

# **Stockton-on-Tees Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2008 - 2018**



# Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2008 - 2018

**Published November 2007**

Please Note –

All representations received regarding the consultation of the draft plan have been taken into account and incorporated into the final ROWIP.

A selection of images, etc. are still required to be included into the final plan, which will be arranged, after Cabinet approval.

The plan is also available as a CD-ROM and can be downloaded from [www.stockton.gov.uk](http://www.stockton.gov.uk)

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This document is also available in a number of different formats and languages to ensure it is fully accessible.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Background**

The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) is a requirement of section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 and is intended to be the prime means by which the Council will identify changes to be made in respect of the management and improvement of the local rights of way network over the next 10 years.

The ROWIP identifies the current issues affecting the use, management and maintenance of the local rights of way network, together with the actions that the Council proposes to undertake, both on its own and in partnership with others, in order to improve the existing network and to ensure that its potential is fulfilled over the next 10 years.

In summary the ROWIP must contain the following:

- An assessment of the extent to which local rights of way meet the present and likely future needs of the public
- An assessment of the opportunities provided by local rights of way for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and enjoyment of the authority's area.
- An assessment of the accessibility of local rights of way to blind and partially sighted people and others with mobility problems.
- A statement of Action. This will outline strategic actions the authority proposes to take for the management of rights of way, and for securing improvements to the network.

### **The Rights of Way Improvement Plan**

Given the above, the Council has prepared a ROWIP, based on the need to create a 'joined up' network of paths across the Borough; which are in good condition; accessible to all users for leisure and other everyday needs; which assists in increasing the levels of exercise that people take; and on which people feel safe.

The plan is one of the 'Daughter Strategies' supporting the Second Stockton-on-Tees Local Transport Plan (LTP). The Department for Transport (DfT) has stated that the ROWIP must show clear links to the priorities set out in the LTP, as well as helping to deliver the objectives set out under the five key themes of the Central/Local Government Shared Priority for Transport. From 2010 onwards, it is a statutory requirement that the ROWIP is fully integrated with the LTP.

The plan has two key sections. The first contains an assessment of the state of the existing public rights of way network and the present and likely future needs of the public. The second contains an Action Plan setting out a programme to improve the network over the next 10 years.

## **The Assessment**

The assessment of whether the existing network meets the public's needs was made in two parts:

An examination of the size and connectivity of the network and its general condition, together with the procedures and policies that determine how the network is maintained and developed; and

An extensive consultation exercise, in order to identify the existing and future needs of both users and non-users.

## **Action Plan**

The Action Plan, is shown on table **7 (page 47)** to this plan, is the most important part of the ROWIP. The Action Plan identifies seventeen potential improvements to the existing path network in order to provide greater opportunities for use of the network by residents of, and visitors to, the Borough.

In order to prepare the ROWIP, a period of consultation was undertaken. In order to maximise engagement, this exercise took a number of different forms, including Viewpoint surveys, press releases and a web-based questionnaire.

In addition to residents of the Borough, the following groups and organisations were consulted:

- a) Elected Members
- b) User Groups;
- c) Town and Parish Councils;
- d) Neighbouring Local Authorities;
- e) Partner Organisations;
- f) Landowners/Representatives;
- g) Tees Valley Local Access Forum;
- h) Stockton Renaissance; and
- i) Relevant Service Areas within the Council itself.

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## **1.0 FOREWORD**

Welcome to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) for Stockton. The plan outlines our aspirations of what needs to be done to improve access to the countryside for our residents and visitors over the next ten years.

In Stockton we have recognised the importance of the rights of way (ROW) network and its role in enabling people to enjoy the countryside and providing a more sustainable means of travelling to school, to work and to local services. The health benefits of visiting the countryside are well documented, as are the benefits to the local economy of money spent on recreational visits.

Over the next ten years, we will strive to implement the key actions of this improvement plan by identifying further funding and resources to make Stockton's right of way network more accessible and enjoyable for residents and visitors.

**Councillor Bob Cook**  
**(Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Transport - Stockton Borough Council)**

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 demand of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and seeks to continually improve provision for recreation, and 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 well being. 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 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)**

## **1.2 VISION STATEMENT**

Stockton Borough Council, through the ROWIP, aims to produce a public rights of way network:

- that is physically accessible for all:
- which meets the needs of all users for both recreation and access:
- on which up-to-date information is readily available by a variety of means:



## **2.0 SETTING THE SCENE**

### **2.1 The Borough of Stockton-on-Tees**

The Borough of Stockton-on-Tees lies in the heart of Teesside. It is bordered to the east by Middlesbrough, to the south by North Yorkshire, the north by County Durham and to the west by Darlington. The town of Stockton-on-Tees is the main centre for the Borough's 187,300 population. Other major population centres are Billingham, Thornaby, Yarm and the more recent residential area at Ingleby Barwick.

The River Tees flows through the middle of the Borough from south west to north east. There are crossing points at Yarm, North of Ingleby Barwick, and between Stockton and Thornaby, Tees Barrage, the A19, between Portrack and Middlesbrough and the Transporter Bridge which links Port Clarence to Middlesbrough.

Yarm and Stockton are ancient market towns and Stockton had established itself as an important river port by the 1300s. Stockton, on the north bank of the Tees, grew as an industrial centre following the mining of iron in the Cleveland Hills in the 1850s.

The downturn in manufacturing in the last decades of the 1900s led to some dereliction in Stockton and along banks of the River Tees, but this is now being addressed by imaginative developments.

The Borough still has large areas of industrial land, but now also includes the Stockton Campus of the University of Durham, on the bank of the Tees at Thornaby, and the Wynyard Business Park, on its northern boundary.

Stockton is now ranked highest of all five Tees Valley Boroughs on the Government's Index of Multiple Deprivation (98 out of a total 354 English Boroughs in 2007, up from 74 in 2004). This suggests that Stockton is recovering from its post industrial decline.

Most of the rights of way network lies in the rural areas of the Borough to the north, east and south. The low-lying land to the east of Billingham has very few rights of way, but there is access at Cowpen Bewley Country Park and the new Tees Valley International Nature Reserve being developed by RSPB at Saltholme, which will have a number of new, permissive walking and cycling routes.

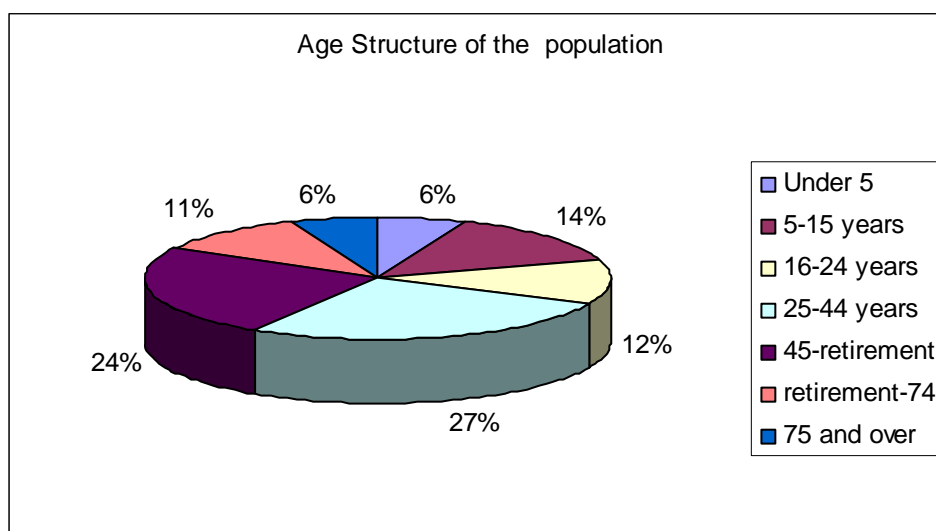
The Borough has excellent north-south and east west road and rail connections through the East Coast Main Line, the A66 and the A19, however, as with the River Tees, a lack of crossing points over these routes, act as barriers to access and means that in parts of the Borough the access network is rather disjointed.

## 2.2 Population Structure (Use & Demand)

There are several factors that influence the use and demand of the rights of way network, population density and structure for example. The population of Stockton-on-Tees as recorded in the 2007 JSU statistics is approximately 187,300.

Approximately 51% of the population are female and 49% male.

The table below shows the age structure of the population, with 41% of the population aged over 45 and 39% aged between 16 to 44 the figures highlight ageing population



(Source – JSU Statistics 2007)

## 2.3 The Access Network

The rich and complex network of footpaths, bridleways, lanes and areas of open access which extends across England and Wales is very much taken for granted. Yet millions of people use this network of routes on a regular, frequent basis for getting to work or school, for going to the shops, visiting friends and relatives and for exercise and relaxation.

The current network of access routes has evolved over centuries. Following the National Parks and Countryside Act of 1949, local authorities were obliged to identify and map walking and riding routes known to the public and these were formalised into the Highways Network as 'Public Rights of Way' – routes along which people have legal rights of access for walking, riding a horse or using other vehicles.

Subsequent legislation allowed cyclists to use bridleways and for invalid carriages (including electric mobility scooters) to use footpaths and bridleways.

The Public Rights of Way Network in Stockton is maintained by the Highways Authority and in recent decades, Local Authorities have found it difficult to maintain and manage their PROW as resources for this task have been limited. At the same time, use of the PROW and the rest of the access network, which includes areas of open access and routes specifically developed to provide off road access for cyclists, has changed. Whilst parts of the network are still used for utility trips, leisure has taken over as the chief purpose of use of the access network especially in rural areas and on the urban fringe.

Leisure users require different kinds of access routes to those provided for utility trips and this means that planning and investment are required to ensure that the network meets the needs of present day and future users.

The public rights of way network does not exist in isolation, many other routes can be found that make up the wider access network. As part of the ROWIP process it is important to identify and map known routes and other opportunities for outdoor access to assist in the connectivity, development and management of the public rights of way network.

Recording these routes will provide a complete inventory of the off road network, whilst ensuring that routes identified as having no current legal status are protected. Under section 53 of the CROW 2000 Act : all unrecorded Rights of Way will be extinguished after 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026.

The Stockton ROWIP process has identified the following additional opportunities that form the wider access network in Stockton Borough :

**Permissive Routes** - These are routes developed at the discretion of the landowner who has permitted public use of a route as either a Footpath or a Bridleway.

**Environmental Stewardship Schemes** – Access opportunities created by DEFRA to conserve and improve the countryside whilst supporting both the rural community and economy. Close partnership working can improve connectivity to the public rights of way network and the wider network of access.

**The Highway Network** - The road and footway network play a significant part in connecting routes in both rural and urban areas. The majority of public rights of way terminate at the adopted highway and these roads link much of the network. In almost all cases suitable crossing facilities such as bridges, railway crossings and traffic lights are in place.

**Quiet Lanes and Greenways initiatives** - Minor roads, country lanes and unclassified roads play a significant role in connecting routes in the more rural areas of the Borough. Quiet lanes are minor rural roads, which experience low levels of traffic travelling at low speeds. They are recognised to be safe, attractive routes for healthy commuting, recreation and sport, providing the opportunity for shared use by cyclists, equestrians, motorised users and walkers.

Greenways are networks of largely off-highway routes for shared use by cyclists, equestrians and walkers.

**The National Cycle Network** – Co-ordinated by Sustrans, the UK's leading sustainable transport charity. There are three national cycle routes in Stockton :

- Route's 1, 14 and 65

**The Local Cycle Network** - The local cycling network in Stockton provides a comprehensive network of access, which is progressively developing. Although these route are often specifically designed for cycling, off road routes also have pedestrian rights.

**Parks, Public Gardens, Nature Reserves** - The Borough of Stockton is fortunate to have an excellent network of parks, attractive areas of open space and highly accessible and popular Country Parks.

## 2.4 Rights of Way Improvement Plans

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) placed an obligation on all Highway Authorities to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). This is a 10-year strategic document which assesses the current situation with regard to access and Rights of Way and details improvements and developments to be implemented during the plan period. The Act also obliges authorities to review and update the ROWIP at least every 10 years.

Rights of Way Improvement Plans are to be used to help highways authorities to manage and improve them effectively and efficiently, ensuring they meet people's changing needs.

## 2.5 The Stockton-on-Tees Rights of Way Improvement Plan

The ROWIP for Stockton-on-Tees has been produced by officers of the Council who are responsible for managing public rights of way and other access in the Borough. It has involved the following processes:

- Finding out how people use the network, what they think of it and what improvements they would like to see
- Making an assessment of the network, information about it, its promotion, management, etc
- Reviewing the policy framework for rights of way
- Consulting users who have specific needs to understand them better
- Identifying general trends in how people use access networks
- Analysing the information collected to identify a list of issues
- Identifying actions to address the issues
- Producing an action plan

Many people have contributed to the ROWIP and it will be used by different officers of the Council and by other organisations to guide the improvement of access in the Borough over the coming years.

## 2.6 How the Plan is Structured

This ROWIP has 5 sections in addition to this one, as follows:

- **Setting the Scene** – background to the plan and its purpose
- **Strategic Framework** – a summary of the policy fit for the plan
- **Use and Demand** – how people use the network and improvements they would like to see
- **The Existing Access Network** – the current condition of the network and its management
- **Assessment and Action Plan** – issues and a plan of action to address them
- **Appendices** – containing details of policy, research, parish maps, etc

### 3.0 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

It is important that the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) complements and reflects the key themes and issues that are highlighted not only in the legislation mentioned above but also in other strategies and policies relevant to the area, **(details of documents in appendix 1)**. This will be mutually beneficial in assisting with the delivery of the ROWIP and in delivering the aims and objectives of these other strategies. The links will also be beneficial in supporting any funding applications from within the local authority and from outside bodies with similar aims and objectives. It will also provide opportunities for partnership working which in turn will help deliver aims and objectives.

The following documents have been identified and are considered relevant to the Rights of Way Improvement Plan: -

#### 3.1 Relevant Strategies & Policies

The following **23** regional **(5)**, sub-regional **(8)** and local **(10)** strategies and plans have policies which are relevant to the Stockton-on-Tees ROWIP.

- North East Regional Economic Strategy
- North East Regional Spatial Strategy
- North East England Tourism Strategy
- North East Strategy for the Environment
- Cycle Tourism Strategy for the North East
- Tees Valley Cycle Strategy
- Tees Valley Tourism Strategy & Management Plan
- Tees Forest Plan
- Tees Forest Countryside Sport & Recreation Strategy
- Tees Valley Equestrian Leisure Sector Strategy
- Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan
- Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy and Action Plan
- River Tees Navigation Strategy 2002
- Stockton Local Plan, incorporating the Local Development Framework
- Stockton-on-Tees Final Local Transport Plan
- Stockton-on-Tees Cycling Strategy
- Stockton-on-Tees School and Workforce Travel Plan Strategy
- Stockton-on-Tees Road Safety Strategy
- Sustainable Community for the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees 2008 -2021
- Stockton-on-Tees Sport & Physical Activity Strategy
- Stockton-on-Tees Health Improvement Plan
- Stockton-on-Tees Parks, Open Spaces and Countryside Strategy
- Regeneration Strategy for Stockton Borough 2007 – 2012

#### Conclusions

It is clear from the detailed analysis **(Appendix 1)** that there is considerable policy support for the access network in Stockton-on-Tees and that by improving the access network will help to deliver a wide range of local, sub-regional and regional policies.

The relevant issues and opportunities for the ROWIP are summarised in **Table 1**. The strategic context for the Stockton-on-Tees ROWIP is detailed in **Appendix 1**.

**Table 1:** Summary of the Strategic Context for the Stockton-on-Tees Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Strategy	Key Issues/Opportunities for the ROWIP
Regional Economic Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maximise the value of access to local Greenspace to improve the quality of life for people who live in and visit the Borough</li> </ul>
Regional Spatial Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a network of green routes to link urban areas with surrounding rural areas</li> <li>▪ Providing walking and cycling routes between residential areas and work, school, the shops, etc</li> <li>▪ Ensuring that new development is served by green routes</li> </ul>
North East England Tourism Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve the access network to enable the Borough to benefit from regional marketing of walking and cycling tourism</li> <li>▪ Support for the improvement, management and promotion of the access network in the Borough</li> </ul>
North East Strategy for the Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ NESE sets out a strategic approach to address the main environmental challenges that the region faces</li> </ul>
Cycle Tourism Strategy for the North East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop day cycling routes in the Borough or jointly with adjoining Boroughs for use by residents of the Tees Valley</li> <li>▪ Provide services to cycle tourists using the long distance routes which pass through or close to the Borough</li> </ul>
Tees Valley Cycle Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a network of safe and convenient strategic cycle routes which link to strategic routes across the Tees Valley</li> <li>▪ Establish minimum standards for the maintenance and sweeping of cycle routes</li> <li>▪ Provide adequate cycle parking at cyclists' 'destinations'</li> <li>▪ Establish systems to ensure cyclists' needs are taken into account in new highway and traffic management schemes and at new junctions</li> <li>▪ Provide adequate cycle awareness and cycle proficiency training</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the Council leads by example by providing facilities for staff who wish to cycle to and during work</li> </ul>
Tees Valley Tourism Strategy & Management Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contribute to tourism in Stockton by providing an additional activity for its target markets</li> <li>▪ Link into access provision in other Tees Valley Authorities to create a sub-regional activity offer to visitors</li> <li>▪ Link into the wider Tees Valley network to provide access to the North York Moors, Teesdale and routes in County Durham</li> </ul>
Tees Forest Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop new access in line with the strategy, including two major access routes – the Darlington to Stockton Greenway and the Summerhill to Cowpen Bewley Greenway with links to the Tees Valley International Nature Reserve</li> <li>▪ Gain optimum access to the Tees Forest for residents of Stockton</li> <li>▪ Link the access network to Forest Access Points</li> </ul>
Tees Forest Countryside Sport & Recreation Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop networks of routes from gateway sites</li> <li>▪ Improve the quality of the existing access network</li> <li>▪ Create new access to improve conditions especially for higher rights users</li> <li>▪ Improve safety and promotion</li> </ul>
Tees Valley Equestrian Leisure Sector Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve and extend the bridleway network in the Borough</li> <li>▪ Introduce more people to horse riding – especially young people</li> <li>▪ Contribute to the strategic development of the equine industry in Tees Valley</li> <li>▪ Consider developing a tolled route system in the Borough</li> </ul>
Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Minimise negative impacts on priority habitats and species through management and consultation</li> <li>▪ Maximise opportunities for interpretation of nature conservation to increase people's knowledge wildlife and of how to behave to minimise their impacts on it</li> </ul>

Strategy	Key Issues/Opportunities for the ROWIP
Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy and Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify gaps along urban fringe /corridors e.g. Billingham Beck, Lustrum Beck, Tees Corridor, Preston Farm to the Castle Eden Walkway and Wynyard, River Leven, Port Clarence to Saltholme and Hartlepool. It is envisaged the plan will be available for spring 2009.</li> </ul>
River Tees Navigation Strategy 2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Document sets out a plan for the revival of the River Tees</li> </ul>
Stockton Local Plan, incorporating the Local Development Framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a network of access routes to and within the Borough's Greenspace</li> <li>▪ Create walking and cycling routes from homes to work, school and other facilities for people to use without a car</li> <li>▪ Provide access to attractive wildlife sites</li> </ul>
Stockton-on-Tees Local Transport Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contribute to reduced congestion and improved air quality by providing attractive walking and cycling routes to encourage modal shift</li> <li>▪ Contribute to road safety through training, awareness and design</li> <li>▪ Contribute to quality of life by providing attractive routes and increasing awareness of them for use by all</li> </ul>
Stockton-on-Tees Cycling Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve the network for cycling including enhancing existing bridleways and creating new bridleways and traffic free cycling routes</li> </ul>
Stockton-on-Tees School and Workforce Travel Plan Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Contribute to/support school and workforce travel plans</li> </ul>
Stockton-on-Tees Road Safety Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve traffic free routes between residential areas and schools and workplaces</li> </ul>
Sustainable Community for the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees 2008-2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that the access network is of a high quality</li> <li>▪ Ensure that Stockton's residents know where it is and what they can do on it</li> <li>▪ Ensure that people can use it conveniently and safely</li> </ul>
Stockton-on-Tees Sport & Physical Activity Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create conditions where people can use the access network easily to engage in physical activity – through the creation of short circular routes which can be used for walking and jogging, and of circular cycling and riding routes</li> </ul>
Stockton-on-Tees Health Improvement Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create and promote guided and self-guided health routes</li> </ul>
Stockton-on-Tees Parks, Open Spaces and Countryside Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure safe, convenient, high quality access to green spaces from residential areas</li> <li>▪ Create access for all</li> <li>▪ Encourage use of the access network to increase participation in healthy exercise</li> </ul>
Regeneration Strategy for Stockton-on-Tees 2007-2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The vision of the many regeneration and to deliver a step change in the quality of place, and use it to help deliver the sustainable economic and social renaissance of Stockton-on-Tees"</li> </ul>

It is clear from **Table 1** that there is considerable policy support for the access network in Stockton-on-Tees and that improving the access network in the Borough will help to deliver a wide range of local, sub-regional and regional policies in the following areas:

- Transport
- Economic development
- Health
- Environment
- Equality

### **3.2 Links to Economic Development and Tourism**

A high proportion of public sector funding (EU, UK Government and Regional Development Agency-channelled) is offered on the basis of hard economic outputs – jobs and businesses created and safeguarded. Historically, it has been challenging to secure such funding for rights of way projects but, as the following paragraphs show, there is a strong link between rights of way (and wider access) and economic development and tourism in the Borough.

#### **3.2.1 Economic Development**

Economic development in Stockton is guided by the Borough's Regeneration Strategy. At the time of writing this Plan, the current Regeneration Strategy (2004-08) is close to an end and the 2007-2017 strategy is in draft form.

During the 2004-08 strategy, the four main areas of activity were business growth, image & environment, community empowerment and workforce development. The 2007-17 strategy builds on the work done and has seven 'key ambitions', as follows:

- Improved city scale facilities
- Better use of the River Tees
- Vibrant and successful town centres
- A top location for business & development of growth sectors
- Vibrant sustainable neighbourhoods & rural communities
- Improved transport networks

The strategy recognises the diversity of the Borough, with urban and rural areas and identifies 'quality of place' as the focus of the strategy.

The River Tees is the major focus for physical regeneration – the 'Blue Green Heart' as it is known. A number of major regeneration projects are under-way or planned for the Blue Green Heart, including:

- The North Shore
- Bowesfield Riverside
- Southern Gateway

Regeneration proposals include three new bridges – an iconic bridge as part of the North Shore development, a bridge to link Ingleby Barwick to Eaglescliffe and bridge link to Ingleby Barwick to Yarm.



The Northern Way Strategy has recognised the importance of Greenspace (and access to it) and has charged the city regions with developing green infrastructure strategies, as they can contribute to health, productivity, property values, inward investment, etc. It is important that rights of way and wider access are fully integrated into this process when it occurs in Stockton-Middlesbrough.

Rights of way improvement can support this development by:

- Contributing to 'liveability' and the image of the Borough
- Improving the connectivity between residential areas and the three regeneration projects
- Improving the quality of access along the Tees in the rural and urban areas of Stockton
- Improving connectivity between new riverside housing and Stockton town centre
- Improving connectivity between urban areas of the Borough and the rural areas

### **3.2.2 Tourism**

Tourism in Stockton is guided by the Tees Valley Tourism Strategy. In recent years, public sector involvement in tourism in the North East and in Tees Valley has seen some major changes, including:

- The passing of responsibility for tourism in the region to One North East
- Adoption of the new regional tourism strategy
- Development of Visit Tees Valley and work on a new tourism strategy for the Tees Valley

The strategy for tourism in Tees Valley is being re-written at the time of writing to bring it into closer alignment with the regional tourism strategy. Until this is published, it is not possible to position rights of way fully. However, the following is apparent:

- Tees Valley (with the exception of East Cleveland) is not a significant destination for walking, cycling and horse riding
- Tourism in Stockton will continue to focus on heritage, urban centres and arts/events
- The central focus for tourism in Tees Valley is now 'events and experiences'
- Rights of way have an important supporting role:
  - To provide attractive short routes for people visiting and staying in the area
  - To provide links into settlements from the long distance routes which pass through the Borough

The largest tourism development to occur in Stockton during the ROWIP period is the development of the Tees Valley International Nature Reserve. This will attract some 80,000 visitors a year.

This development will also deliver new walking and cycling routes and will be a major new rural resource. It is important that the reserve is fully integrated into the access network so that visitors to it can be encouraged to use footpaths and cycleways to visit other parts of the Borough, thus maximising length of stay and spending.

### 3.3 Conclusions

A well-developed, well managed and promoted access network is an important component of the Borough's leisure and tourism offer, contributing to the economic regeneration of the Borough and improved quality of life for its residents and visitors of the Borough.

The ROWIP will:

- Improve connectivity and access to Greenspace throughout the Borough
- Create a network which is convenient and attractive, to encourage people to walk and cycle rather than to drive
- Create links between long distance routes and the TVINR and town and village centres to encourage longer stays
- Create attractive short walking and cycling routes as an additional visitor product
- Rights of Way improvements will facilitate the creation of interested packaged days out for tourists and will be part of an itinerary that can include walking, shopping, eating out etc.

### 4.0 THE EXISTING ACCESS NETWORK

Stockton-on-Tees has approximately 188 km (117miles) of public rights of way over 256 individual routes recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement (DMS). The DMS is the legal document which proves that a route is a right of way. These routes form part of the highway network that the Council is responsible for maintaining.

#### 4.1 Types of Routes

The Public Rights of Way network is made up of the following four kinds of route:

1. Footpaths – (open to walkers)
2. Bridleways – (open to walkers, horse-riders and cyclist)
3. BOATs – Byways open to all traffic (open to all users, including vehicles)
4. RUPPs – Road used as a public path (open to all walkers, horse-riders and cyclists but ambiguous in law concerning vehicular rights)

The above definitions were originally made in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949. Routes are definitive if shown on the Definitive Map and statement, the legal document maintained by the Highway Authority (in this case, Stockton Borough Council).

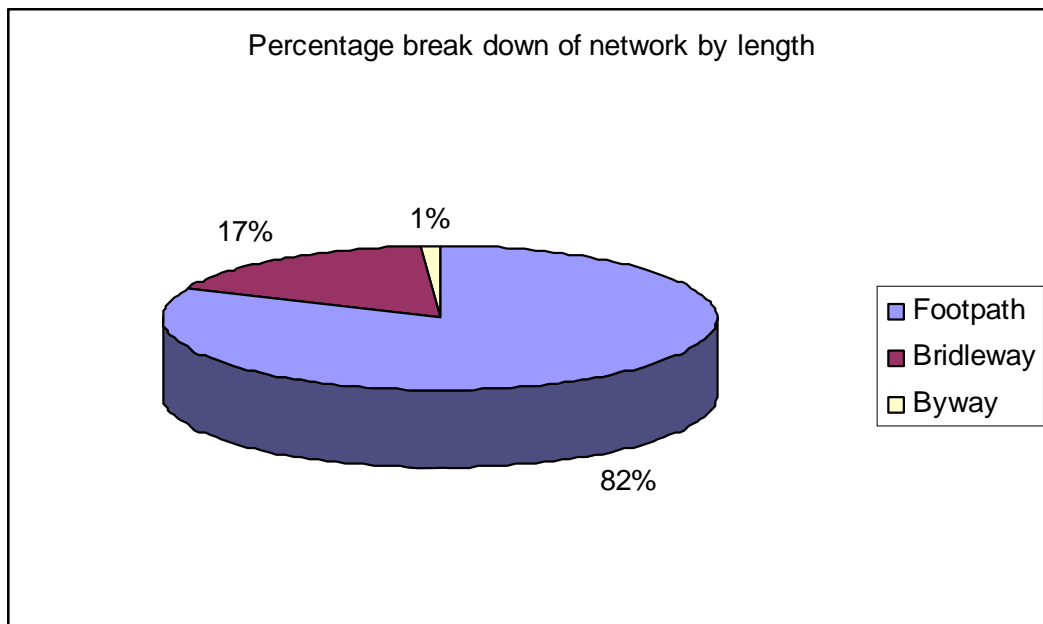
Stockton's public rights of way network is spread across 21 Parishes and consist of 256 different routes. The distribution of routes around the Borough is summarised in **Table 3**.

**Table 3: Lengths of Rights of Way in Stockton by Type and Parish**

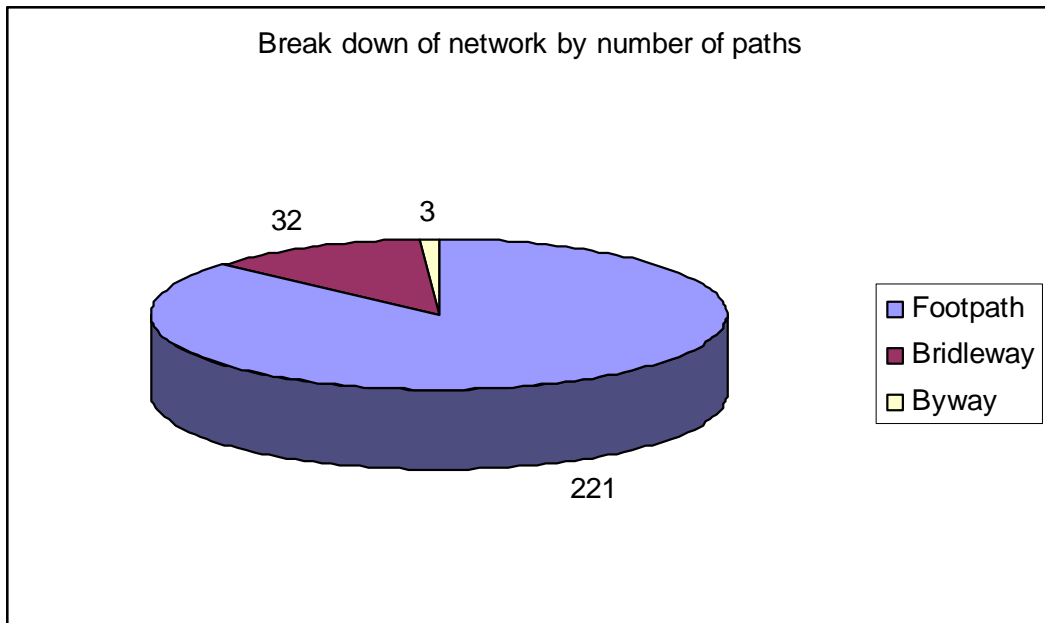
Parish	Route Type	Length (m)	Parish	Route Type	Length (m)
Aislaby *	Footpath	11,720	Longnewton	Footpath	8,700
	Bridleway	0		Bridleway	2,050
Billingham	Footpath	5,405	Malltby	Footpath	8,565
	Bridleway	1,200		Bridleway	0
	BOAT	1,450	Newsham	Footpath	6,190
Carlton	Footpath	7,365		Bridleway	2,750
	Bridleway	0	Preston	Footpath	1,730
Castlelevington	Footpath	2,820		Bridleway	150
	Bridleway	2,650	Redmarshall	Footpath	3,875
Eaglescliffe	Footpath	10,715		Bridleway	0
	Bridleway	0	Stillington	Footpath	2,570
Elton	Footpath	7,310		Bridleway	0
	Bridleway	0	Stockton	Footpath	30,185
Grindon	Footpath	16,920		Bridleway	2,500
	Bridleway	6,280	Thornaby	Footpath	4,863
Hilton	Footpath	3,570		Bridleway	615
	Bridleway	4,350		BOAT	620
Ingleby Barwick	Footpath	3,700	Whitton	Footpath	2,130
	Bridleway	5,700		Bridleway	1,170
Kirklevington	Footpath	7,250	Wolviston	Footpath	1,380
	Bridleway	1,735		Bridleway	0
			Yarm	Footpath	7,675
				Bridleway	0

(\* see appendix 4, example of Aislaby desk top study analysis.)

The chart below shows the break down of rights of way across the borough by percentage length of network.



82% of the network is classified as footpath (154km), 17% bridleways (32km) and 1% byway (2km).



Most of the routes on the network are footpath, 86% (221 footpaths), 13% of routes are bridleways (32) and 1% are byway (3)

Other routes with public access in Stockton include the following; these are not public rights of way as they are not included within the remit of the definitive map and statement:

- **Cycle Tracks** - Often specifically designated for cyclist they may also have walking and horse rights. Within the Stockton area these are generally confined to the urban area.
- **Permissive routes** - These routes are used by the permission of the landowner and can be footpaths or bridleways.
- **Lost Ways** – routes that were used in the past but which were not recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement have become lost to users. \*
- **Adopted Road** – a road that has been adopted to the list of streets and formally adopted by the Highway Authority and is maintainable at public expense

\*Natural England were initially running 'Re-discovering Lost Ways', a national programme to systematically research rights of way not currently shown on the definitive map.

Following a recent review, Natural England are no longer researching rights of way but has concluded that a review of the legislation governing recording and claiming of routes is needed. A working group has been established.

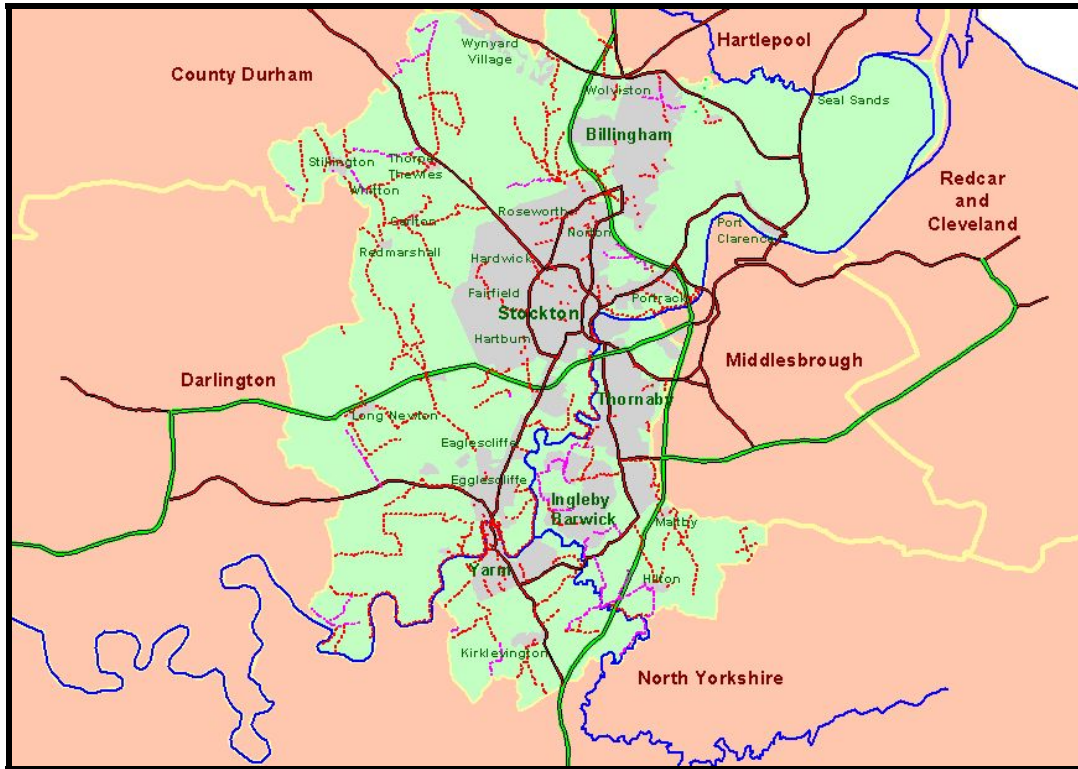
#### 4.2 Distribution of rights of way across the Borough

The following map shows the availability routes across the whole borough for its different users –

Walkers (**Red**)

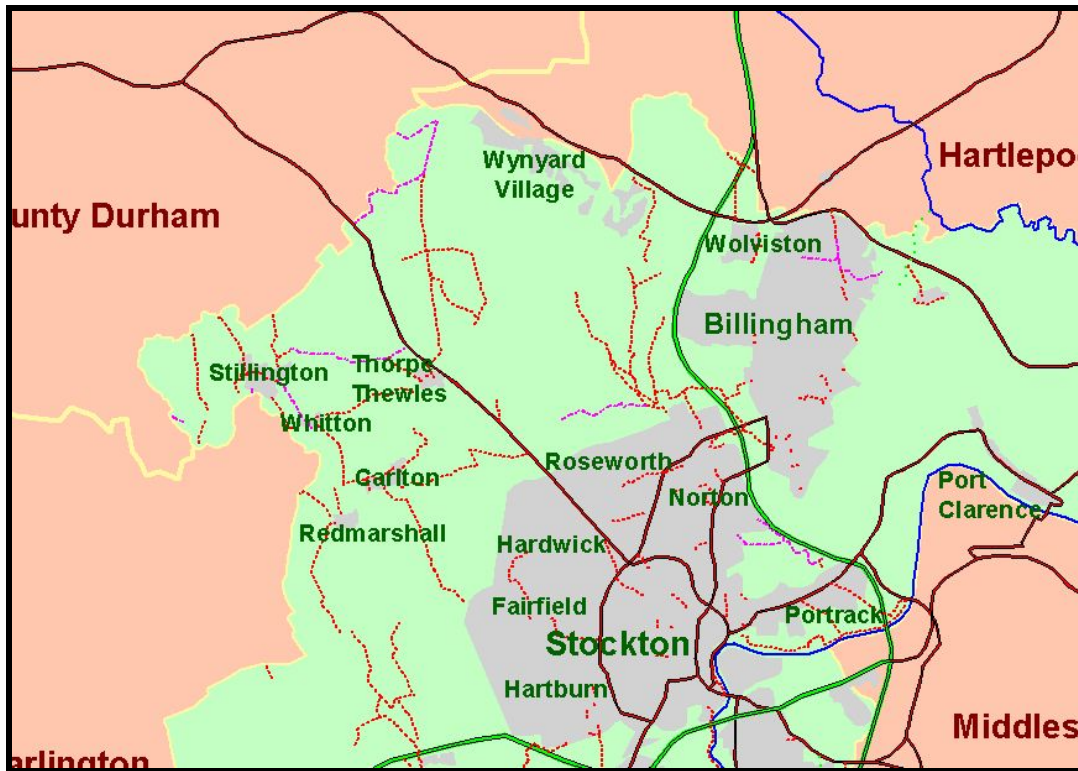
Equestrians and Cyclists (**Purple**)

Recreational motorist vehicles (**Green**)

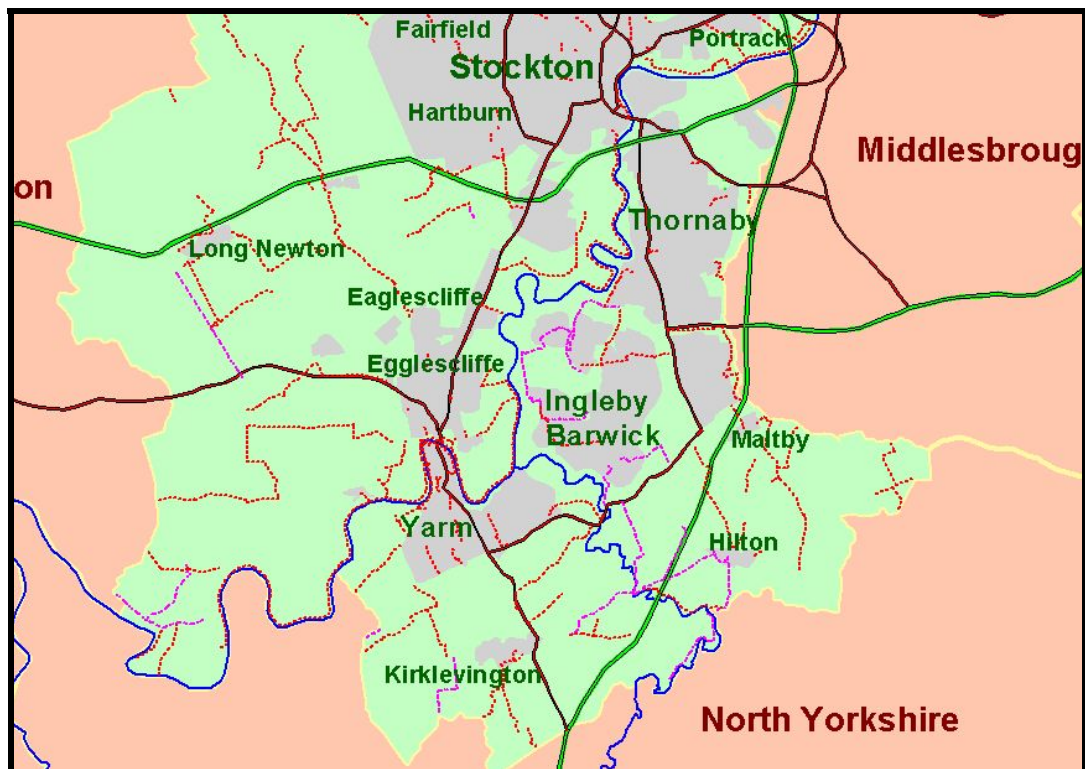


The following two plans show's the break down of rights of way across the north and south areas of Stockton

#### 4.2.1 Stockton North



## 4.2.2 Stockton South



The North and South of Stockton have a good network of rights of way available to pedestrians and cyclist. However, the bridleway network is deficient in many areas with obvious gaps across the borough.

Footways, or pavement as they are more commonly know, do not come under the Government definition of local rights of way and are not the focus of this plan. These routes do, however form an important part of Stockton's pedestrian network and must be taken into consideration when considering routes for walkers.

## 4.3 Promoted Routes

There are a number of nationally and locally recognised, promoted routes in the Borough, including the following:

- Teesdale Way (**Regional and European long distance path**)
- Links to the Cleveland Way National Trail
- Wynyard Woodland Park (formerly known as the Castle Eden Walkway)
- Three Villages Loop Walk
- Tees Corridor
- Thornaby Trail
- Grindon Loop Walk
- Park to Park Circular Walk
- Connect 2 (**Proposal**)
- Ancient Hedgerow of Stockton
- Teesside Retail Park Nature Trail
- Gravel Hole
- Portrack Marsh
- Newport Walks

The above routes provide important short, medium and long distance-routes for walkers, cyclist and in part for horse-riders.

**Teesdale Way** – a 90mile long footpath from Cow Green Reservoir in Upper Teesdale to the sea at South Gare. It passes through Stockton Borough on the left bank of the river and for much of this route it is right on the riverbank. A walker on the footpath in Stockton Borough heading downstream would pass through attractive farmland and features of interest such as Newsham Medieval Village, Newsham Woods, Aislaby Bank SNCI (Site of Nature Conservation Importance), the historic town of Yarm, the confluence of the River Leven, the site of a Norman Castle, Preston Park, Stockton Riverside, the Tees Barrage and Portrack Marsh Nature Reserve.

**Wynyard Woodland Park** – started life as a working railway, carrying freight to the ports along the River Tees. Now it provides visitors with miles of flat footpaths and numerous circular walks. Housed in the old railway station, the visitor centre has displays about archaeology, woodland history and wildlife.

**Three Villages Loop Walk** - a 7 mile walk which is fairly easy going, and the majority of the route crossing farmland through the villages of Thorpe Thewles, Stillington and Whitton. A leaflet with detailed directions and map is published to promote this popular route.

**Tees Corridor** – over the last couple of years, a number of improvements works have been carried out along the section of river from Bowesfield (Stockton) to the Transporter Bridge (Middlesbrough) which includes planting of trees, construction of footpaths, planting of wildflowers and erection of signposts.

**Thornaby Trail** – celebrating Thornaby's aviation history and inviting people to take a self-guided walk around its landmarks. A leaflet with detailed directions takes people on a tour approximately 90 minutes and takes in 19 sites that hark back to the town's aviation past, from the replica Spitfire, on the roundabout where Thornaby Road meets Trenchard Avenue, to the airman's statue, the NAAFI building, the aeroplane shed and the armoury. The trail is all about remembering the past while discovering Thornaby as it is now in the present day.

**Grindon Loop Walk** – a popular walk of 1.5 miles within Wynyard Wood Park.

**Park To Park** – a popular 9-mile circular walk up to Wynyard Woodland Park, which is fairly easy going with some steep sections. The route passes through attractive rural scenery, away from busy roads. A leaflet with detailed directions and map is published to promote this popular route.

**Connect2** - is a national initiative developed by Sustrans, the sustainable transport charity. It aims to connect communities currently separated by major physical barriers such as rivers, roads and railways. Stockton Council has worked with Sustrans to develop a Connect2 scheme linking Ingleby Barwick with Eaglescliffe, Thornaby and Yarm via a series of walking and cycling routes, including new bridges across the Rivers Leven and Tees. The proposed routes will bring the four communities closer together, making it easier to travel to work, school, the shops or the station on foot or by cycle. They will also improve access to Preston Park and the River Tees between Stockton and Yarm, opening up this stretch of the river for leisure use by all residents of the Borough.

**Ancient Hedgerow of Stockton** - this 2.5 mile circular route from the villages of Long Newton to Elton takes you past examples of some of the oldest hedgerows in Stockton-on-Tees. A leaflet with detailed directions and map is published to promote this popular route.

**Teesside Retail Park Nature Trial** – the site is bounded to the south and west by Teesside golf club and the old River Tees . Majority of the site is within the Retail Park and a number of less developed land can be found, which supports valuable habitats and species.

**Gravel Hole** – 3 acres site, which was a small disused sand and gravel pit which is now a mixture of herb grassland and scrub on the northern western edge of Billingham

**Portrack Marsh** – situated on the north bank of the River Tees, just below Tees Barrage and can be reached on foot, from the Teesdale Way.

**Newport Footpath's** – a circular link of footpaths around the former incinerator site and Billingham Beck.

#### 4.4 Surface Conditions

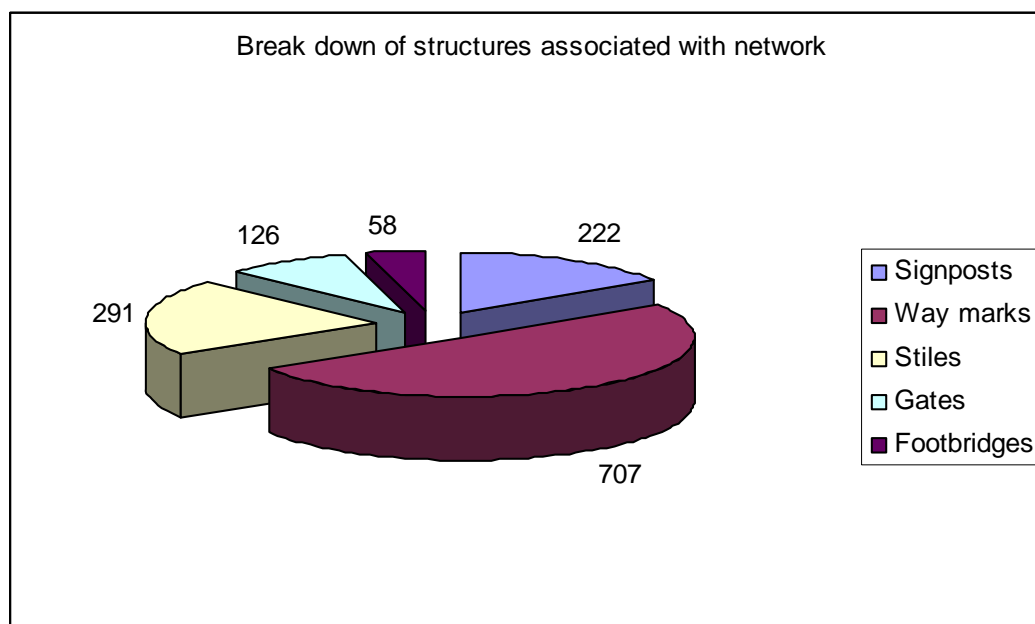
The majority of Stockton's public rights of way network is within the rural part of the Borough with only 18% (approximately 33.4Km) in the urban area. The four fifths of the network, which is in the countryside is subject to the effects of seasonal weather conditions and vegetation growth.

Approximately half of the network (54%) crosses agricultural land and is affected variously by farming activities through the year. A third of the network (36%) crosses arable land and is affected by ploughing and cropping. A tenth of the routes (10%) are described as having sealed or semi-sealed surfaces that are likely to be less affected by seasonal changes.

#### 4.5 Structures

There are 1,404 structures associated with the network including approximately 222 signposts, minimum of 707 way marks, 291 stiles, 126 gates, and 58 footbridges. Some provide barriers for livestock and others enhance public safety.

The following chart shows the break down of structures, which are located on the public rights of way network.





The majority of stiles are located in the rural areas in order to control the movement of animals on agricultural land. It has been established that a number of structures could be removed, because they are not needed.

In addition to stiles, other type of access controls are recorded, ranging from bollards and motor bike barriers to various types of gates and chicanes. Many of these have been installed to prevent illegal use of the network by motor vehicles and in particular motorbikes. Many of these barriers can prevent legitimate users passing through whilst not stopping their intended targets.

#### **4.6 Definitive Map and Statement**

Details of the Public Rights of Way in Stockton are kept on our Definitive Map and Statement. The 'Map' shows at a scale of 1:10,000, the existence of the footpaths, bridleways and restricted byways, confirming the rights of access associated with each one and their positions. Accompanying the map is the Statement. This is a written description of the routes on the map. Each route is a unique highway and as such has its own reference. Alongside each reference are details of the location, length, width and surface type of the path and a general description of its route with respects to local landmarks such as farms.

Together these documents form a legal record, conclusively proving the existence of Public Rights of Way.

##### **4.6.1 Keeping our Map up to date**

The Council are the appointed Surveying Authority for the Stockton area, who's duty is the upkeep of the 'Map and Statement' Like other forms of highway, the rights of way network is subject to changes which may come about for a variety of reasons. Amongst the more common types of change which need to be reflected on the Definitive Map are:

- Diversions of Public Footpaths
- Upgrades in status. E.g. from footpath to bridleway
- Creations of new routes
- Extinguishments of sections of footpaths
- Addition of previously unrecognised footpaths or bridleways

##### **4.6.2 Anomalies on the Definitive Map**

A survey was undertaken in 2006 and nineteen anomalies on the Definitive Map were identified and require resolving.

Majority of anomalies have occurred due to the development of housing estates, and footpaths have not been legally extinguished or diverted.

A total of 256 footpaths are recorded on the Definitive Map, and 7% of routes are partly obstructed. Therefore, it is important that theses anomalies are regularised and removed from the definitive map.

#### 4.7 Permissive Routes

Permissive paths are provided by landowner for the public to use. They do not have any legal status and their use may be stopped at any time. There are three routes in Stockton, which provide an additional 14.5km of pedestrian and equestrian access.

Several landowners in the Stockton area have entered into agreements with DEFRA under the 'Countryside Stewardship Scheme' and have provided access to their land. It should be noted that the access is permissive and the table below summarises the access provided by landowners under the stewardship schemes.

Walkers can also use a number of Council owned permissive paths. The most important of these is the Castle Eden Walkway, which is arguably the most popular path for recreational walks and cycling.

In the borough some of the Council's permissive paths could be reclassified as public rights of way and shown on the definitive map. This would give the public more rights over the paths and in turn fill in the missing links of the existing network.

Access provided by landowners under the Countryside Stewardship Schemes

(Source DEFRA website - <http://countrywalks.defra.gov.uk>)

Location	Grid Ref. (NZ)	Length km	Equestrian	Date Ends
Newsham	381 110	2.3		Sept. 2014
Stockton	390 234	2.4	✓	Sept. 2012
Thornton Moor Farm	489 127	9.8	✓	Sept.2013

All the sites above provide pedestrian access with some providing access for horse riders. Due to the nature of the sites, not all routes are suitable for disabled use.

#### 4.8 Grants schemes (Environmental stewardship and woodland grant)

The Woodland Grant scheme operates in a similar way as the Countryside stewardship schemes. Several private woods have been opened up to the public in the Stockton area and access is on foot via a series of way marked permissive routes.

The table below provides information relating to some of the private woods, open to public access under the Woodland Grant Scheme and Forestry commission managed land.

Location	Area	Organisation
Coatham Stob	Long Newton	Forestry Commission
Coatham Wood	Elton	Forestry Commission
West Stockton Woodland	Hartburn	Tees Forest
Ouston Moor Community Wood	Stockton	Tees Forest

#### 4.9 Public Parks and Countryside

The Borough of Stockton is fortunate to have an excellent network of parks, attractive areas of open space and highly accessible popular Country Parks which can give access to the wider public rights of way network , as mentioned below:

**Wynyard Woodland Park** – 81 Hectares of woodland and farmland, has virtually doubled the size of the site and changed the nature of it to such an extent that it can no longer be regarded as a mere 'walkway'

**Billingham Beck Valley Country Park** – designated as a Local Nature Reserve in 1992, this valuable pocket of countryside has been preserved as a haven for wildlife and a place where people can explore, enjoy and learn about the countryside.

**Cowpen Bewley Park** – the site was reclaimed from former brickworks, landfill and ex-agricultural land. Although still in the early stages of growth, rapid development has led to the site's large variety of habitats and wildlife. These include grassland, a lake, a series of ponds and a beck flows around the boundary. The abundant wildlife consists of 80 species of bird, waterfowl, toads, newts and dragonflies in and around the ponds and 18 species of butterfly, hares, foxes and small mammals in the grassland

**Ropner Park** - 1893 Ropner Park first opened to the public. Now with the help of 2.4 million grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, Stockton Borough Council has restored and opened up the park again for the public to enjoy.

**Preston Park** – parkland popular with families, with its extensive picnic areas, well equipped and spacious children's safe play areas. After all the exertion undertaken in exploring the many rambling riverside pathways

**John Whitehead Park** – plenty of open space enjoyed by residents and park provides pedestrian connection to the Town Centre.

**Stillington Forest Park** – woodlands, ponds and meadows with a network of paths for pleasant walks.

**Honey Potts Wood** – young woodland with picnic areas and quiet walks around villages of Whitton, Carlton and Redmarshall.

**Bassleton Woods and the Holmes Local Nature Reserve** - is a six-hectare pocket of ancient deciduous woodland sandwiched between the Bassleton Court housing estate of Thornaby and the River Tees. It was declared a local Nature Reserve in October 1992. There are some rarely seen creatures here such as the '**white letter hairstreak butterfly**' and despite the proximity of housing there is the possibility of seeing a '**roe deer**' if you are out for an early morning walk.

**Quarry Woods Local Nature Reserve** – is woodland within Preston Park was declared a nature reserve in 2004. It is a former Victorian Quarry that has now been reclaimed by nature. Its location at the far southern edge of the park and its mix of trees such as beech, alder, oak, horse chestnut and larch make this a pleasant and quiet retreat from the bustle of other areas of the park.

**Black Bobby's Field Local Nature Reserve** - a small site of some 6 hectares nestled up against housing in Thornaby, this reserve is host to a range of wildlife. It was decalred a Local Nature Reserve in 1992. There are developing woodland, wet meadows, a large pond and a fish haven connected to the river. A footpath elevated for much of its length on an earthen mound goes around the site giving good views of the meadows, ponds and river. A metal bridge takes the walker across the neck of the fish haven.

**Bowesfield Nature Reserve** - a new nature reserve has been created on the floodplain of the River Tees, just to the north of Ingleby Barwick. The new 15-hectare wildlife reserve provides a superb backdrop to the development and has been carefully designed to provide an area for residents, workers and visitors to enjoy, as well as a sanctuary to support wildlife. New features include ditches, pools, ponds and wet woodland can be reached on foot, along the Teesdale Way.

**Hardwick Dene and Elm Tree Wood** – a local nature reserve, comprised of two steep-sided beck valleys with an area of grassland in between.

#### 4.10 Performance

In December 2000 the Government published new and revised Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) in line with its programme to modernise local government. Best Value Authorities have a duty to seek continuous improvements in the way in which they exercise their functions and BVPI's provide a performance management framework for reporting progress.

BVPI number 178, which superseded the 'old', Audit Commission Indicator, covers aspects of a highway authority rights of way function and is a measure of 'ease of use' of its public rights of way network.

A sampled condition survey is undertaken in the spring and autumn of each year and the results are used to provide statistical data on the network for Best Value Performance 178 – 'the percentage of total length of footpaths and other rights of way which are easy to use by members of the public'.

The results for BVPI 178 in Stockton-on-Tees are summarised in **Table 4**. The table shows an improving trend of ease of access in the Borough.

**Table 4:** Summary of last 5 years BVPI 178 Results

Year	% Target	% Result	% of Network Surveyed
2003 – 04	85	80.7	5.0
2004 – 05	85	80.73	13.0
2005 – 06	85	79.5	15.5
2006 – 07	90	87.1	18.6
2007 – 08	92	90.6	5.0

Footpaths which failed the BVPI surveys, generally did so because of agricultural activities or have been obstructed.

BVPI 178 will no longer be a national measure of performance from the end of 2007, however at the moment Stockton Borough Council will continue to use this survey method to monitor the condition of public rights of way network.

In addition to the above, 2008 we will investigate in using user groups and Parish Councils helping with path monitoring.

#### **4.11 Cross Boundary Consultation**

Consultation was carried out with neighbouring Councils and a number of routes which would benefit from collaborative management across administrative boundaries have been identified. Whilst each of the five Tees Valley local authorities has produced its own ROWIP, the authorities collaborate in the Joint Tees Valley Access Forum and it is proposed to produce a sub-regional ROWIP statement. In the meantime, rights of way and other officers working on access are in regular contact with each other through groups such as TVLAF and PROW Officers Liaison Group.

Stockton Borough Council shares its boundary with the following neighbouring unitary and county authorities, each length of boundary providing different and unique rights of way and access issues:

Darlington  
Hartlepool  
Middlesbrough  
Durham  
North Yorkshire

The rights of way network continues beyond the Borough boundaries and many routes in Stockton link with routes in neighbouring areas. The majority of the routes link seamlessly with no noticeable change for users.

#### **4.12 Information and Marketing**

An information guide was produced in April 2007 to help residents of Stockton and visitors to the Borough to enjoy the benefits of using the Rights of Way network.

The guide shows a wide range of routes and opportunities for countryside recreation, including vital links between countryside sites and urban areas, local circular walks and longer distance routes such as the Teesdale Way (which runs from Upper Teesdale to the North Sea), cycle routes and places to visit in Stockton's countryside. The guide explains what rights of way are and what the different coloured way marks mean.

The access guides are distributed and promoted as follows:

- Main Council reception areas
- Libraries
- The tourist information centre
- Featured on SBC website

Arrangements are in hand to provide an online mapping facility for public rights of way in the Borough. This will be available on the rights of way pages of the Council website ([www.stockton.gov.uk](http://www.stockton.gov.uk)). These pages already feature information on rights of way, as follows:

- The Council's statutory duties
- Diversions and Alterations
- Local Access Forum
- Newsletter
- Report a Problem with a Public Right of Way (On-line Service)
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan (On-line Service)

The Tees Valley cycling website ([www.doitbycycle.com](http://www.doitbycycle.com)) has information on three recreational cycle rides in the Borough, of 5, 8 and 12 miles.

#### **4.13 Maintenance**

Public Rights of Way are generally maintained by both the Borough Council and landowners whose land they cross; responsibility for the surface of the path lies with the former and responsibility of gates, stiles and vegetation clearance lies with the latter.

Landowners and land managers must therefore be made aware of their duties, and of the help which is available to them from the Borough Council.

The majority of maintenance works are currently undertaken by North East Community Forest and additional work is carried out by Community Payback – a probation services initiative where offenders carry out work in the community as part of their unpaid work sentence.

A monthly work programme is drawn up for the teams, incorporating request/complaints from the public, project work and problems/issues identified in previous surveys. Major construction work i.e. footbridges, is undertaken by the in-house Structures Team or by a contractor.

In addition 2008/09 North East Community Forest will undertake vegetation clearance works which consist of 2 - 3 cuts per year on selected footpaths covering approximately 46km. It is intended to increase the number and lengths of paths cleared each financial year, which, together with the implementation of the Councils policy on Ploughing and Cropping, should greatly improve the current percentage of public rights of way which are 'easy to use'

#### **4.14 Network Deficiencies and Shortcomings (Summary)**

Government guidance directs highways authorities to assess 'the opportunities provided by local rights of way (and in particular by footpaths, cycle tracks, bridleways and restricted byways) for exercise and forms of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of their area' (together with) 'the accessibility of local rights to blind or partially sighted persons and others with mobility problems'.

Consultation and BVPI 178 show that the public rights of way network in Stockton-on-Tees is generally accessible for most users. However, assessed against the expressed needs and demands a range of shortcomings have been identified that are likely to affect access to the network, either on a permanent or a seasonal basis. These are summarised in the following paragraphs.

##### ***Disjointed Nature of the Network***

The network is disjointed with severance of some routes from the urban to the wider rural area by the A19 and A66 Trunk roads, railways and the River Tees. Within the rural area there are places where changes in status occur part way along the length of some routes (e.g. bridleways becoming footpaths), routes come to an abrupt end, (particularly at administrative boundaries and major roads) or safe crossings of busy roads are not provided.

### ***Missing Links Between Settlements***

Whilst most villages have a good rights of way network around them, there are cases where there is no direct link between settlements and where the Rights of Way network, and routes start and finish in the countryside.

### ***Negative Perceptions***

The surveys identified perceived barriers to using the network, especially for the less mobile. This is largely because the Borough's public rights of way network is set within a working agricultural landscape where structures are required for stock proofing and public safety.

### ***Surfaces***

The type and consistency of surfaces also have an impact on access. The majority of routes around Stockton have a natural surface that is prone to damage in poor weather, especially in the winter. For example, more than a third of all routes cross arable farmland and are likely to be affected by wet weather, ploughing and cropping.

### ***Signing, Waymarking and Information***

A key component of access is the provision of information both on site and through other means, such as leaflets and web sites. Whilst the network is consistently signed, waymarking is inconsistent in places. At present, information provision is un-coordinated. Information on access is available at a number of locations, but absent from others. There is an opportunity to promote and provide information on access more effectively, for example by working through Tees Valley-wide instruments, such as [www.doitbycycle.com](http://www.doitbycycle.com) and similar schemes to promote other forms of access.

### ***Access for All***

There is currently a lack of specific provision and allowance for people with disabilities including those with mobility problems or who are blind or partially sighted, which means people who have these disabilities have to travel out of the Borough to find places where they can access the rights of way network.

However, Stockton Council are currently in partnership with Tees Forest, and under the 'Tees Forest Mobility Scheme' with the support of Natural England a number of electric off road scooters have been purchased and are available to hire for use throughout the summer to Ramble around Stockton.

This project began back in 2005 in Stockton to open up wider access to the countryside, for people with mobility impairments.

In linking up with Stockton Shop Mobility and Community Transport in Stockton the project aims to address these barriers by providing a pick up bus service from the front door along with an electric scooter to a choice of countryside locations.

The sites are:

- Preston Park,
- Wynyard Woodland Park,
- Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park
- The Tees Barrage.

In 2007, Tees Forest organised a number of Ramble events around Castle Eden Walkway, Cowpen Bewley to Greatham and Tees Barrage.

The Rambles was such a big success, further events are planned for 2008.

### **Break Free**

Introduction of the 'Break Free' system was devised in the northeast and is supported by the Sensory Trust, a charity looking at access to the countryside for people with a wide range of disabilities and access difficulties. Rather than giving directions, 'Break Free' grades all the routes on a site, allowing those with mobility problems to decide a route suitable for them.

Those who find this information of benefit include:

- the elderly
- those who can't walk far without a rest
- blind and partially sighted
- wheelchair users
- those with prams and pushchairs

### **The Sensory Trust**

What they do:

- Raise awareness of good practise in urban and extra-urban design and management
- Make green space accessible to as many people as possible
- Offer consultancy and advice on inclusive design

Copies of 'Break Free' Country Places are available on website and leaflets.

### **Resources**

The management of the Rights of Way functions in Stockton-on-Tees is not well resourced in comparison with other local authorities within the Tees Valley region, as the table below indicates.

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>Size of Network (km)</b>	<b>Staff Resources</b>
Stockton	188	1 Full
Darlington	300	1 Full & 2 Part-time
Hartlepool	100	2 Full
Middlesbrough	38	1 Full
Redcar & Cleveland	400	3 Full

It should be noted from the table above, Stockton Council has one dedicated officer working on all aspects of PROW's inc. management, promotion, improvements, legal orders and maintenance works together with other duties within the Highway Network Management Section.



#### **4.15 The Tees Valley Local Access Forum (TVLAF)**

The CROW Act 2000 placed a duty on Highway Authorities to establish a Local Access Forum for their area. Its function is to provide advice to the constituent Local Authorities and to Natural England on how to make the countryside more accessible and enjoyable for open-air recreation in ways, which address social, economic and environmental interests.

The Tees Valley boasts outstanding scenery, with a great range of wildlife habitats and a rich cultural and industrial heritage. The TVLAF covers 54,910 hectares and 646 kilometres of public rights of way.

It was agreed in 2003, Stockton Council would work in partnership with three other local authorities –

- Darlington
- Hartlepool
- Middlesbrough

TVLAF is a statutory advisory body to the four appointing authorities and has 14 members, who represent a wide variety of countryside and access interest across the Tees Valley

The forum's role is to encourage and assist access provision and give advice on issues of particular relevance to the Tees Valley area.

#### **4.16 Conclusion**

The following conclusions can be drawn from consideration of the current Stockton Borough rights of way network:

- Walkers have the greatest access to public rights of way and are able to use 100% of the network
- Cyclist and horse riders have access to 32km or approximately 17% of the network.
- Results from the BVPI Surveys, indicates that the network is in good physical condition.
- A full audit of the suitability of access for the mobility impaired would be beneficial in the future
- There is clear room for maintenance improvements in certain areas; issues to be tackled in the future should include path surfaces, vegetation clearances.
- The majority use of rights of way network for leisure and recreation. The choice to use conveniently located paths provides an opportunity to increase use of the network by publishing under used and less well known area routes.
- Opportunities exist for closer working with neighbouring authorities and stakeholders.
- Regardless of it's current condition, a number of network improvements are required in order to address issues, such as missing links, gaps in network and accessibility

Rights of Way functions in Stockton-on-Tees is not well resourced in comparison with other local authorities within the Tees Valley region. Therefore it is recommended that additional staffing resources should be investigated so that the recommendations and improvements in this report can be delivered and implemented within the timescales as outlined within the action plan, as indicated in **Table 7, on page 47**.

## **5.0 USE AND DEMAND**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This section summarises use of and demand for the access network in Stockton-on-Tees.

Information on use and demand and on trends in use of the access network has been obtained from a variety of sources, as follows:

- A 'Viewpoint' survey
- Interviews with people who have physical and sensory disabilities
- A review of research in connection with ROWIPs in the Tees Valley and elsewhere
- Press Releases
- Web-based Questionnaire

The groups and organisations directly consulted included the following:

1. Users Groups;
2. Town and Parish Councils;
3. Neighbouring Local Authorities;
4. Partner Organisations;
5. Landowners/Representatives;
6. Stockton Renaissance (the Local Strategic Partners for the Borough); and
7. Relevant Services Areas within the Council itself.

### **5.2 Viewpoint Survey**

A 'Viewpoint' Survey was undertaken by the Borough Council in November 2004 to explore residents' use of and attitudes towards Public Rights of Way and access in the Borough. The findings of this survey are shown in full in **Appendix 2** and summarised here.

#### **5.2.1 Use of Rights of Way in Stockton-on-Tees**

A third of residents (34%) use their local rights of way either 'most days (16%) or 'weekly' (18%). A further 8% uses the network 'occasionally' and a third (35%) uses it 'infrequently'. Only 1% never uses local rights of way.

People use their local rights of way for a variety of purposes. The most common are summarised in **Table 2**, below.

**Table 2:** Reasons for Use of local Rights of Way

Purpose	Rank Order	Percent
Walking	1	35%
Enjoying the countryside/open spaces	2	23%
Recreation	3	12%
Cycling	4	11%
Getting to school, shops, etc	5	9%
Walking the dog	6	9%

Use of rights of way from countryside access points (i.e. country parks and visitor centres) is high – 57%.

### **5.2.2 Awareness of and Perceptions of Rights of Way in Stockton-on-Tees**

Just over half of Stockton residents (56%) are ‘not really sure’ where their local rights of way are, with the remaining 44% confident that they know where they are and using them.

In common with people living elsewhere in the UK, awareness of the wider rights of way network is at best patchy and most feel that they would use them more if more information were available.

Whilst awareness of the established, long distance routes is relatively high (94% have heard of the Castle Eden Walkway, 54% of the National Cycle Network and 32% the Teesdale Way), only 11% had heard of the ‘Three Villages Loop’ local promoted walk. Use reflects awareness, with 58% having used the Castle Eden Walkway, 12% each the Teesdale Way and National Cycle Network but just 2% having used the Three Villages Loop.

Over two thirds (69%) either agreed or strongly agreed that they would use public footpaths if there was more information about them.

Perceptions of other aspects of the PROW are summarised as follows:

- Routes are well signposted
- Routes are in good condition
- Routes are easy to use
- Some routes need improving
- Some routes need better maintenance

### **5.3 People with Physical and Sensory Disabilities**

DEFRA’s guidance on the preparation of ROWIPs asks Highway Authorities to take particular account of the needs of people with physical and sensory disabilities. In order to inform the Stockton-on-Tees Rights of Way Improvement Plan in relation to the needs of people with disabilities, people living in the Borough with sensory and or mobility disabilities and their helpers were interviewed.

Our disabled user survey revealed, a number of people consulted had used the access network in the Borough and most also travelled outside of the Borough to reach the access network. Most had encountered barriers which had prevented from using the access network, which a small minority went to great lengths to overcome.

Most would like to be able to use the access network within the Borough more and said that they would do so if the following barriers could be removed:

- Getting to the access network – crossing roads, public transport, etc
- Physical obstructions and inappropriate terrain –including high kerbs and places to get onto the access network
- Lack of ‘joined-up’ provision – including public transport, parking, wc’s, etc as well as surfaces and stiles
- Dog fouling – which causes problems for wheelchair users and people with visual impairments
- Lack of information – access for all details should be included in mainstream information

#### **5.4 Secondary Research**

Use and demand issues arising in the Tees Valley include the following:

- The most common uses of the access network, in priority order, are as follows:
  - Walking
  - Cycling
  - Running/jogging
  - Walking the dog
  - Riding a horse
  - Access for all
  - Motorised use
- Factors which attract people onto the access network are:
  - Attractive landscape
  - Ease of access
  - Views
  - Car parking and facilities
  - Wildlife/nature
- Factors which deter people from using the access network are:
  - Lack of information
  - Poor condition of routes
  - Litter
  - The routes don’t go where people want to go
  - Litter, dog fouling and other forms of anti-social behaviour
  - Fear of stock
  - Busy road crossings
  - Lack of car parks
  - Lack of toilets
  - Low level of landscape interest
  - Not feeling safe
  - No-one to go with
- The most common ways in which people find out about the access network (in priority order) are:
  - Always known
  - From a local resident
  - Word of mouth
  - Saw others using it
  - Map
  - Website
  - Found it by accident
  - Leaflet

## **5.5 The Needs of Different Users**

The needs of different types of users and the issues they currently face are summarised here.

### **5.5.1 Walkers**

Walkers require circular routes of varying length (from an hour or so, close to where people live to half day and full day from countryside access points), which are easy to follow and barrier free. Ideally information on where to walk should be widely available and signage and waymarking should be clear and continuous. Key issues facing walkers are:

- Horse riders and mountain bikers eroding/poaching routes
- Inconsiderate mountain bikers approaching too fast from behind without bells
- Dog-fouling
- Lack or inconsistency of signage and waymarking
- Lack of information
- Litter and other forms of antisocial behaviour

### **5.5.2 Cyclists**

Road cyclists seek traffic free or segregated routes which are continuous and well-maintained (i.e. clear of debris). Their specific issues are:

- Lack of traffic free routes
- Dangerous junctions and safe road crossings
- Lack of consideration from motorists
- Poor connectivity of cycle routes
- Maintenance of cycle routes

### **5.5.3 Mountain Bikers**

Mountain bikers prefer specially designed, single track routes; the nearest of these to Stockton are at Hamsterley Forest and on the North York Moors. Their particular needs and issues are as follows:

- Access to off road routes from home
- Hostility from walkers
- Lack of centres for mountain biking with routes, food and drink, accessories sales, cycle washing area

### **5.5.4 Equestrians**

Historically, equestrians face a number of constraints and issues which restrict their access to the network more so than walkers and cyclists, these include:

- Poor connectivity of routes
- Lack of safe road crossings
- Availability of network close to where horses are kept
- Lack of secure parking for horse boxes
- Behaviour of other users – mostly motorists and mountain bikers
- Lack of places to gallop
- Lack of places for carriage driving

### **5.5.5 People With Physical and Sensory Disabilities**

Specific barriers to people with disabilities in Stockton are described elsewhere (**details of research in appendix 3**). In general, this group face a wide variety of issues. In order to inform the improvement plan in relation to the needs of people with disabilities, a number of people living in the Borough with sensory and or mobility disabilities were interviewed. People were selected as follows:

- Participants in the Tees Forest's 'Break Free' programme
- Contacts supplied by 'Blind People's Voice'
- Individuals recruited on the street in Stockton and Billingham

The following issues were identified :

- Difficulties involved in using buses to reach the access network
- Lack of a helper to plan and accompany the disabled person on a visit
- Lack of safe places to park a car close to the access network
- Physical barriers to accessibility, including surfaces, stiles and steps
- People with visual impairments require high contrasts to differentiate edges and over-hanging vegetation to be cut back
- Lack of joined-up provision – i.e. there is a flaw or gap in the continuity of provision which renders a route un-usable – consider getting to the route, parking, WCs, shelter and other facilities, as well as the route itself
- Making provision just for one group of disabled users – most commonly manual wheelchair users
- Providing gates which are too narrow for power wheelchairs
- Installing motorcycle 'traps' which also prevent access to power wheelchairs, mobility scooters, etc
- Lack of colour contrast in information, signage and waymarking

### **5.5.6 Young People**

Young people are increasingly disconnected from the countryside and green spaces as opportunities for them to visit/use it diminish. Particular issues they face are as follows:

- Distance to places to walk, cycle, etc
- A perception that there is nothing for them in the countryside or parks (boring, bleak, dull)
- Lack of opportunities or reasons to use the access network
- Fear of crime and personal safety

### **5.5.7 Older People**

Older people, who are less fit face similar difficulties to people with mobility and sensory disabilities, including the following:

- Poor or expensive bus network
- Lack of short routes from near home
- Lack of shelter and resting places (benches, leaning posts, etc)
- In appropriate surfaces or furniture
- Lack of information on routes

### **5.5.8 People With No Car**

The chief difficulties for people without access to a car relate to getting to access points:

- Poor or expensive bus network
- Lack of information on routes

### **5.5.9 Black and Minority Ethnic Communities**

Research into the needs and perceptions of under-represented groups for access to the outdoors and countryside was undertaken by Ethnos (the UK's leading research organisation specialising in ethnic minorities) in 2004.

The top finding was that, contrary to assumptions, Black and Minority Ethnic people are keen on outdoor recreation once they have tasted the experience. That lack of experience, lack of appropriate, targeted information and lack of confidence are key barriers. Lack of transport also prevents many Black and Minority Ethnic people being able to access the countryside. For some, racism and discrimination are experienced.

### **5.5.10 Landowners**

Landowners face different issues, mostly actual or perceived disadvantages arising from access:

- Damage and theft
- Litter
- Erosion to routes, in particular horses and mountain bikes
- Access constraining management activity, such as controlling pests – shooting rabbits, etc

### **5.5.11 Motorised Vehicle Users**

There is virtually no provisions for this type of use within Stockton due to the complete lack of Byways Open to All Traffic. Survey work has not identified a demand for legitimate use of the Byways network for this user group.

Therefore, we will continually monitor the demand for this group and will address any issues relating to improved provision and increased demand if they arise.

### **5.5.12 Carriage Driver**

Survey work for Stockton ROWIP failed to identify a demand for this form of use. Only 1% of the Public Rights of Way network is available to carriage drivers through the Byways network, which is unevenly distributed across the Borough.

We did not hear from any carriage drivers, and do not anticipate any significant increase in demand for routes in the future.

However, we will monitor the demand for this group and will address any issues relating to improved provision and increased demand if they arise.

## **5.6 Other Research in Connection with ROWIPs**

Several ROWIPs which have already been completed have been reviewed in order to identify emerging trends in use and demand. Key trends identified include the following, which are considered below:

- Congestion and modal change
- Access close to home
- Access for all
- Health
- Greenspace
- Needs of horse riders
- New modes of transport
- Landowners
- User conflict
- Young people and the countryside

### **5.6.1 Congestion and Modal Change**

Increasing traffic congestion is leading to greater policy involvement in providing alternative means of travel, especially to work and school. At the same time it is beginning to impact on the way people make travel decisions for both utility and recreation trips.

Congestion will continue to increase during the plan period and rights of way have an important role to play in:

- Providing routes from residential areas to places people work, learn and shop
- Encouraging people to switch to greener modes of travel (it is easier to encourage people to take up cycling for recreation, following which, a proportion will consider modal shift for utility journeys)

In a survey in Barnsley, 33% said they would consider walking up to a mile for a utility trip and 33% said they would walk 1-2 miles, whilst 58% said they would cycle for up to 3 kilometres.

### **5.6.2 Access Close to Home**

Several surveys undertaken to inform ROWIPs have identified high demand for short routes (ideally circular) which people can access directly from their homes.

In the Barnsley survey quoted above, 28% seek walks of 1-3 miles and 37% 3-6 miles, whilst 30% of cyclists seek routes of 6-10 miles and 42% routes of more than 10 miles.

Providing such routes, however, does present challenges to access planners, as routes in the urban fringe can be subject to factors which make them unattractive to users – litter, dog fouling, anti-social behaviour, unattractive landscape, etc.

Providing attractive routes in the urban fringe requires careful planning and an integrated approach, working with other departments and agencies to tackle the deterring factors.

### **5.6.3 Access for All**

The market of disabled people is considerable, estimated to be 10 million people in the UK with disposable incomes of £50 billion. In England alone, over 2.7 million disabled people regularly travel. At the same time, the population of the UK is ageing and whilst older people are healthier and fitter for longer, there is a growing number of people who are generally less fit as a result of longevity and changing lifestyles.

The consequence is that, increasingly, people require barrier-free access, with even surfaces, whilst people with sensory and mobility difficulties require 'joined-up' access



– i.e. parking, facilities, access onto the route and access along the route must all be fully accessible.

#### **5.6.4 Health**

Health is a key issue for planners and for individuals. Policy makers are keen to improve health to increase productivity and to minimise the health budget, whilst there is growing interest amongst the public in being fit.

Whilst it is possible to engage in healthy activity in urban areas, and many people do, the number participating in healthy, regular exercise can be increased through the provision of attractive, high quality short circular routes for walking and jogging, and better joined up routes for cycling.

Softer measures can also make a contribution, for example providing guided and self-guided health walks and rides and supporting walking and cycling groups for under-represented groups – such as women, people with disabilities and people from ethnic minority communities.

##### **5.6.4.1 It's good to walk!**

Regular walking has been proven to provide many health benefits, particularly if undertaken for five thirty-minute sessions each week. There are both long and short term benefits to regular walking. In the long term it can reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, strokes, high blood pressure, type II diabetes, bowel cancer and reduce the development of osteoporosis.

The short term benefits of regular walking include weight loss, better strength and mobility, improved mood and a general feeling of better health and wellbeing.

In short, walking regularly can improve many aspects of your life. Most importantly, its free and no special equipment is required as all walks are along hard surfaces; many of our walks are accessible to pushchair and wheelchair users.

#### **5.6.5 Green infrastructure**

The term 'green infrastructure' is relatively new, and is best described as a network of multi-functional green spaces, green links, other green areas which link urban areas with the wider countryside.

Green infrastructure can provide a range of environmental, social and economic functions, including positive health benefits and the ROWIP can play a major role in helping deliver the benefits of investment in green infrastructure by providing and promoting convenient, high quality access to it.

#### **5.6.6 Needs of Horse Riders**

Horse ownership has increased rapidly in recent years across the country. This is putting increasing pressure on horse riding routes, in particular in the urban fringe, where demand is highest and where, often, provision is poorest and this can lead to difficulties for other users, for example poaching of bridleways.

There is a need to provide attractive, sustainable short routes for hacking and exercising horses. Ideally these should be circular and of 2-5 miles in length; they should be targeted to locations where there are high numbers of horses.

In 2004, all Tees Valley Authorities jointly funded a Tees Valley Equestrian Study which was carried out by McAuley-McGee Associates to carry out an in depth study of the Tees Valley area.

The full report and Executive Summary can be found on the Tees Forest website at [www.teesforest.org.uk/equestrianfullreport.htm](http://www.teesforest.org.uk/equestrianfullreport.htm); however, the recommendations from the full report are listed below:

1. Work should be set in hand to create a Tees Valley “Festival of the Horse”
2. A ‘Tees Valley Trail’ should be established, ‘wrapping’ around the conurbation of Tees Valley with further connections to Cumbria, Durham and North Yorkshire
3. The development of a framework partnership agreement between the key agencies with one nominated lead agency to provide the first point of contact.
4. The nominated lead agency, with the support of the partnership, should seek to promote a business cluster group; to identify and address issues of common concern to the sector, develop an effective interface with agencies, encourage competition and seek new markets for the local product.

#### **5.6.7 New Modes of Transport**

Recent years have seen the development of a number of new types of vehicles, which can be used in the countryside. These include:

- QPod – a small, road legal ‘dune buggy’ made from the same plastic as wheelie bins and with a 350cc engine
- Road legal quad bikes – a new generation of inexpensive machines. These machines have been on sale in France where there are now more road-registered quads than motorcycles
- Wheelman – a motorized ‘snowboard’ with steerable front wheel and 43 cc engine for sale at £695
- Mini Motorbike – pocket bikes have been available for some time, but cheap production in the Far East is reducing retail prices to around £300
- Alini – a motorized skateboard on sale for £145
- Personal hovercraft
- Paramotor – a small inflatable craft for two people attached to a hang glider with an engine/propeller

There is much confusion amongst the people who buy these machines over where they can legally use them. Most are not road-legal and so the pressure to use them in parks and other public open space is likely to increase.

#### **5.6.8 Landowners**

Whilst a small minority of private landowners go to some lengths to provide and encourage access, for the vast majority, public access is considered to be a costly inconvenience. There are no or few perceived benefits and many actual and potential costs.

If landowners are to be encouraged to be more positive in their approach to public access, planners need to work with them to find and promote ways in which landowners can derive income or other benefits from increased public access, for example through providing toll riding routes, cross country routes or secure parking for horse riders.

### 5.6.9 User Conflict

Research shows that most user conflict is exaggerated and that most conflict is perceived rather than actual, though there are undoubtedly some conflicts between users. Much of the conflict arises from ignorance, either of the access law – what kinds of users people might expect to encounter on a particular type of right of way – or of the needs and sensitivities of other types of users.

It is important that these conflicts are addressed through education, including:

- Increasing the general understanding of who is legally entitled to use different kinds of right of way
- Increasing awareness of users needs amongst specific types of user, in particular:
  - The rights of cyclists and motorised users amongst walkers
  - The needs of horse riders amongst all users

### 5.6.10 Young People and the Countryside

There is increasing, chiefly anecdotal evidence to suggest a growing lack of connectivity with the countryside/greenspace amongst young people. Recreation research suggests that habits in visiting the countryside amongst adults are formed and informed by their experience as children. The implication is that a lack of visiting the countryside/greenspace by children today could lead to a decline in visiting the countryside by adults in the future.

## 6.0 ASSESSMENT & ACTION PLAN

### 6.1 Conclusions

The Council will consider all relevant environmental and landscape impacts of any improvement and will carry out any assessments necessary.

Following analysis of the research into use and demand and the review of the network condition the following **Thirty two** conclusions are drawn. **Eighteen** are drawn from an analysis of use and demand (**Table 5**) and fourteen are drawn from analysis of the current network condition (**Table 6**). The implications for rights of way improvement planning are also identified.

**Table 5: Conclusions Arising From Use and Demand**

Conclusion	Implications For Rights of Way Improvement
1. Awareness of where local rights of way are is low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve the volume and distribution of information</li> <li>▪ Provide information where it is easy for people to find it, for example in the local press, at supermarkets, on local notice boards</li> </ul>
2. Many people travel out of the Borough to reach the access network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase use of the local access network to reduce the number of car journeys with positive downstream outcomes</li> </ul>
3. Over half of people in Stockton access rights of way from countryside access points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that routes and facilities at access points are managed to a high standard</li> <li>▪ Use countryside access points to promote the wider access network</li> </ul>

Conclusion	Implications For Rights of Way Improvement
4. Improving information about rights of way would encourage people to use them more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve the volume and distribution of information</li> <li>▪ Provide information where it is easy for people to find it, for example in the local press, at supermarkets, on local notice boards</li> <li>▪ We should look to improve the design and techniques used to provide information to make sure it is achieving what we intended as well as looking to improve volume and distribution</li> </ul>
5. The access network is used for a wide variety of activities and purposes, but walking, cycling, jogging and walking the dog are the most common	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure the access network meets the needs of all users</li> </ul>
6. Attractive places, easily accessible routes, good views, availability of car parking and facilities and wildlife/nature attract people to the network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that the access network is well managed</li> <li>▪ Promote routes which pass through attractive places</li> <li>▪ Manage the places through which access routes pass positively for wildlife</li> </ul>
7. The main constraints to use of the access network are lack of information, poor quality of routes, litter and dog fouling and poor connectivity of routes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tackle the barriers which currently prevent or discourage people from using the access network, in priority order</li> <li>▪ As well as tackling the barriers it is important to publicise the work done so that perception change</li> </ul>
8. Relatively few people currently find about access from promotional activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitor the effectiveness of existing promotion</li> <li>▪ Undertake research to find out how people would like to obtain information about the access network and provide the information accordingly</li> </ul>
9. Increasing traffic congestion, along with fuel prices, is likely to lead to an increase in demand for non car travel for work, school, shopping and for leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work through travel to work and travel to school plans to identify opportunities to provide enhanced or new access routes</li> <li>▪ Also identify opportunities in new development</li> </ul>
10. There is demand for short, circular routes which people can use direct from home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide at least one short, circular access route from every residential area in the Borough</li> </ul>
11. People with disabilities face the same barriers as fit people and some additional ones, in particular lack of information on conditions for people with disabilities, physical barriers and lack of continuity in provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consult with people who have disabilities in order to identify priority routes for improvements</li> <li>▪ Deliver a programme of access for all provision to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Replacement of stiles by gates</li> <li>○ Surface improvements on priority routes</li> <li>○ Ensuring 'joined-up' provision on priority routes (including getting to the routes)</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Continue/develop the Breakfree 'ethos'</li> </ul>
12. Increasing participation in regular physical activity (including walking, cycling and jogging) improves health and well-being with downstream impacts including lower demands on the health budget, fewer days work lost, etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a network of short, circular walking, cycling and jogging routes, which are easily accessible from residential areas</li> <li>▪ Promote the new routes through existing initiatives (Stepping Out, Do it by cycle, walking for health) and through leaflets, SBC website and the local press</li> <li>▪ Strengthen links with the Regional Development Agency, Government Office and use Area Agreements to help identify and deliver improvements</li> </ul>
13. Increasing people's access to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ As 12 above</li> </ul>

Conclusion	Implications For Rights of Way Improvement
and use of greenspace has a number of downstream impacts including on productivity, attractiveness of place to live and work, inward migration of skilled people, etc.	
14. Horse riding is increasing in popularity, but the availability of horse riding routes is generally poor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve the number and continuity of bridleways, especially in areas where high numbers of horses are kept</li> </ul>
15. Ownership and use of motorised recreational vehicles of various kinds is growing, yet awareness of where they can be used legally is low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify suppliers of motorised recreational vehicles</li> <li>▪ Identify places where vehicles can be used legally</li> <li>▪ Work with suppliers to provide information to purchasers on legal use</li> <li>▪ Involve enforcement agencies in policies and strategies</li> </ul>
16. In general, landowners are negatively inclined towards public access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with partners (other Tees Valley authorities, Natural England, the economic development agencies, etc) to identify ways in which to deliver benefits to landowners through access</li> <li>▪ Develop use of ROW as an educational resource in themselves</li> </ul>
17. Awareness of what types of users can legally use different types of right of way is low and this sometimes leads to user conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Deliver an education campaign to increase understanding of who can legally use a right of way</li> </ul>
18. Young people appear to be losing connectivity with the countryside	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Engage with young people to understand better their perceptions of and attitudes towards the countryside and act in response to their specific needs (since this is a national issue, action could be progressed with partners)</li> <li>▪ Run countryside events specifically for young people</li> </ul>

**Table 6: Conclusions Arising from Assessment of the Existing Network**

Conclusion	Implications for Rights of Way Improvement
19. The Definitive Map and Statement contain anomalies and need to be consolidated and regularised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The definitive map needs to be amended and consolidated (consolidation order)</li> <li>▪ The definitive map should be amended on a regular basis to an agreed timetable based on surveys of the route network</li> </ul>
20. Most of the rights of way network is currently classed as 'easy to use'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A well-resourced programme of maintenance is required in order to maintain the existing quality of the network</li> </ul>

21. The network is disjointed by trunk roads, railway lines and the River Tees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify strategic locations for crossing points and implement these as resources allow</li> <li>▪ Maximise the use of planning gain to implement safe crossings</li> </ul>
22. There are missing links between some settlements and some routes start and end in the rural area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide new access to fill the gaps between settlements</li> <li>▪ Provide new access to the countryside from settlements where existing countryside routes are isolated</li> </ul>
23. There are gaps in provision for cyclists and horse riders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Consult cyclists and horse riders to identify priorities</li> <li>▪ Provide new access to fill the gaps in priority order</li> </ul>
24. Much of the network is within agricultural land and as a result there are actual and perceived barriers to use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Work with landowners to minimise the negative impacts of ploughing, cropping, etc</li> <li>▪ Replace stiles with gates or gaps where appropriate</li> <li>▪ Include information on farming activity in rights of way publicity and information</li> </ul>
25. Surface conditions are poor in places, especially in the winter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve surfaces on high use routes</li> <li>▪ This could be done in consultation with all legal users. i.e. horse riders are sometimes put at a disadvantage by inappropriate surfaces on bridleways</li> </ul>
26. Information on the rights of way network has been poor in the past and is still limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ask people what are the best ways to provide them with information on rights of way</li> <li>▪ Act accordingly</li> </ul>
27. Less is known about the suitability of the network for people with physical and sensory disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Undertake a survey of the suitability of the network for people with disabilities</li> <li>▪ Remove physical barriers, including stiles</li> <li>▪ Improve surfaces</li> </ul>
28. A number of specific opportunities to improve the network for walkers have been identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Draw up and implement a prioritised list of improvements which will provide walking routes that people want</li> </ul>
29. There is a significant amount of permissive and conservation access within the Borough, but much of this is not promoted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Draw up and implement a prioritised list of improvements which will provide leisure and utility cycling routes that people want</li> </ul>
30. There are a number of dangerous road and rail crossings, which currently discourage use of some rights of way, or at best make them unpleasant to use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify improvements and alternative crossings and implement a prioritised programme of improvements</li> </ul>
31. Resources for management of rights of way are limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Raise awareness of the benefits of rights of way amongst Council members and officers</li> <li>▪ Look for external funding opportunities, explore the use of volunteers, work in partnership with other organisations</li> </ul>
32. The Teesdale Way, Country Parks and other countryside sites are	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that these facilities are managed to a high standard</li> </ul>

important aspects of Stockton's tourism offer	▪ Ensure that facilities are regularly up-dated so that they continue to meet the increasing expectations of visitors
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**6.2 What We Will Do in the Future – Our Action Plan**

In order to address the above implications for rights of way improvement, the following action plan has been drawn up and summarised in Table 7 on page 47.

**Costs** – An estimated cost required to implement each action shown:

£ Less than £5000  
 ££ Between £5000 – £50,000  
 £££ More than £50,000

**Table 7 - Our Action Plan**

No.	Conclusions from Consultations/Assessments	Ref.	Recommended Action	Key Stakeholders	Funding Sources	Estimated Completion Date	Relevant LTP Objective	Policy Area Delivered
1)	Definitive Map and Statement to be Consolidated	1.1	Identify timescales	SBC	SBC - £	2008	A, C, RS, QL	Transport
		1.2	Make Consolidation Order	SBC		2009	A, C, RS, QL	
		1.3	Reprint/distribute Definitive Maps	SBC/Stakeholders		2009	A, C, RS, QL	
		1.4	Consolidate on bi-annual basis	SBC		Bi-annual	A, C, RS, QL	
2)	Definitive Map Anomalies to be Regularised	2.1	Complete surveys	SBC/User Groups	SBC - ££	Jan. 06	A	Transport
		2.2	Re-consult	User Groups		2009	A	
		2.3	Make Orders	SBC/User Groups		2009	A	
		2.4	Amend Definitive Map	SBC		2009	A	
3)	Existing Network 'Easy to use' Currently 90%. Formalise Maintenance Procedures and Undertake Prioritised Works Programme	3.1	Introduce electronic maintenance records/schedule related to BVPI survey results	SBC/Contractors/Volunteers/Agencies	SBC/ Volunteers/Agencies - £	On-going	All Objectives	Transport Equality Health
		3.2	Further links with other agencies. Secure funding for NECF work team	SBC/NECF/Probation Services/CWT/BTCV		On-going	All Objectives	
4)	Complete Digitised Definitive Map and Electronic Records	4.1	Complete Draft Digitised Map and associated electronic records	SBC/Consultant	SBC - £	2009/10	A	
5)	Introduce Disabled 'Accessibility Assessment' Procedures	5.1	Complete staff training	SBC/Training Advisor	SBC/LTP - £	On-going	A, QL, RS	
		5.2	Complete priority and accessibility provision audit	SBC/User Groups/Field Fare Trust		2009/10	A, QL, RS	
6)	Introduce 'Barrier Free' Routes	6.1	Undertake prioritised 'Barrier Free' works within routes identified	SBC/User Groups/Landowners	LTP - £	2006 - ongoing	A, QL, RS	Transport Equality
		6.2	Produce publicity/information (leaflets/website)	SBC/User Groups/Landowners	SBC/LTP - £	2006 - ongoing	A, QL, RS	
7)	Making the Public Aware of the Rights of Way Network	7.1	Identify public needs	SBC/User Groups/General Public	SBC/LTP - £	2006 - ongoing	A, C, QL, RS	Transport Equality
		7.2	Co-ordinate and consolidate current publicity materials	SBC/DEFRA/CA	SBC/LTP - £	2006 - ongoing	A, C, QL, RS	



		7.3	Produce publicity material inc. IT/website	SBC/DEFRA /CA	SBC/LTP - £	2006 - ongoing	A, C, QL, RS	Health
		7.4	Publicity needs identified from consultation	SBC/User Groups/General Public	SBC/LTP - £	2007 – ongoing	A, C, QL, RS	
8)	Improving & Extending the Network for 'Walkers'	8.1	Further consultations with stakeholders	SBC/User Groups/Landowners/Adjacent LA's	SBC/CA - £	On-going	A, C, QL, RS	Transport Health Economic Development
		8.2	Undertake identified minor improvements	SBC/User Groups/Landowners/Adjacent LA's	SBC - ££	2006 - ongoing	A, C, QL, RS	
		8.3	Identify, prioritise and implement circular/alternative paths/improvements	SBC/User Groups/Landowners/Adjacent LA's	SBC/LTP/Landowners - ££	2006 - ongoing	A, C, QL, RS	
9)	Improving & Extending the Network for 'Equestrians'	9.1	Further consultations with stakeholders	SBC/BHS/Riding Stables/Landowners/Tees Forest/Adjacent LA's	SBC/CA - £	2008 - ongoing	A, C, QL, RS	Transport Health
		9.2	Undertake identified minor improvements	SBC/Volunteers/Agencies/Landowners/ Adjacent LA's	SBC - ££	2006 – ongoing	A, C, QL, RS	
		9.3	Identify, prioritise and implement circular/alternative paths/improvements	SBC/User Groups/Riding Stables/Landowners/Tees Forest/ Adjacent LA's	SBC/LTP/Landowners - £	2006 – ongoing	A, C, QL, RS	
		9.4	Develop 'Tees Valley Equestrian Study'	Policy Document Consultees	SBC/LTP - ££	2006 ongoing	A, C, QL, RS	
10)	Provision of Missing Links and Circular Paths ('Lost Ways')	10.1	Further consultations with stakeholders	SBC/User Groups/CA/Consultants	SBC/CA/LTP - £	Awaiting guidance from consultants	A, RS	Transport Health
		10.2	Identify and priorities links and circular routes/paths	SBC/Landowners/User Groups/CA	SBC/CA/LTP - £	Awaiting guidance from consultants	A, RS	
		10.3	Contact/confirm links and circular routes/paths with landowners/stakeholders/CA	SBC/CA	SBC/Landowners - £	Awaiting guidance from consultants	A, RS	
11)	Public Transport Provision	11.1	Provision of public transport information to enable alternative means of access to the countryside and rights of way network	SBC/Country Bus/Bus Operators	SBC/CA/LTP - £	2008/09	All Objectives	Transport Equality
12)	Compile Details of Permissive/Conservation Paths	12.1	Produce Borough Countryside Access Register/Map	SBC/DEFRA/Landowners	SBC - £	2007 – ongoing	A	Transport Health
13)	Improving & Extending the Network for 'Cyclists'	13.1	Further consultations with stakeholders	SBC/Sustrans/User Groups/Landowners/ Adjacent LA's	SBC - £	2006 – ongoing	All Objectives	Transport Health
		13.2	Undertake minor improvements	SBC/Sustrans/User Groups/Landowners/Adjacent LA's	SBC/LTP Landowners - ££	2006 – ongoing	All Objectives	
		13.3	Identify & prioritise improvements & alternative/linking routes	SBC/Sustrans/User Groups/Landowners/ Adjacent LA's	SBC/LTP Landowners - £	2006 – ongoing	All Objectives	
		13.4	Contact/confirm network improvements with stakeholders	SBC/Sustrans/User Groups/Landowners/Adjacent LA's	SBC/LTP Landowners - £	2006 - ongoing	All Objectives	

14)	Identify 'Dangerous' Crossings Rail/Trunk Road	14.1	Identify crossings	SBC/BR/HA/Stakeholders	SBC/LTP - £	2006 - ongoing	A, RS	Transport Health
		14.2	Identify alternative routes/crossings	SBC/BR/HA/Stakeholders	SBC/HA - £	2007 – ongoing	A, RS	
15)	Provision of Key Crossings over the River Tees & River Leven	15.1	Identify alternative routes/crossings	SBC/BR/HA/Stakeholders	SBC/LTP - £	2007- ongoing	A, RS	Transport Health
		15.2	Provision of bridge	SBC/BR/HA/Stakeholders	SBC/LTP - £££	2007 – ongoing	A, RS	
16)	Benefits to Tourism	16.1	Develop/promote access to Teesdale Way/Country Parks/visitor sites	SBC/Tourism Representatives	SBC/CA - ££	2006 - ongoing	QL	Economic Development
17)	Small-Scale Improvements Identified during Consultation	17.1	Prioritise and include in PROW work programme	SBC/Landowners/Voluntary External Agencies	SBC - £££	2006 - on-going	A	Transport Health Equality

LTP Objective abbreviations: A – Accessibility, AQ – Air Quality, C – Congestion, QL – Quality of Life, RS – Road Safety

**Table 6.3: Network Improvements ‘Already in Progress’**

No.	Improvements	How?	Benefits	
			Routes & Links	Users
1	<b>General Information e.g. maps, routes etc. to be available to the general public</b>	A guide was produced in 2007 to show the extent of PROW network. Due to the popularity of the guide, a re-print of a further 3000 guides has been arranged and will be available in December 2008.	All	Walkers Cyclists Horse-riders
2	<b>Better Access for ‘ALL’ to the PROW network</b>	Currently replacing existing stiles with kissing gates, with landowners permission and fixing trombone handles to existing bridle gates.	Priority Routes	Walkers Cyclists Horse-riders
3	<b>Improve signage along Teesdale Way</b>	Erected new signage in 2007 from Newsham to Yarm and waymarked full length of route (approx 20 miles) with dipper logo which is used by Durham County Council and Darlington Borough Council.	Teesdale Way	Walkers
4	<b>Provision of new footbridge over River Tees and Leven</b>	Connect2 Bid (Big Lottery Fund)	Linking Ingleby Barwick with Eaglescliffe, Thornaby and Yarm via a series of walking and cycling routes inc. new bridges across the River Tees and Leven	Walkers Cyclists Horse-riders
5	<b>Surface Improvements from –</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Viewpoint Surveys</li> <li>• Web based Questionnaires</li> <li>• Web based ‘Report a Problem’ on line form</li> </ul>	Re-cycled stone and construction of boardwalks to improve overall condition of route and construction of footbridge.	Aislaby Billingham Egglecliffe Ingleby Barwick Stockton Thornaby Wolviston Yarm	Walkers Cyclists Horse-riders
6	<b>Routes obstructed with housing development</b>	Survey of network has been carried out and 19 anomalies have been identified. Removal of anomalies from definitive map are required by legal order.	Regularise definitive map	Walkers Cyclists Horse-riders
7	<b>Signage and waymarking</b>	185 No. metal finger signs have been purchased over the last 4 years.	All	Walkers Cyclists Horse-riders
8	<b>Extension of Bridleway Network</b>	2007, permissive rights of way were granted within Wynyard Woodland Park which created additional 4km of routes to the existing 5.5km bridleway network which can be accessed from WWP.	Bridleway No.14 – Grindon and improvement links	Walkers Cyclists Horse-riders
9	<b>Dog bins on PROW network</b>	Forward requests onto Environment Health Department.	All	Walkers Cyclists Horse-riders
10	<b>Vegetation Works on Teesdale Way</b>	3 cuts to be carried during June, July and August ( <b>inc. spraying of giant hogweed</b> ).	Teesdale Way	Walkers

No.	Improvements	How?	Benefits	
			Routes & Links	Users
11	<b>Maintenance Works on PROW Network</b>	North East Community Forest, used on a full time basis in 2008 to carry out maintenance works in addition to further works carried out by the Probation Services <b>(Services reviewed annually)</b> .	All	Walkers Cyclists Horse-riders
12	<b>Information regarding PROW works being carried out on network and information required for temporary diversion and proposed diversion</b>	continue to produce newsletters to update users of PROW. Previous editions can be found on SBC PROW website.		Walkers Cyclists Horse-riders
13	<b>Railway Crossings</b>	Discussion carried out with Network Rail regarding provision of surface deck platforms.	Footpath No.27 - Stockton (Shearwater Lane, Norton) Footpath No.28 - Stockton ( Billingham Country Park) Footpath No.31 - Billingham (Cowpen Bewley Park) Footpath No.5 - Stockton (Yarm Road) Footpath No.9 - Carlton (Three Village Loop Walk)	Walkers
14	<b>Footbridge Crossings</b>	Discussion carried out with Highway Agency regarding provision of suitable crossing points over the A19/A66.	Footpath No.15 - Grindon (A19) NZ 445167 526879 Footpath No.6 - Maltby (A19) NZ 446586 513652 Footpath No.4 - Elton (A66) NZ 439931 517412 Footpath No.2 – Long Newton NZ 438116 516671	Walkers

**Table 6.4: Future Improvements to the Network**

No.	Improvements	How?	Benefits	
			Routes & Links	Users
1	<b>Additional signage and information on promoted routes</b>	Provide interpretation panels, new waymarks along promoted routes and provide leaflets.	All promoted routes	Walkers
2	<b>General information on PROW network</b>	Provide new signage to inc. destinations and distances along routes.	All	Walkers Cyclists Horse-riders
3	<b>Teesdale Way signage</b>	Erect new signage along route from Yarm to Newport Bridge ( <b>Middlesbrough</b> ).	Teesdale Way	Walkers Cyclists
4	<b>Additional information for PROW users</b>	Provide each Parish Council an extract of definitive of map to be displayed on village Green or village notice board.	All	Walkers Cyclists Horse-riders
5	<b>Extend PROW network</b>	Look into including Council's permissive paths onto definitive map and continue to discuss additional routes with private landowners.	All	Walkers Cyclists Horse-riders
6	<b>Information and Marketing</b>	Update PROW guide and leaflets for promoted routes.	All	Walkers Cyclists Horse-riders
7	<b>Provide better access to PROW network</b>	Continue to work with landowners to replace existing stiles with gaps or with alternative options.	Priority routes	Walkers Cyclists Horse-riders
8	<b>On-line mapping of PROW network</b>	Digitised mapping on SBC website.	All	Walkers Cyclists Horse-riders
9	<b>Extend Vegetation Clearance Contract</b>	Increase the number and lengths of paths each financial year.	All	Walkers Cyclists Horse-riders
10	<b>Public Consultation of the existing PROW network</b>	Continue with public consultation by 'Viewpoint Surveys', 'Press Release' via Stockton News magazine and web-based questionnaires.	All	Walkers Cyclists Horse-riders

## APPENDIX

1. Strategic Context
2. Viewpoint Survey
3. Views of People with Physical and Sensory Disabilities
4. Parish Maps

### APPENDIX 1: THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT FOR THE STOCKTON-ON-TEES RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

This Appendix describes the strategic framework for the Stockton-on-Tees Rights of Way Improvement Plan. The regional, sub-regional and local documents reviewed are listed here:

- North East England Regional Economic Strategy
- North East England Regional Spatial Strategy
- North East England Tourism Strategy
- North East Strategy for the Environment
- Cycle Tourism Strategy for the North East
- Tees Valley Structure Plan
- Tees Valley Renaissance
- Tees Valley Transport Strategy
- Tees Valley Cycle Strategy
- Tees Valley Tourism Strategy
- Tees Valley Area Tourism Management Plan
- Tees Forest Plan
- Tees Valley Equestrian Leisure Sector Strategy
- Tees Valley Bio-diversity Action Plan
- Tees Valley Green Infrastructure
- Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan
- Stockton Renaissance
- Stockton-on-Tees Final Local Transport Plan
- Stockton-on-Tees Cycling Strategy\*
- Stockton-on-Tees School and Workforce Travel Plan Strategy\*
- Stockton-on-Tees Road Safety Strategy\*
- Stockton-on-Tees Accessibility Strategy
- Stockton-on-Tees Community Strategy
- Stockton-on-Tees Sports and Physical Activity Strategy
- Stockton-on-Tees Health Promotion Strategy
- Stockton-on-Tees Parks, Open Spaces & Countryside Strategy

**Note: \* These are 'Daughter Strategies' contained within the Stockton Local Transport Plan**

## **North East England Regional Economic Strategy**

The Regional Economic Strategy (RES) is a strategy for the sustainable, inclusive economic growth necessary to underpin the fulfilment of the overarching vision<sup>3</sup> for the North East region. The shared vision will promote greater alignment across regional strategies and policies, and will facilitate a greater understanding of the kind of region we want to be in the future.

The strategy's vision for the North East is:

*The North East will be a region where present and future generations have a high quality of life. It will be a vibrant, self-reliant, ambitious and outward looking region featuring a dynamic economy, a healthy environment and a distinctive culture. Everyone will have the opportunity to realise their full potential.*

The strategy has a number objectives including:

- Increasing productivity
- Leadership and partnership working
- Supporting businesses
- Increasing levels of skills
- Economic inclusion
- Transport connections

Whilst the strategy focuses on measures to support economic regeneration, it recognises the importance of the natural environment and Greenspace as a key component of sustainable communities, which must be maximised through sound planning and management as part of making the North East a great place to live, work and visit.

The RES seeks to use and develop the region's natural, heritage, cultural and creative assets to:

- Create, attract and retain greater numbers of entrepreneurs, skilled workers and inward investment
- Significantly increase visitor numbers to the region, and therefore visitor spend
- Improve educational attainment, skills levels, economic inclusion and aspiration within the region.

The Stockton-on-Tees ROWIP can support the RES by:

- Maximising the value of access to local Greenspace to improve the quality of life for people who live in and visit the Borough

## **North East England Regional Spatial Strategy**

'VIEW: Shaping the North East' is the spatial strategy for North East England; it aims to determine how much development will take place in the region to 2021 and beyond, and where it will be located. It provides the long term framework for the region for developing a stronger economy and improving the quality of life of communities as places to live and work. It also sets out policies and proposals to protect the environment and identifies the priorities for transport investment in the North East.

The four main themes under which the locational strategy for the region is developed are to:

- Deliver economic prosperity and growth;
- Deliver sustainable communities;

- Conserve, enhance and capitalise upon the region’s diverse natural and built environment, heritage and culture; and
- Improve connectivity and accessibility within and beyond the region.

Policy 10, which relates to green belts, states that strategies, plans and programmes should support the establishment of strategic networks of green infrastructure that links existing and proposed woodland hubs with green corridors running through urban, suburban, urban fringe, and rural areas.

Policy 11, which addresses connectivity and accessibility, seeks to improve and enhance the internal and external connectivity and accessibility of the North East by a number of measures, including:

- Managing travel demand particularly by the promoting public transport, travel plans, and cycling and walking
- Reducing the need to travel by focusing development in urban areas that have good access to public transport, cycling and pedestrians
- Minimising the impact of the movement of people and goods on the environment and climate change

Policy 24 deals with sustainable communities and includes proposals to ensure that new development is well-served by walking and cycling routes

Key issues for the Stockton ROWIP are:

- Establishing a network of green routes to link urban areas with surrounding rural areas
- Providing walking and cycling routes between residential areas and work, school, the shops, etc
- Ensuring that new development is served by green routes

### **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 for the ROWIP is:

“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. There are seven parts to the strategy and overall success depends upon progression across all areas:

- Activities and attractions;
- Accommodation;
- Information provision;
- Infrastructure;
- Marketing, communication and branding;
- Business and workforce development;
- Planning and the environment.

With regards to attractions, the strategy highlights that those already existing must be focused on and new attractions must only be developed where there are obvious gaps in provision.



The document also comments that there are opportunities to develop tourism in both rural and urban areas of the North East and, most importantly, this should be done in line with the Sustainable Development Framework for the region.

One North East has identified the walking and cycling markets as key target niche markets for tourism in the North East. It is delivering marketing campaigns aimed at these markets. The ROWIP should consider:

- How improving the access network in Stockton-on-Tees can enable the Borough to benefit from regional marketing of walking and cycling tourism (although it is unlikely that the Borough will become a significant destination for these activities, it could benefit from long distance routes and from walking and cycling as a secondary activity pursued by visitors on a trip to the area)
- How this regional strategy can support the improvement, management and promotion of the access network in the Borough

### **North East Strategy for the Environment**

NESE sets out a strategic approach to address the main environmental challenges that the region faces. It identifies four broad themes:

- sustainable communities - how the environment and cultural assets contribute towards better places to live and work;
- resource management - making best use of our resources;
- environmental infrastructure - securing key natural, physical and cultural assets and realising their potential; and
- integration - action to meet the region's environmental objectives whilst also delivering social and economic benefits.

### **Gearing Up for Growth: A Cycle Tourism Strategy for the North East**

Gearing up for growth highlights the fact that cycle tourism is expected to continue to grow strongly in coming years. Due to the North East's rural cycling potential and its urban cycle routes the area is able to benefit from the growth in cycle tourism. Marketing has already been produced advertising the area's cycle tourism offer through promotional literature, websites and the 'Discover Northumbria on 2 Wheels' campaign.

Facilities and services needed for cycling visitors are also being developed, with some having already been put into place and the strategy aims to build on this. The strategy's objectives are:

- To ensure that the full economic benefits available from cycle tourism are met;
- To help the North East become one of the UK's leading destinations for cycle breaks;
- To encourage visitors to use cycles and to reduce the use of cars;
- To improve cycle provision for local people.

More specifically the strategy hopes to; maximise the potential of any existing or planned routes, develop existing routes to include more circular routes to appeal to tourists, to ensure routes and cycling infrastructures are maintained and improved continuously, to ensure there is

coordination between current and future cycle tourism products and to establish well coordinated marketing campaigns that aim at specific target markets.

The strategy highlights one of the benefits of the development of cycle tourism as being an environmentally sustainable form of tourism, having a low impact on both the environment and communities. It can also help to reduce the number of cars used by visitors and therefore reduce the problems associated with visitor traffic.

There are three priorities for action, as follows:

- Developing and promoting rural cycling and mountain biking breaks in Northumberland and County Durham
- Developing and promoting recreational cycling day visits in Tyne & Wear, Tees Valley and County Durham
- Developing and promoting cycle touring holidays for overseas visitors

The strategy identifies the main target market for Tees Valley as 'recreational cycling day visits by the local population'

Issues for Stockton's ROWIP are:

- Developing day cycling routes in the Borough or jointly with adjoining Boroughs for use by residents of Tees Valley
- Providing services to cycle tourists using the long distance routes which pass through or close to the Borough

### **Tees Valley Structure Plan**

The Tees Valley Structure Plan is being replaced by the North East England Regional Spatial Strategy (see above).

### **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 groups of policies, as follows:

- 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

Key issues for the Stockton ROWIP are:

- Creating a network of safe and convenient strategic cycle routes in the Borough which link to strategic routes across the Tees Valley
- Establishing minimum standards in place for the maintenance and sweeping of cycle routes
- Providing adequate cycle parking at cyclists' 'destinations'

- Establishing systems to ensure cyclists' needs are taken into account in new highway and traffic management schemes and at new junctions
- Providing adequate cycle awareness and cycle proficiency training
- Ensuring that the Council leads by example by doing all it can to provide facilities for staff who wish to cycle to and during work

### **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 in Tees Valley has moved on considerably over the past 3 years. A new tourism strategy is to be developed by Visit Tees Valley (formerly the Tees Valley Area Tourism Partnership) during 2007.

In the effective absence of a tourism strategy for the sub-region, the Tees Valley Area Tourism Management Plan, which applies from 2005 to 2008 is a key strategic document. The draft has ten objectives, which align with the Regional Tourism Strategy.

It also identifies product strengths and the associated target markets as shown in **Table 8**.

**Table 8:** Tees Valley Main Products and Experiences and Associated Target Markets

<b>Current Main Products &amp; Experiences</b>	<b>Target Markets</b>
The Urban Core Experience (encapsulated mainly by the Stockton and Middlesbrough focus)	Good time singles (B/C1), professional dinks (ABC1), caring parents (B/C1)
The Maritime experience (especially related to the Hartlepool and coastal areas)	Caring parents (B/C1), new Empty Nesters (ABC1), SKI Brogues (AB)
Activities and Seaside focus (predominantly in Redcar and Cleveland and incorporating Hartlepool along the Coastal Arc)	Caring parents (B/C1), new empty nesters (ABC1), ski brogues (AB), Busy yuppies (AB)
Service Hub, especially Darlington, providing a service focus for the hinterland and on major transport routes	Good time singles (B/C1), new empty nesters (ABC1), professional dinks (ABC1)
Gateway to the North York Moors (incorporating the market town of Guisborough)	Caring parents (B/C1), professional dinks (ABC1), new empty nester (ABC1)

*Source: Tees Valley Area Tourism Partnership Management Plan 2005 - 2008*

Issues for Stockton's ROWIP are:

- Can the access network contribute to tourism in Stockton by providing an additional activity for its target markets?
- How can the access network in Stockton link into access provision in other Tees Valley Authorities to create a sub-regional activity offer to visitors?
- Can Stockton's network of routes link into the wider Tees Valley network to provide access to the North York Moors, Teesdale and routes in County Durham

Tees Valley Tourism has recently adopted target markets and a marketing strategy

### **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. Community Forests are a long term project and the Tees Forest could take up to 30 years to establish.

A '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. Recreational activity will focus on these Gateways and Greenways as well as on 'Open Access Areas' providing for a range of outdoor activities and 'Participation Programmes' to involve everyone in the Community Forest.

The Plan has a number of 'Local Management Zones'. Zones LMZ2, LMZ3, LMZ4, LMZ5, LMZ6, LMZ7 and LMZ13 cover Tees Forest activity in Stockton. The strategies for this zone, which relate to access are as follows:

#### LMZ2 Greatham Corridor

- Extend the influence of Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park into neighbouring areas, including the proposed International Nature Reserve
- Work with farmers and landowners to diversify land-use, enhance biodiversity and provide new and improved access routes
- Establish a Greenway route between Summerhill and Cowpen Bewley, and provide links to the International Nature Reserve

#### LMZ3 Wynyard

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

#### LMZ4 Thorpe Beck Valley

- Agri-environmental measures will be utilised to improve the management of grasslands, meadows, wetlands, and the creation of new access opportunities
- Extend the influence of the Castle Eden Walkway by securing additional neighbouring land for the creation of new open access community woodland areas

#### LMZ5 West Stockton Rural Fringe

- Recognise and realise the potential for both commercial forestry and recreation in this zone
- Develop a new Greenway between Stockton and Darlington for recreation and travel by non-motorised means of transport

#### LMZ6 River Tees Corridor

- Exploit opportunities for the development of both formal and informal recreation, including water based pursuits on the River Tees
- Assist other organisations to develop further open access areas, new and improved linkages, including paths and trails and a proposed bridge across the River Tees
- Retain the Leven Valley as a haven for wildlife and biodiversity, by focusing on informal access only

#### LMZ7 Middlesbrough and South Tees Rural Fringe

- Community woodlands adjacent to the conurbation will be sought to absorb recreational pressures
- Where appropriate, these will be funded by developer contributions secured by planning agreements

- Good access links along the beck valleys and other routes into the urban area will be fostered and these will intersect and joint with a major proposed new east - west Greenway
- The development of a new primary Gateway site at Lingfield Farm, with suitably designed countryside access links, will be actively encouraged

#### LMZ13 Tees Urban Green Corridor

- Develop selected woodlands and the Tees Barrage as recreational foci and provide opportunities for healthy living and for tackling social exclusion in nearby communities. Promote the potential of the Teesdale Way as a recreational route and enhance links between it and other recreational and green commuter routes
- Safeguard environmentally sensitive areas, such as Billingham Beck wetlands

Key issues for the Stockton ROWIP are as follows:

- Developing new access in line with the strategy, including two major access routes – the Darlington to Stockton Greenway and the Summerhill to Cowpen Bewley Greenway with links to the Tees Valley International Nature Reserve
- How can the residents of Stockton gain optimum access to the Tees Forest?
- Linking the access network to Forest Access Points

#### **Tees Forest Countryside Sport & Recreation Strategy**

The strategy describes 4 core building blocks of recreation in the Tees Forest, as follows:

- Gateway sites - which provide visitor facilities and information and facilitate access into the neighbouring countryside
- Greenway routes - which provide multi-user access to The Tees Forest area and complement the Public Rights of Way network
- Open access areas - which provide for a variety of recreational experiences
- Participation - programmes to involve everyone in the Community Forest

The strategy contains a number of actions to support walking, walking for health, recreational cycling and horse riding, as follows:

##### *Walking - Health Walks*

1. Develop further partnerships with local authorities, health authorities and other agencies to establish new programmes of health walks
2. Develop networking
3. Raise awareness of the benefits of walking in greenspace and the countryside
4. Link Health Walks initiatives with Greenways and Countryside Gateway sites
5. Run a programme of guided walks, promoted by leaflets and publicity
6. Co-ordinate a training programme for leaders to take the Health Walks
7. Investigate the appointment of a 'Walking the Way to Health' co-ordinator for Stockton
8. Investigate the prospective employment of a Countryside Sport & Health Officer, to coordinate a programme of activities

##### *Walking - Public Rights Of Way*

1. Develop activities, events and initiatives that promote access, enjoyment and understanding of Public Rights of Way to all
2. Ensure the retention and maintenance of the existing Public Rights of Way network
3. Develop Local Access Forums to look at ways of developing the network

#### 4. Prepare Improvement Plans to meet the needs of the users

##### *Cycling – Recreational*

1. Ensure that safe cycle routes are identified for individuals and families along bridleways, Quiet Roads and lanes and that these routes are promoted and published in a map format for everyone to use.
2. Seek opportunities to link the existing bridleway network to enable circular routes
3. Produce leaflets to promote off/on road cycle routes aimed particularly the family
4. Develop new Mountain Bike and BMX facilities in appropriate countryside settings
5. Investigate the issue of appropriate surface improvements on well used leisure routes

##### *Horse Riding*

1. Look for opportunities to develop permissive routes for horse riders, making use of private land
2. Assess the number of farms offering livery facilities within The Tees Forest and investigate provision in the network

A number of issues arise from this strategy for the ROWIP, in particular:

- Developing networks of routes from gateway sites
- Improving the quality of the existing access network
- Creating new access to improve conditions especially for higher rights users
- Improving safety and promotion

#### **Tees Valley Equestrian Leisure Sector Strategy**

The objectives of the strategy are:

- To increase the 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

The strategy has twelve recommendations, as follows:

- Work should be set in hand to create a Tees Valley 'Festival of the Horse'
- A 'Tees Valley Trail' should be established which wraps around the Tees Valley conurbation with connections west to Cumbria, north to Durham and south to the North York Moors
- A framework partnership agreement between the key agencies should be developed with one nominated lead agency to provide first point of contact
- A nominated lead agency, with the support of the partnership, should promote a business cluster group
- Supplementary planning documents should be produced to provide a comprehensive and consistent approach to the equestrian sector
- A set of comprehensive, but direct, guidance notes should be published
- Investigating the feasibility of developing an extensive tolled route system

- Consideration should be given to developing a Tees Valley framework
- 1% of LTP resources over a 5-year period should be allocated to a programme of ROW maintenance, improvement and extension
- Debating the issue of horses and road use
- Exploring options for 'safe riding' qualifications
- Exploring opportunities to widen the riding offer in the Tees Valley

The strategy identifies three key concerns, as follows:

- The availability and cost of basic training
- The dearth of off-road riding opportunities
- The absence of a strategy for developing the equine industry

Issues for the Stockton ROWIP are:

- Can the bridleway network in the Borough be improved/extended?
- Are there opportunities to introduce more people to horse riding – especially young people?
- How can the ROWIP contribute to the strategic development of the equine industry in Tees Valley?
- Is there an opportunity to develop a tolled route system in the Borough?

### **Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan**

The Tees Valley Biodiversity Action Plan identifies priority habitats and species. Action plans have been prepared for a number. Issues concerning access and biodiversity include:

- Disturbance to breeding or migrant species, especially birds, though in Tees Valley, Water Vole and Otter also fall into this category
- Trampling of vegetation

Key issues for the ROWIP are:

- Minimising negative impacts on priority habitats and species through management and consultation
- Maximising opportunities for interpretation of nature conservation to increase people's knowledge wildlife and of how to behave to minimise their impacts on it

### **Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy and Action Plan**

The Tees Valley Joint Strategy unit, in partnership with the five Tees Valley local authorities, the Environment Agency, the North East Community Forest, One North East, the Northern Way sub-region.

The Strategy is being developed to show how green infrastructure and 'quality of place' can play a key role in helping to achieve the economic and sustainable vision for the Tees Valley. A well planned green infrastructure network will provide many positive benefits. As well as an enhanced image and environment that will promote the Tees Valley as a high quality place to live, work, invest and visit, it could also help to address issues such as adapting to climate change, enhancing biodiversity, and providing opportunities for exercise, sport and better health.

Consultation on the draft Strategy has been carried out 2007 and the partners are now preparing an Action Plan that will show how the Green Infrastructure Strategy can be implemented.

The Action Plan will:

Identify existing and potential projects/activities over the period to 2016;  
Show sources of existing/potential funding, together with project partners and lead organisations;  
Show how projects support the aims and objectives of the Strategy;  
Identify gaps in green infrastructure provision and show how these could be addressed, and  
Set out arrangements for monitoring progress and reviewing priorities.

### **River Tees Navigation Strategy 2002**

The plan identified sites for sustainable development along the river, from the Tees Barrage to Low Worsall, and of the river corridor for sport, recreation and leisure.

Issues for the Stockton ROWIP are as follows:

- Provide continuous green corridor and identify strategic green infrastructure projects/links

### **Stockton Local Plan (1997) and the emerging Local Development Framework**

Local Development Framework was introduced by the Government in 2004 and will eventually replace the 'old' system of Local Plans. The Local Development Framework (LDF) is not a plan, but a folder of planning documents forming a single source for all the Local Authority's planning policies. The Council is currently preparing the Core Strategy, which will be the key strategic local development document. It sets out the long term vision, objectives and policies that will guide proposals in other local development plan documents. It is anticipated that the Core Strategy will be adopted in 2009. It will be followed by other Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents which will include site specific policies and provide a greater detail on various topics. Some policies from 1997 Local Plan have been deleted, whilst others have been saved until they are replaced by policies in the LDF.

The Core Strategy identifies a number of key drivers for a change and seeks to address these with policies which will strengthen economic performances, maintain population growth, encourage inward investment, and improve the image of the Borough as a place to live and work. In order to achieve these aims, the Core Strategy makes reference to the following requirements;

- Diversify and modernise the economic base;
- Support existing industrial "cluster" and businesses;
- Increase the levels of skill on offer and the qualifications of the resident workforce
- Realise the potential of the presence of Durham Tees Valley Airport and the University of Durham Queen's Campus at Stockton;
- Improve and revitalise the Borough's town centres;
- Improve local accessibility to jobs, services and facilities
- Improve links between the Borough and the rest of the Tees Valley and the North East region to support economic growth of the area and the Tees Valley City Region as a whole;
- Make the most of the Borough's natural assets, such as the River Tees and its valley, the Teesmouth National Nature Reserve, Saltholme RSPB Nature Reserve;
- Maximise the use of renewable energy;
- Improve the leisure, sport, recreation and cultural offer of the area;
- Improve and enhance the Borough's historic environment;
- Improve the environment, particularly through the re-use of previously developed land;
- Build on past successes, such as the redevelopment at Teesdale, to continue regeneration of the Borough and in partnership with Middlesbrough, provide city-scale facilities to serve the City Region.



The Core Strategy also includes a Vision for the Borough and sets out 11 Objectives. Improving quality of life is central to the document and the importance of access to green space for recreation is recognised.

The Vision is as follows:

Situated at the heart of the Tees Valley City Region, and taking advantage of its historic position astride the river, Stockton-on-Tees is a Borough leading the way in economic regeneration. Previously developed areas of land along the River Tees corridor have been brought back into use, in line with the aspirations of the Stockton - Middlesbrough Initiative, and links to surrounding areas strengthened. The upgraded and regenerated centres of Stockton, Billingham and Thornaby, in addition to Yarm provide a range of improved retail and related facilities. Residents have access to the very best in housing, education and training, health care, employment opportunities, sport recreational and cultural facilities, which has created safe, healthy prosperous inclusive and sustainable communities, so providing a better quality of life for all. The diversity, quality and character of the natural and built environment together with the Borough unique historic assets, are valued, protected, enhanced and optimised for the benefit of everyone. A world class, integrated Tees Valley-wide public transport network, and provides a realistic alternative to travelling by private car.

Proposed core strategy policies include :

Policy 1: The Spatial Strategy. This policy sets out the broad locations where most development will take place.

Policy 2: Sustainable Transport. This policy outlines the requirements for new development to ensure that people have a choice of transport means so there is an alternative to using the private car. Additionally, the policy outlines how public transport infrastructure will be improved and how traffic congestion will be addressed.

Policy 3: Sustainable Living. This policy sets standards to make new development more sustainable in terms of construction and energy efficiency, to meet the climate change agenda, to improve and provide a safe environment, and so it can be adapted to changing circumstances.

Policy 4: Economic Regeneration. This policy states how much land will be provided for employment uses, saying broadly where this will be, and supports other initiatives to provide more jobs in the area.

Policy 5: Town Centres. This policy acknowledges that no further allocations for retail development are required during the life of the Core Strategy. Stockton will continue in its role as the Borough's main shopping centre, supported by the district centres of Billingham, Thornaby and Yarm. No changes to the shopping hierarchy are proposed.

Policy 6: Community Facilities. This policy recognises that additional services and facilities will be required to meet the needs of a growing population.

Policy 7 Housing Distribution and Phasing. This policy sets out the Borough's housing requirement up to 2024, and states broadly where this will be located. No new allocations are needed before 2016.

Policy 8: Housing Mix and Affordable Housing. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that a broad range of housing types, sizes and tenures are built, including affordable housing. Density of development will broadly accord with national standards, except in areas characterised by mature dwellings and large gardens.

Policy 9: Provision for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. This policy sets out criteria for the provision of accommodation for these specific groups.

Policy 10: Environmental Protection. This policy sets out how the Council will protect and enhance the natural and built environment.

Policy 11: Planning Obligations. This policy requires all new development to contribute towards the provision of additional infrastructure resulting from that development.

Issues for the Stockton ROWIP are as follows:

- Creating a network of access routes to and within the Borough's Greenspace
- Creating walking and cycling routes from homes to work, school and other facilities for people to use without a car
- Providing access to attractive wildlife sites

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- Providing access to attractive wildlife sites

### **Stockton-on-Tees Final Local Transport Plan 2006-2011**

The plan identifies five key implications for future transport strategy as follows:

- Greater demand for travel to health and education facilities, throughout the day and the week
- More dispersed travel patterns due to a wider choice of facilities
- An increased need to provide travel opportunities for those without access to a car
- Access to local services and facilities by all transport modes
- The need to review existing public transport networks in the light of changing demands

The plan seeks to achieve the following 5 outcomes:

- Enhanced community health
- Enhanced social inclusion
- Better access to educational facilities by a range of accessible modes
- Enhanced personal safety
- A sustainable transport network

The Vision for the strategy has five aims, each with supporting objectives, as summarised in **Table 9**. The ROWIP can help deliver on objectives highlighted in yellow, which represent the issues for the ROWIP.

**Table 9:** Vision for Long Term Transport Strategy in Stockton-on-Tees

Aim	Objectives
<b>Accessibility:</b> Improve opportunities for all to access health, education, jobs, leisure and food outlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improved public transport network coverage</li> <li>▪ More integrated transport links</li> <li>▪ Better information</li> <li>▪ Increased reliability of transport systems</li> <li>▪ Reduce cost of travel</li> <li>▪ Encourage more cycling and walking trips</li> </ul>
<b>Congestion:</b> Reduce the rate of traffic growth within the Borough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase use of more sustainable modes</li> <li>▪ Promote awareness of sustainable modes</li> <li>▪ More efficient management and use of existing infrastructure</li> </ul>
<b>Road Safety:</b> Reduce the incidence and severity of casualties on the Borough's roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New and improved highways; adopt 'safe by design' principles</li> <li>▪ Take account of greater incidence in priority neighbourhoods</li> <li>▪ Promotion and awareness of road safety</li> </ul>
<b>Air Quality:</b> Reduce the risk to health by traffic generated pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Maintain statutory air quality objectives</li> <li>▪ Implement measures to reduce PM10 levels across the Borough</li> </ul>
<b>Quality of Life:</b> Improve transport's contribution to our community's quality of life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement measures to enhance safety and reduce fear of crime</li> <li>▪ Address noise and climate change issues</li> <li>▪ Enhance landscape and biodiversity</li> <li>▪ Enhance the quality of the public realm</li> <li>▪ Improve community transport</li> <li>▪ Promote healthier communities</li> </ul>

Interventions in relation to walking and cycling proposed in the LTP are as follows:

- Improving common desire lines to and from bus stops
- Developing additional walking routes and pedestrian crossings
- Developing a network of on and off road cycle routes that feed into the National Cycle Network including at:
  - Stockton – to serve the town centre
  - Between Hartburn, Elton, Long Newton and the Borough boundary (NCN Route 14)
  - In the vicinity of schools and other education establishments

Implications for the Stockton ROWIP are:

- Contributing to reduced congestion and improved air quality by providing attractive walking and cycling routes to encourage modal shift
- Contribute to road safety through training, awareness and design
- Contribute to quality of life by providing attractive routes and increasing awareness of them for use by all

## **Stockton-on-Tees Cycling Strategy**

The aim of Stockton's Cycling Strategy is

***“More people cycling, more often, and more safely”***

To meet this aim, the objectives are:

- To develop a seamless hierarchy of cycle routes, allowing cyclists to access all parts of the Borough
- To reintroduce and reformulate an officers' cycling group consisting of representatives for Regeneration and Neighbourhood Development, Road Safety, Traffic Management, Transport Planning, Development Control, Sustrans, Tourism, Leisure and Countryside, and Highways Maintenance
- To develop and implement a robust planning and design process to deliver cycle-friendly infrastructure as an integral part of the Borough's transport network
- To develop and implement a suite of 'soft' measures including promotion and training
- To increase the number of cycling trips throughout the Borough through a campaign of awareness and education
- To provide a safe, efficient and well maintained cycling network;
- To reduce the actual and perceived dangers to cyclists
- To provide more and better cycle facilities, to remove theft as a barrier to cycling as a transport mode choice
- To provide for the needs of cyclists at all stages of the land use planning and development control processes
- To ensure that the Authority adopts hierarchies of users and infrastructure which prioritise the travel choices available to promote sustainable modes of travel

Work is proposed within the following Policy Areas

### 1. Cycling Facilities

- Hierarchy of Cycle Routes
- Cycle Route Network
- Design and Maintenance Standards
- Cycle Parking Facilities

### 2. Cyclists' Needs

- Cycle Audits, incorporating SAPs (Scheme Assessment Process)
- Road Junctions and Cyclists
- Traffic Calming and Cyclists
- Cycle Parking at New Developments
- Integration with Public Transport

### 3. Promotion, Awareness and Safety

- Promotion of Cycling Facilities
- Promotion of Cycle Routes for Recreation
- Travel Awareness Campaigns
- Cyclist Training

#### 4. Workplace Cycling

- Cycle Parking and Changing Facilities at Council Buildings
- Cycle User Mileage Allowance
- Provision of Pool Bikes
- Assisted Cycle Purchase
- Assisted cycle
- Working Practices

#### 5. Consultation and Involvement

#### 6. Cycle Monitoring

The Cycling Strategy will support the ROWIP by providing additional facilities for cyclists. The ROWIP should include measures to improve the network for cycling including enhancing existing bridleways and creating new bridleways and traffic free cycling routes.

### **Stockton-on-Tees School and Workforce Travel Plan Strategy**

The overall Aims of this Strategy are:

- All schools to have an authorised Travel Plan within the lifetime of the Strategy
- Workplace Travel Planning and monitoring to be integrated into the planning process
- All businesses to have information enabling them to develop a Travel Plan
- Establishment and continuance of a robust monitoring system for travel planning

The strategy seeks to address the Central/Local Government shared priorities for transport, which are:

- Congestion; Accessibility
- Road Safety
- Air Quality
- Other Quality of Life

### **Stockton-on-Tees Road Safety Strategy**

The LTP acts as an over-arching strategy incorporating:

- School and Workplace Travel Plan Strategy
- Cycling Strategy
- Walking Strategy
- Motorcycling Strategy

Its aims are:

- Education – to raise the level of road user knowledge
- Training – to target specific road user skills development
- Publicity – to raise the profile of specific safety issues
- Engineering – to improve the road environment
- Promotion of risk management products for business and workplaces

The strategy contains a number of training, engineering and other measures targeted at vulnerable users.

The key issue for the ROWIP is improving traffic free routes between residential areas and schools and workplaces by the variety of measures available.

### **Stockton-on-Tees Community Strategy**

There are several strands to the Sustainable Community Strategy Vision for 2021, as follows:

- Stockton-on-Tees at the heart of an economically successful Tees Valley
- A cleaner, greener Stockton
- A safe Stockton
- A Borough where every child matters
- A healthy Stockton
- A cohesive society
- People in Stockton grow older with dignity and maintain a high quality and independent lifestyle
- Culture underpins all aspects of life in the Borough

There are five priority improvement themes as follows:

1. *Economic Regeneration and Transport* - working in partnership across the Tees Valley to bring more people into employment, to strengthen the knowledge base, to promote a more entrepreneurial culture and to strengthen key industrial clusters; working to improve connectivity within and external to the city core by all forms of transport
2. *Liveability* - working to improve the quality of life of local people, through engaging with local communities, promoting cohesive communities and improving the local environment and housing
3. *Safer Communities* - tackling crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour within local communities
4. *Children and Young People* - promoting the health, well-being and achievement of children and young people, and tackling inequalities and disadvantage experienced by some children and their families
5. *Healthier Communities and Adults* - promoting healthier communities by tackling key public health issues such as smoking, obesity and drug and substance misuse; providing care and support for vulnerable adults and older people within our communities

Key issues are:

Ensuring the ROWIP contributes to the Community Strategy objectives, including – ensuring that the access network is of a high quality and that Stockton's residents know where it is and what they can do on it; that they can use it conveniently and safely.

## **Stockton-on-Tees Sport & Physical Activity Strategy**

“To use physical activity, in its widest context, to improve the health, wellbeing and quality of life of the local community within Stockton-on-Tees”

The strategic aims are as follows:

- Healthy Activities - To deliver specific physical activity programmes for identified groups, considering national and local issues, to reduce health inequalities
- Development – To develop and promote health improvement initiatives to a wider audience
- Education and Lifelong Learning – To create more opportunities, through education, for participation in healthy lifestyle activities
- Partnerships – Improve and strengthen partnerships between health professionals, community groups and leisure providers

The ROWIP should seek to create conditions where people can use the access network easily to engage in physical activity – perhaps through the creation of short circular routes which can be used for walking and jogging, and of circular cycling and riding routes.

## **Stockton-on-Tees Health Improvement Plan**

Key interventions in the Stockton HIP are as follows; effort is being targeted in the most deprived (and unhealthy) wards.

- Local delivery of Obesity, Alcohol, Smoking Cessation Strategies
- Community Health Champions
- Weight management courses run by community nursing
- Smoking cessation target vulnerable groups
- Healthy walk projects
- Address particular areas of binge drinking, alcohol related crime & disorder through neighbourhood partners

The ROWIP can contribute to the HIP by the creation and promotion of guided and self-guided health routes.

## **Stockton-on-Tees Parks, Open Spaces and Countryside Strategy**

The strategy has six key aims which are explained here:

**Improving the Environment** by improving the maintenance and management of all green areas within the Borough. Particular attention will be applied to large areas of open space situated in beck valleys, urban woodlands and the creation of highly accessible linear routes from urban areas to the attractive areas of countryside within the Borough.

**Opportunities for All** The Council will ensure that all sections of the community have good access to parks, open spaces and countryside. A strong emphasis will be placed on the requirements of people with special needs, women, children and those people living in socially disadvantage areas.

**Health and Well Being** The promotion of opportunities for all residents of the Borough to lead an active and healthy lifestyle through the use of parks and countryside facilities.

### **Partnerships**

The Council will build on the existing support of many external funding agencies in an attempt to maximise resources for the implementation of proposals. Opportunities for establishing closer links with Town and Parish Councils and community groups will be explored.

**Implementation of the Community Forest** The Boroughs designation as part of the Tees Forest area has already contributed towards the creation of large areas of new woodland during

recent years. It is widely recognised that Stockton has enormous potential for the further implementation of the community forest initiative.

**Best Value Management** The Council will ensure that parks, open spaces and countryside are managed in a cost effective and efficient manner meeting the requirements of best value and satisfying the aspirations of the local community. A Community Plan has been produced for the Borough which identifies various policy platforms aimed at addressing problems and issues. The Parks and Countryside Section will work within the guidelines of the 5 policy commitments contained in the Community Plan:

- Secure a safe and attractive environment for current and future generations
- Promote the social well being and safety of the community
- Improve the health of the local community
- Further regenerate the Borough and improve the local economy
- Improve opportunity and achievement in education and life long learning
- A good network of formal local parks

Key issues for the ROWIP are:

- Ensuring safe, convenient, high quality access to green spaces from residential areas
- Creating access for all
- Encouraging use of the access network to increase participation in healthy exercise

### **Regeneration Strategy for Stockton Borough 2007 - 2012**

Regeneration Strategy collates the vision of the many regeneration projects already being delivered in partnership with our national, regional and local partners, and those in development for the future.

The Borough faces the greatest degree of physical change for a century. The regeneration of former industrial areas linked to high quality development of Town Centres and an improvement in housing choice and quality across the Borough, means that there will be an exciting transformation in facilities and opportunities for local people.

The involvement of local people is also fundamental to the delivery of the Strategy and the projects within it have been developed with extensive consultation with local communities.

The Council recognises that a high quality of 'place' is fundamental to delivering sustainable regeneration of the Borough. To that end, the Regeneration Strategy focuses on this as a driver for improvement. It also highlights the linkages to economic success and social opportunity that stem from it. The vision for the Regeneration Strategy is:

“To deliver a step change in the quality of place, and use it to help deliver the sustainable economic and social renaissance of Stockton-on-Tees”



## APPENDIX 2: VIEWPOINT SURVEY

The following survey was sent out to the full Viewpoint panel in 2004. In total 885 questionnaires were completed giving an overall response rate of 55% giving an overall confidence interval of 2.21%. The analysis that follows details the top line findings from the survey.

### SECTION ONE – PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

The Government wants to improve facilities for walkers, cyclists, horse riders and people with mobility problems. In order to help achieve this, Stockton Council wants to improve the local paths network within the borough. Public Rights of Way include bridleways and walking and cycling routes that are not open to motorised traffic. They include for example, paths between villages, the workplace, shops and other local services as well as providing recreational opportunities in the open countryside. Your comments will be used to help us develop these facilities in the future. They will also influence the development of the Stockton on Tees Local Transport Plan.

#### Which of the statements below best describes you?

I am not really sure where my local Rights of Way are <i>Please go to Section B</i>	56%
I am confident that I know where the local Rights of Way are and use them <i>Please go to Section A</i>	44%

### SECTION A

How often do you use local Rights of Way?

Most days	Weekly	Monthly	Occasionally	Rarely
16%	18%	8%	35%	14%

Mainly at weekends	Never	Don't know
4%	1%	4%

Which local Rights of Way do you use most often (please list up to 5)?

Right of Way	Percentage
Castle Eden	18%
Cycle Network	11%
Yarm / Eaglescliffe / Preston Park	9%
Billingham	8%
Riverside	5%
Teesdale / Cleveland Way	4%
Norton	3%
Greens Lane / Hartburn	3%
Tees Barrage	2%
Kirklevington	2%
Cowpen Bewley	2%
Thornaby / Sainsby Beck	2%
Railway line	2%
Hilton	2%
Wynyard	1%
Fairfield	1%
Basselton	1%
Darlington Lane	1%

Listed below are reasons why you may use local Rights of Way.

Walking	35%	Cycling	11%	Riding	*
Travelling to work	3%	Getting to school, shops etc	9%	Recreation	12%
Exercise e.g. jogging	5%	Enjoyment of countryside / open spaces	23%	Walking the dog	9%

Please say how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements about local Rights of Way

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
When using local Rights of Way I rarely meet anyone else	3%	19%	18%	42%	12%	6%
The routes are well signposted	8%	41%	17%	22%	6%	5%
The routes I use are in good condition	5%	41%	19%	23%	6%	6%
The routes I use are easy to use	8%	61%	11%	14%	1%	7%
The routes I use or would like to use need improving	11%	35%	24%	21%	2%	7%
The routes I use or would like to use need better maintenance	14%	34%	25%	20%	1%	7%
I use or would consider using public transport to access the countryside	13%	29%	15%	27%	11%	5%
I do not know where to find information on public Rights of Way	14%	33%	9%	28%	10%	7%

## SECTION B

Have you heard of, or used any of the following:

Route	I have heard of	I have used
The Three Villages Loop	11%	2%
The Teesdale Way	32%	12%
The Castle Eden Walkway	93%	59%
That National Cycle Network	54%	12%
Stockton on Tees Cycling Guide	25%	5%

Have you ever used public footpaths when visiting the Council's Countryside Parks and Visitor Centres (e.g. Billingham Beck)

Yes 57% No 43%

Have you heard of something called the Definitive Map?

Yes 9% No 91%

Please say how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
I would use public paths if there was more information available about them	23%	46%	17%	5%	1%	8%

### APPENDIX 3: VIEWS OF PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL AND SENSORY DISABILITIES

In total 24 people with a disability were interviewed and 19 helpers of people with a disability. The sample included people with a range of visual and hearing impairments and different kinds of physical disability which necessitated the use of manual and powered wheelchairs.

#### Use of the Access Network

Most of the people interviewed had used the access network in the Borough and travelled outside of the Borough to visit the countryside. Most of the people interviewed said that they would like to use the access network more and that they would do so if the barriers they face currently are removed.

Getting onto the access network, outside of the urban area of the Borough is something that people with disabilities find difficult for a number of reasons which are explored below. Whilst some people with disabilities are very determined to enjoy access in the countryside and go to great lengths to do so, these are a minority and for most disabled people in the Borough a trip out on the access network is a relatively rare occurrence.

People with disabilities tend to re-visit the same places where they know there is appropriate provision rather than take the risk of being disappointed by provision at a place they haven't been previously. Often, people travel out of the Borough for this reason.

For people with visual impairments sound is an important aspect of a visit to the access network. Running water and birdsong were identified as being particularly attractive.

## Barriers to Using the Access Network

Disabled people face a number of barriers, as follows:

- Getting to the access network
- Physical obstructions and inappropriate terrain
- Lack of 'joined-up' provision
- Dog fouling
- Lack of information

### *Getting to the Access Network*

Most of the disabled people interviewed found it difficult to reach the access network. There were a number of reasons for this, as follows:

- Many people including people with visual and physical disabilities are dependent on a helper to take them or to travel with them (for those using public transport)
- Some did not have access to a car and reaching a bus stop from home was difficult without assistance either because of obstructions or the need to cross a busy road
- Some places people would like to visit are not accessible by public transport, or not easily accessible by public transport

For most people with disabilities, planning and making a trip to the countryside requires some effort, including arranging a helper, arranging transport and finding out where to go (see information, below)

### *Physical Obstructions and Inappropriate Terrain*

Most people interviewed said that they had encountered some form of physical obstacle whilst using or trying to use the access network. Specific obstacles identified are as follows:

- Stiles
- Gates which are too narrow (specific to powered wheelchair users)
- Motorcycle barriers (specific to wheelchair users)
- Steep terrain (The Tees Barrage was identified as an example)
- Poor surfaces (with boggy, poached or gravel)

Although not mentioned specifically during the research, similar research the consultants have undertaken elsewhere identified overhanging vegetation as a barrier for people with visual impairments.

Other physical barriers, not actually on the access network, but on approaches to it are high kerbs (also a problem where a road is used as part of a circular route or to join two sections of off-road access) and 'A boards put out by pubs and shops (this was specific to people with visual impairments)

A visit to the access network can be spoiled by encountering just one obstacle which is impassable. A number of people interviewed had had to abandon a trip because of encountering an obstacle, often a short distance into the trip. Better information (see below) would help to address this issue.

### *Lack of 'Joined-up' Provision*

In many cases provision for access by people with disabilities is not fully thought through resulting in omissions or gaps in provision; particular examples raised during the interviews are as follows:

- Lack of disabled car parking close to access routes
- Uneven surfaces between car parking and the access network
- Some repairs to surfaces are done with gravel or mulches and these can unwittingly create a barrier to wheelchair users in particular
- Lack of seating for people with disabilities to sit and rest along the way
- Lack of toilets
- Lack of shelter and places to get a warm drink after a visit on a cold day

### *Dog Fouling*

Dog fouling is particularly unpleasant for people with disabilities. It is a particular hazard for people with visual impairments and for wheelchair users. Dog dirt can be difficult to remove from treaded tyres and is often taken into the houses of wheelchair users in this way.

### *Lack of Information*

Most people interviewed – disabled and helpers – felt that information on access for disabled people was inadequate, both in the Borough and further a field. Organised groups, including the Break Free programme and the Disabled Ramblers Group were identified as being especially valued. These organisations help to overcome many of the barriers faced by people with disabilities.

### *Suggested Improvements*

People interviewed suggested a number of actions which could be included in the ROWIP to improve conditions for disabled users, as follows:

- Replace stiles and narrow gates with gates which are wide enough for a power wheelchair
- Review surfaces and maintenance plans to ensure level, hard, well-drained surfaces
- Investigate alternatives to the 'A frame' motorcycle barriers currently in place
- Review the area around access for all routes to ensure that provision is consistent, in particular:
  - Install dropped kerbs
  - Provide disabled parking
  - Provide disabled WCs
  - Ensure surfaces are even and hard
  - Provide seats along and at the start/end of access for all routes
  - Tackle dog fouling
- Work with people who have disabilities to identify and design access for all routes
- Establish a disabled user's forum
- Promote access for all route information through disability groups, information centres and the Council web site
- Organise guided walks with helpers
- Develop and promote routes specifically for people with visual impairments and manage surrounding vegetation to attract songbirds
- Recruit volunteers who would be interested in becoming helpers on guided walks so that a regular programme could be developed
- Consider 'talking lamp posts' at popular countryside sites (such as the country parks)

#### APPENDIX 4: EXAMPLE OF THE REVIEW OF THE EXISTING NETWORK – PARISH MAPS (DESK TOP STUDY)

Parish	REF	FP Dist. (M)	BR Dist. (M)	BW Dist. (M)	SP (s)	WM (s)	Stile (s)	Gate (s)	F'bridge (s)	Urban	C'side	Promoted	R'way Cross.	Cross Bound.	Road Cross. (inc. Trunk Roads)
Aislaby	1	500	0	0	1	4	3	0	2	n/a	500	CW	N	N	N
Aislaby	2	5600	0	0	3	8	4	0	1	n/a	5600	TWAY	N	N	N
Aislaby	3	350	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	n/a	350	CW	N	N	N
Aislaby	3a	380	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	n/a	380	CW	N	N	N
Aislaby	4	2700	0	0	2	6	4	0	1	n/a	2700	n/a	N	N	N
Aislaby	5	1530	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	n/a	1530	n/a	N	N	N
Aislaby	6	500	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	n/a	500	n/a	N	Y	N
Aislaby	7	160	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	n/a	160	CW	N	N	N

#### Promoted Walks -

CW - Circular Walks (in the vicinity of Teesdale Way)

TWAY - Teesdale Way ( Long Distance Walk - E2 European Path)