWIP
TRF	Trail Riders Federation
TVLAF	Tees Valley Local Access Forum
Waymark	Marker with an arrow showing the direction the right of way takes

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