

Stockton-on-Tees
Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2)
2018-2023



Executive Summary

Background

In 2000 the Government introduced, through The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW Act), a duty on Councils to produce and publish, in collaboration with the local community, a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP). This is a document in which highway authorities' set out their plan for improving the network for public footpaths, bridleways and byways in their area. It is a statutory requirement and an important part of the process of making the countryside more accessible for everyone.

The first Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP 1) for Stockton, prepared under Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, established a framework for rights of way (RoW) and the countryside as a 10 year plan covering 2008 to 2018.

In 2017 Stockton Borough Council were ranked very highly, 3rd for 'rights of way' and 6th for 'cycle routes' out of 112 authorities, as part of the National Highways and Transport annually public satisfaction survey.

Over the last 3 years an increase of 44% in usage has been recorded using pedestrian counters on the 'Teesdale Way' (in parts) which is positive information when carrying out improvement works as part of the River Tees Rediscovered project.

The second Rights of Way Improvement Plan is a 5 year plan covering 2018 to 2023 entitled Stockton-on-Tees Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2018-2023, herein referred to as RoWIP 2.

The Assessment

In developing RoWIP 1, we carried out comprehensive assessment of surveys and public consultations to help us better understand the current state of the network on the ground and assess the needs and demands of current and futures users. As part of the review and production of RoWIP 2 we have undertaken further assessments and surveys in order to update the information previously collected.

Action Plan

The 'Action Plan' as shown in **Appendix 1 (page 50)** which identifies 22 potential improvements to the existing RoW network in order to provide greater opportunities for use of the network by both residents of and visitors to the Borough.

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Foreword (Cabinet Member & Tees Valley Local Access Forum)

Welcome to the second Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) for Stockton. This document sets out the Borough Councils proposed aims and objectives to increase public use and enjoyment of the Borough 'Public Rights of Way' network over the course of the next 5 years to meet the needs of today's users to provide better access to the countryside and green open spaces around the Borough.

It is clear that a great deal has changed since the publication of the first RoWIP (2008-18) and there is no doubt that the Council will continue to face challenging times over the coming years.

This plan proposes a series of actions to help achieve the Councils priorities by making the best use of partnership working with a variety of organisations including our partners, user groups, landowners, volunteers and local access forum members who are fundamentally important in helping to deliver the aims laid out in this plan.

Councillor Mike Smith
(Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport - Stockton Borough Council)



The Borough of Stockton on Tees encompasses not only a large densely populated area, but also rural villages, country parks, woodland and the rolling countryside of the lower Tees Valley.

There is an expansive network of Public Rights of Way; some with their origins lost in the mists of time, others created in the last few decades, such as the Castle Eden Walkway and, even more recently; the South Stockton Cycleway.

The Public Rights of Way network provides access to woodlands, parks, riverbanks as well as the countryside, and is an essential resource for improving both physical and mental wellbeing. Many of our Public Rights of Way also provide safe, traffic-free, routes to school and to work.

With ever-increasing pressure on land, Stockton on Tees Borough Council has the task of maintaining footpaths, bridleways and byways, and upholding the public's right to use them.

Since the ROWIP was first published in 2008, there has been a period of diminishing funding for all Councils, and all Councils have been forced to review their ROWIPs. I believe that this revised ROWIP, still champions the causes of increasing access for people who are visually or mobility-impaired, encouraging sustainable non-motorised travel and increasing the numbers of residents using our paths. It is a working document full of relevance and realism.

Yvonne Ramage
(Chair - Tees Valley Local Access Forum)



Vision Statement

Stockton Borough's RoWIP 2 aims to:

- Identify ways to improve access to and usage of public rights of way for those with visual or mobility impairments and to extend, wherever possible, the overall accessibility of the network.
- Encourage greater use of the public rights of network especially by current non users.
- Improve access to open spaces, woodlands country parks, nature reserves and rivers in the Borough via public rights of way by creating links from these green spaces to urban areas.
- Ensure future improvements to the rights of way network are included in Local Development Framework policies and that new developments contribute to the maintenance of existing rights of way and the creation of new rights of ways.
- Increase opportunities for sustainable travel where appropriate to places of work and schools, using existing public rights of way or by creating new public rights of way in order to contribute towards reducing traffic congestion.
- Enhance the range, type and a accessibility of information available for the public rights of way network

In order to achieve the above aims, it is essential that the Council secure funding and involvement from corporate and charitable sources to increase the Councils budgets and help support potential bids for funding from other sources.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 This is Stockton Borough Council's second RoWIP. The plan covers the rights of way (RoW) network which provides opportunities for exercise, recreational activities and access to facilities and the countryside in general.

1.2 Stockton Borough Council is required to produce a RoWIP under section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The Council as a whole has changed significantly since the first RoWIP was published in 2008, with a reduction in available resources requiring the Council to adapt its ways of working accordingly. RoWIP 2 reflects these changes but our overall aim remains to develop and improve the RoW network and other green spaces in the Borough and ensure resident's needs for exercise and other forms of open-air recreation and enjoyment of the authority's area.

Stockton Borough Council recognise the importance of:

- Providing a well-managed and maintained rights of way network that is safe, correctly recorded and meets the requirements to the Borough;
- The need to promote rights of way and other green space as an economic asset that attracts more visitors to the Borough;
- Increasing accessibility to allow more people to take advantage of the health benefits access to the countryside can bring, therefore contributing to improving the health and wellbeing of our residents;
- The need to increase the opportunities for sustainable travel, leisure and recreation activities and access to local amenities;

1.3 This RoWIP contains updated sections on legislation and the local plans and policies that are relevant to the RoWIP. In developing RoWIP 1 we carried out a comprehensive assessment of surveys to help us better understand the state of the network on the ground and assess the needs and demands of current and further users. As part of the review and publication of RoWIP 2 we have undertaken further assessments and surveys in order to update the information previously collected in preparing RoWIP 1.

1.4 RoWIP 2 intends to provide a review of the Council's RoWIP 1 and set objectives for future maintenance and improvements to the local RoW network. Data gathered in the production of RoWIP 1 where still relevant will be referred to in RoWIP 2.

1.5 The Statement of Action in Chapter 7 outlines how the Council aims to take forward the management of the RoW network and bring about improvements throughout the life of the plan on its own and in partnership with others. The statement is supplemented by a series of policies, which will assist in improving the network over the next 5 years.

1.6 RoWIP's are intended to be aspirational and therefore RoWIP 2 includes some proposals for improvements to the RoW network that it will not be possible to deliver immediately or within the 5 years covered by this plan. No additional centralised funding or resources will be made available for implementing the statement of action and therefore the RoWIP will continue to make links to a wide range of other strategies (produced locally, regionally and nationally) in order to realise many of the actions identified.

1.7 A review of RoWIP 2 will be carried out in 2023 and the Tees Valley Local Access Forum will be provided with updates periodically to monitor progress similar to RoWIP 1.

Chapter 2: The Borough of Stockton-on-Tees

Description of Plan Area

- 2.1 Stockton-on-Tees is a local authority in the North East of England. The Borough is bounded by Darlington to the west, Middlesbrough to the east and Hartlepool to the north and these Local Authorities with Stockton and Redcar & Cleveland form the Tees Valley Combined Authority area.
- 2.2 The Borough also shares a boundary with County Durham to the north and North Yorkshire to the south.

Demographics

- 2.3 At the time of writing this policy the Tees Valley has a population of 667,469 of which 194,803 (29.2%) live in Stockton-on-Tees, making it the largest Local Authority in Tees Valley by population size.
- 2.4 Stockton-on-Tees covers 20,393 hectares and has 84,990 homes. The principal settlements are Stockton, Billingham, Thornaby, Ingleby Barwick, Norton and Yarm.
- 2.5 As an economic asset, the River Tees courses through the Borough and sustains a variety of use from heavy industry on its tidal reaches upstream to a leisure destination and throughout it forms part of a tranquil green corridor, providing a good example of one of many environmental and green infrastructure assets within the borough.

The Economy and Transport Network

- 2.6 The Borough's traditional economic base was predominantly heavy industry, including chemical processing, steel production and engineering. The Borough has adapted, responding to change and now represents a modern industrial and service based economy. Although the original manufacturing base is now smaller, it is still significant with a technically and highly skilled workforce. Stockton-on-Tees benefits from good access to the strategic road network (A1M, A19 and A66) and a network of bus routes that provides frequent services to connect residents to work and leisure destinations across the Tees Valley, Durham Tees Valley Airport and the Ports and Wharves on the River Tees.

The Landscape

- 2.7 The Borough's green infrastructure and environment assets support the quality of life of its residents as well as attracting people to the area, to live, work, visit or do business. These assets include, for example, large areas of accessible open space, together with other areas of natural and semi-natural habitat, the River Tees, a network of cycleway and public RoW's, which collectively go towards making the Borough a highly attractive place.

The 'Right of Way' Network

- 2.8 Stockton-on-Tees has an extensive network of cycleways and RoW paths extending across urban and rural areas of the Borough. This represents an excellent recreational asset and also provides safe and attractive routes for active travel. In total there are 70 miles of cycleway and 122 miles (196km) of public rights of way.
National Cycle Network Routes 1, 12 and 65 cross the Borough, providing links to Darlington, County Durham, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and North Yorkshire.
- 2.9 The Teesdale Way (European Long Distance Trail) follows the course of the River Tees for 90 miles from Cow Green Reservoir to the Teesmouth with 17 miles of the trail running through Stockton-on-Tees.
- 2.10 At Newport Bridge the Teesdale Way connects with the England Coast Path running east and south to Middlesbrough, Redcar and the North Yorkshire Coast. The section running north to Hartlepool is under construction with completion expected in 2018.

- 2.11 There are over 600 hectares of publicly accessible open spaces managed by the local authority in the Borough with Preston Park and Ropner Park attracting the most visitors. There are also several other parks and recreation grounds serving the townships across the borough including Wynyard Woodland Park, Billingham Beck Valley Country Park, Cowpen Bewley Park, Stillington Forest Park, John Whitehead Park, Littleboy Park, Newham Grange Park, Romano and Village Park. The remaining urban open space generally comprises amenity green spaces and green corridors.
- 2.12 Many areas of urban open space have seen significant improvements over recent years, including new play areas, skate parks, enhanced wildlife habitats, landscaping and other infrastructure. Maintaining a diverse range of high quality open space contributes to the overall quality of place and quality of life of residents, providing attractive settings for new and existing developments.
- 2.13 The Borough includes significant areas of natural and semi-natural habitat including woodlands, meadows, ponds, wetland, rivers and stream which includes Saltholme, Honey Potts Wood, Hardwick Dene, Elm Tree Wood, Bassleton Woods, Thorpe Wood, Coatham Wood, Leven Valley Woodlands, Holmes Nature Reserve, Quarry Wood Local Nature Reserve, Black Bobbies Nature Reserve, Bowsfield Nature Reserve, Barwick Pond, Charltons Pond, Great North Park, Greenvale, Portrack Marsh, Norton Grange Marsh, Brewdale and Gravel Hole. A number of these sites are protected through international and national designations and recorded as Local Wildlife sites.
- 2.14 As well as supporting a great wealth of biodiversity these natural assets can also provide essential 'ecosystem services'. For example, they can help to reduce flood risk, contribute to improved air and water quality and provide recreational opportunities which in turn promote improved health and wellbeing.
- 2.15 A £38million regeneration programme has seen the complete refurbishment of Stockton's High Street, with new paving, road improvements, street furniture, bus shelters and street lighting. The programme is also bringing to life the medieval and Georgian architecture still in existence along the High Street as well as opening up the area to the riverside and water-sports facilities on the banks of the River Tees.

Chapter 3: Strategic Context and Legislation

3.1 It is important that the RoWIP is set within the context of other relevant plans and strategies at local, regional and national levels to support any funding applications in the delivery of the RoWIP.

The greatest opportunities for RoWIP's can be explored through their integration with existing plans, strategies and policies within their area of local authority activity as this will develop a coordinated, joined up approach to implementation. RoWIP links to areas of work such as health, leisure, recreation, sport, tourism, transport community, congestion, accessibility and environment and economic regeneration.

RoW's can be seen as a tool to achieve the aims and objectives within these areas of works.

The following documents listed below have been identified and are considered relevant to the RoWIP:-

- Tees Valley Combined Authority Strategic Transport Plan (due early 2018)
- Tees Valley Combined Authority Tourism Strategy
- Tees Valley Nature Partnership Development Plan
- Tees Valley Green Infrastructure Strategy & Action Plan
- Tees Valley Strategic Infrastructure Plan
- Tees Valley Strategic Economic Plan
- Tees Valley Joint Minerals and Waste Development Plan Document (2011)
- Connecting the Tees Valley Statement of Transport Ambition (2011)
- Connecting Tees Valley (2016)
- Emerging Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan (2018)
- Adopted Stockton-on-Tees Development Local Plan (1997) and Alteration No.1 (2006)
- Adopted Stockton on Tees Core Strategy (2010)
- Stockton-on-Tees Council Plan
- Stockton-on-Tees Local Transport (Plan 3)
- Stockton-on-Tees Road Safety Strategy
- Sustainable Community for the Borough of Stockton-on-Tees (2008-21)
- Stockton-on-Tees Sport & Physical Activity Strategy
- Stockton-on-Tees Health Improvement Plan
- Stockton-on-Tees Sustainable Community Strategy
- Stockton-on-Tees Green Infrastructure Strategy
- Stockton-on-Tees Heritage Strategy
- Stockton-on-Tees Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document
- Stockton -on-Tees Open Space, Recreation and Landscape Supplementary Planning Document
- Stockton-on-Tees Sustainable Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document
- Stockton-on-Tees Economic Strategy
- Stockton-on-Tees Economic Growth Plan
- Stockton-on-Tees Landscape Character Assessment
- Stockton-on-Tees Review of River based Leisure Facilities
- Stockton-on-Tees Joint Health Strategy
- Marine & Coastal Access Strategy
- National Infrastructure Plan
- DFT Sustainable Transport
- DFT Cycling & Walking Strategy
- Northern Powerhouse Northern Transport Strategy
- National Infrastructure Plan
- Rights of Way Circular (1/09) Guidance for Local Authorities (DEFRA)

3.2 In addition to the strategies and plans identified in this chapter and currently in place, RoW are governed by a combination of both common law and statute law, contained within several Acts of Parliament.

The Acts of Parliament include:

- The Highways Act 1980
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- The Natural Environment and Rural communities Act 2006
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Deregulation Act 2015

Conclusion

3.3 It is clear that there are a number of important strategies and plans (local and regional) published before and after RoWIP 1 which need to link into RoWIP 2 and influence the range of current policies in order to promote and support the delivery of improvements to the RoW network in Stockton and make use of available funds to deliver the aims and objectives of RoWIP 2.

Chapter 4: Public Rights of Way Explained

4.1 All Public Rights of Way (PRoW) are highways which the public are entitled to use at any time. There are four categories of RoW's as listed below giving an indication of permissible use:

- **Public Footpath (open to walkers)**
- **Public Bridleway (open to walkers, horse riders and cyclists)**
- **BOAT's - Byway open to all traffic (open to all users, including vehicles)**
- **RUPPs – Roads used as 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 and are still in general use today.

Routes are defined in law if shown on the Definitive Map and Statement (DMS), a legal document maintained by the Highway Authority (in this case Stockton Borough Council).

4.2 The DMS is the legal record of RoW held by each surveying authority. The map and statement provides conclusive evidence of the existence of a RoW. However other private rights may exist i.e. to ownership of land or property, but the Council does not hold this type information.

The Council is required to keep the DMS up-to-date and ensure that it is accurate and like other forms of highway the PRoW network can only be changed by a legal order known as a Public Path Order (PPO's) which are made for diversion, extinguishment or creation purpose.

Extent of the RoW Network in Stockton

4.3 The Borough of Stockton has an extensive network of formal and informal paths, with approximately 196km/122 miles of RoW's recorded on the DMS for Stockton which are spread across 21 parishes.

Routes of RoW network is summarised in **table 1** and the RoW network also includes signs, waymarks, stiles, gates, footbridges and culverts.

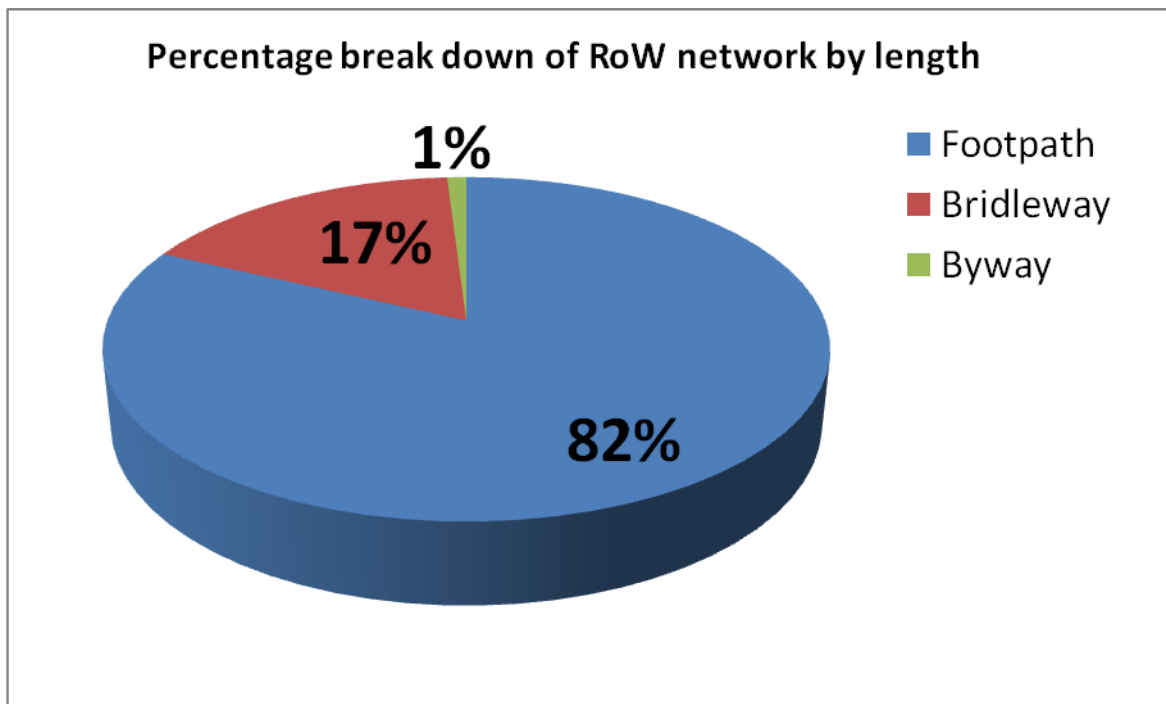
RoW's routes, spread across 21 Parishes in the Borough, are joined by routes on Council green space and other green spaces including alleys and off road routes to form a wider network or footpaths for public use.

Table 1: Lengths of PRoWs in Stockton by type and Parish

Parish	Route Type	Length (m)	Parish	Route Type	Length (m)
Aislaby	Footpath	12,080	Long Newton	Footpath	8920
	Bridleway	0		Bridleway	2050
Billingham	Footpath	6,195	Maltby	Footpath	8162
	Bridleway	1,232		Bridleway	0
	BOAT	1,454			
Carlton	Footpath	7,894	Newsham	Footpath	6255
	Bridleway	0		Bridleway	2750
Castlelevington	Footpath	2,846	Preston	Footpath	1846
	Bridleway	2,375		Bridleway	165
Eaglescliffe	Footpath	9,905	Redmarshall	Footpath	3739
	Bridleway	0		Bridleway	0
Elton	Footpath	7,149	Stillington & Whitton	Footpath	7882
	Bridleway	0		Bridleway	1288
Grindon	Footpath	18,557	Stockton	Footpath	30706
	Bridleway	6,131		Bridleway	2188
Hilton	Footpath	3,612	Thornaby	Footpath	4995
	Bridleway	5,557		Bridleway	615
				BOAT	528
Ingleby Barwick	Footpath	4,304	Wolviston	Footpath	1361
	Bridleway	5,648		Bridleway	0
Kirklevington	Footpath	7,292	Yarm	Footpath	8259
	Bridleway	1,753		Bridleway	0

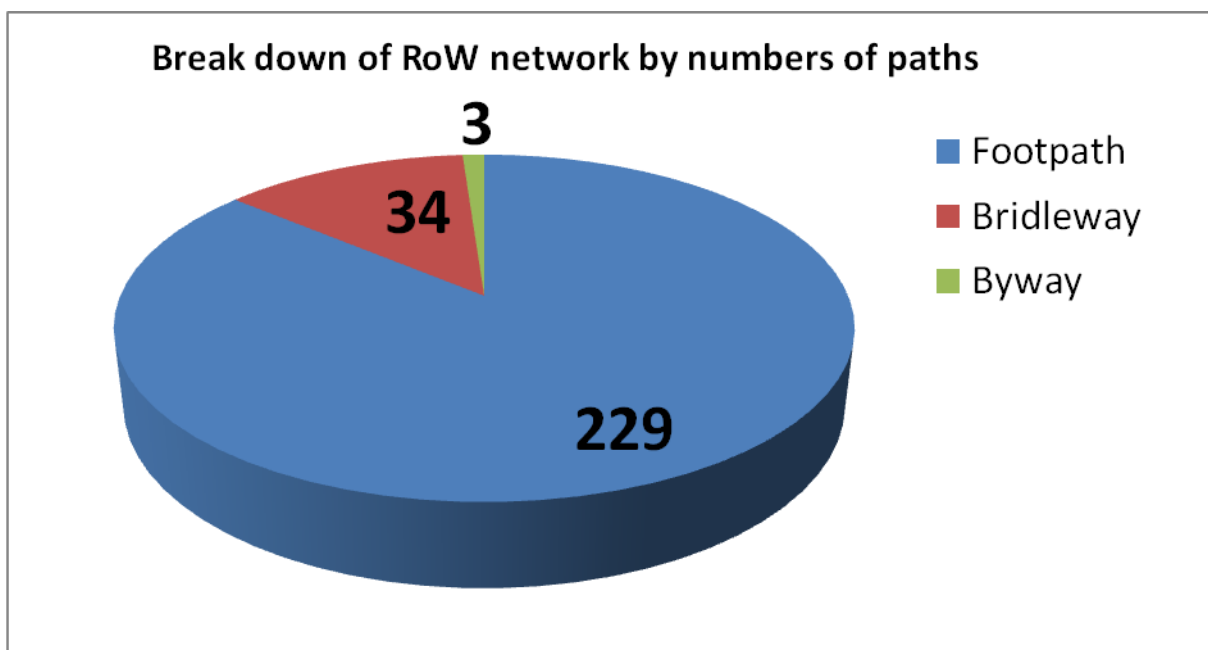
4.4 The charts (**Figure 1 & 2**) below shows the breakdown of RoW's across the Borough by percentage length and break of paths by categories.

Figure 1 - Percentage breakdown of RoW network



82% of the PRoW network is classified as footpath (162km), 17% bridleway (32km) and 1% byway (2km).

Figure 2 - Break down of paths by categories



Most of the routes on the RoW network are footpaths 82% (229 footpaths), 17% of routes are bridleways (34) and 1% are byways (3).

4.5 The table below (**Figure 3**) compares the proportion of categories of Stockton Borough RoW network with neighbouring Tees Valley local authorities RoW network.

Figure 3 - Comparison of RoW network with other Tees Valley Councils

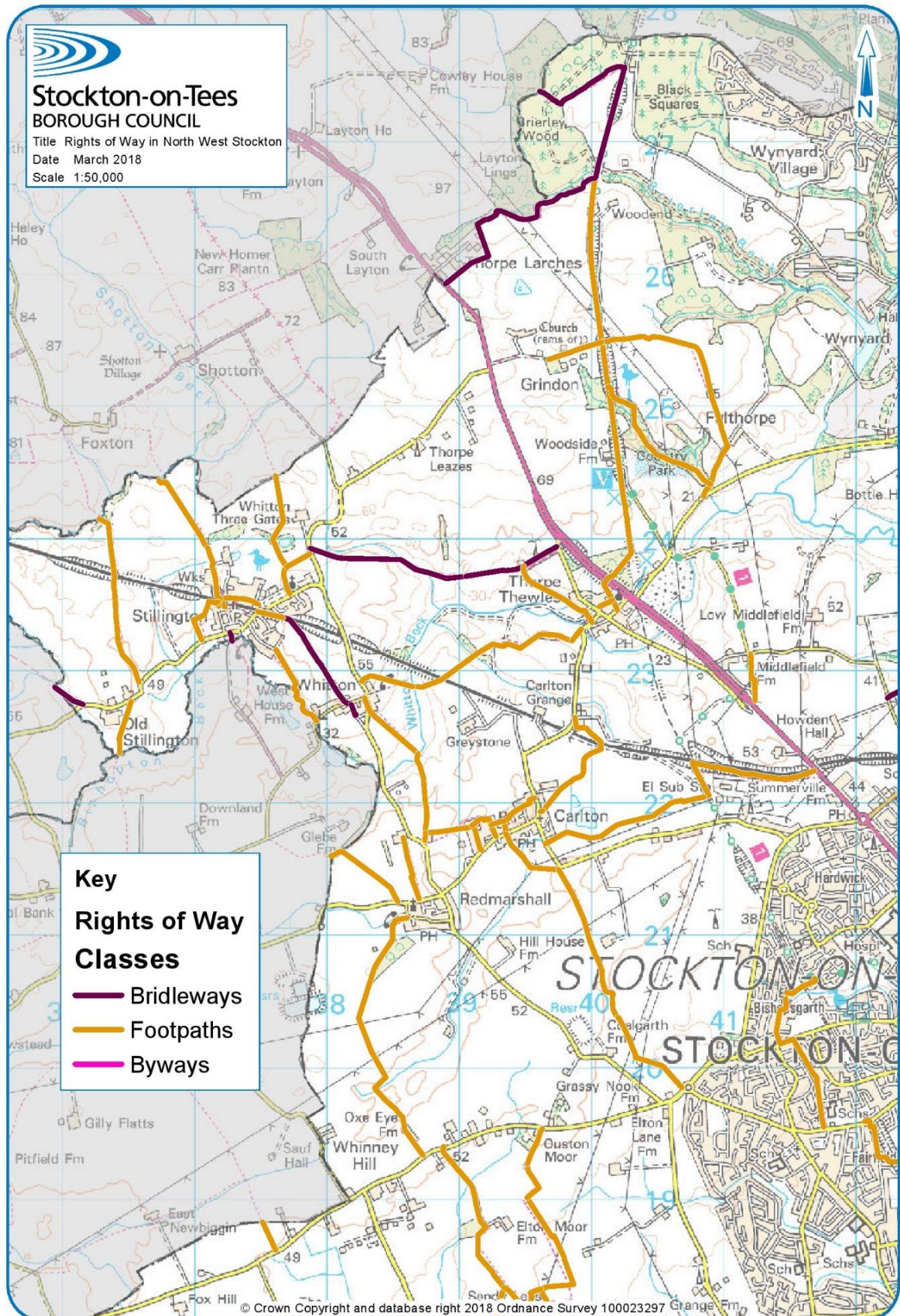
Category	Stockton Borough	Darlington Borough	Hartlepool Borough	Middlesbrough Borough
Footpaths	162km	276km	85.8km	34km
Bridleways	32km	29km	5.8km	6km
BOATS	2km	1km	5.7km	N/A
Total	196km	306km	97.3km	40km

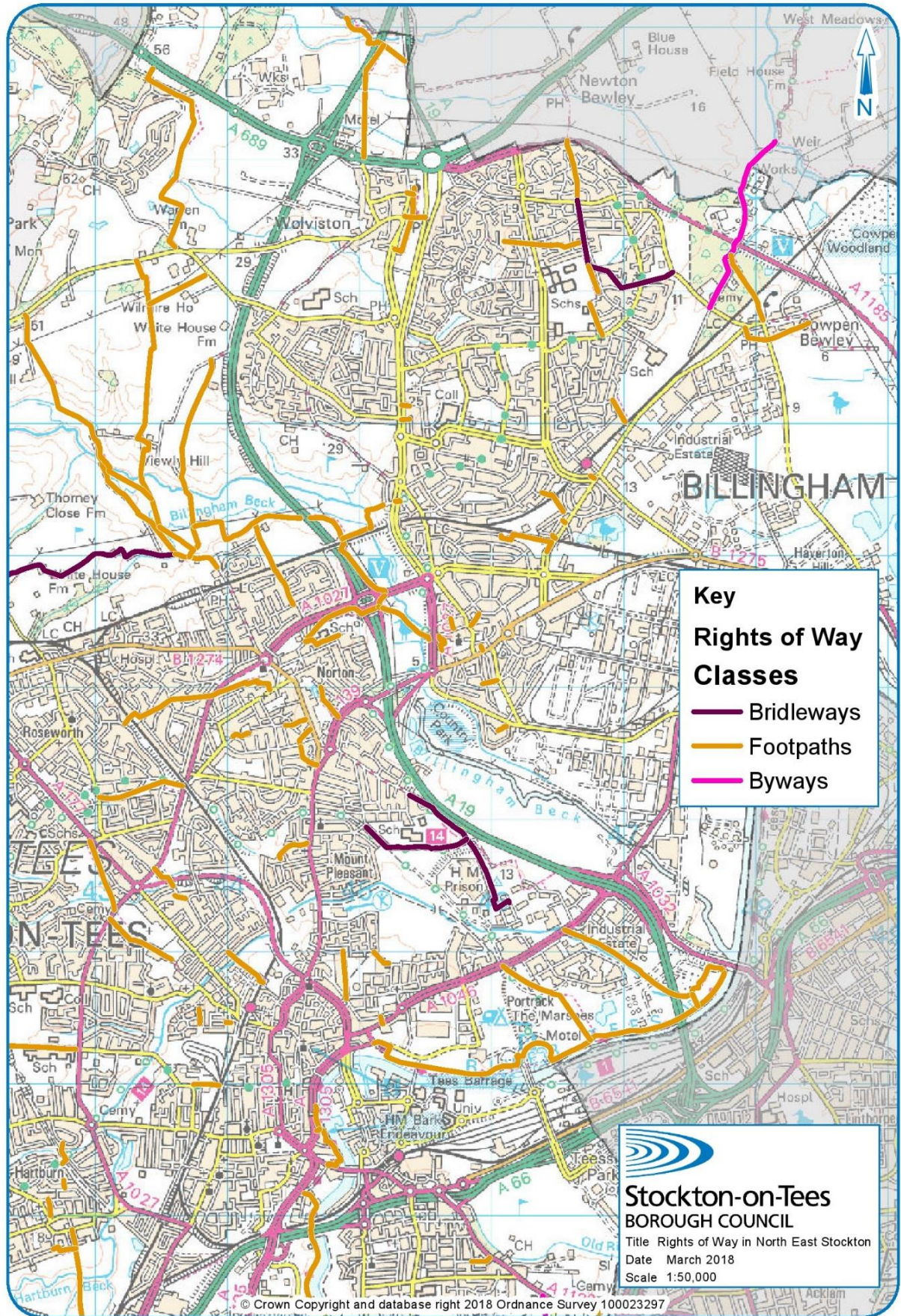
4.6 Other routes with public access in Stockton Borough include the following, however these are not RoW's as they are not included within the DMS.

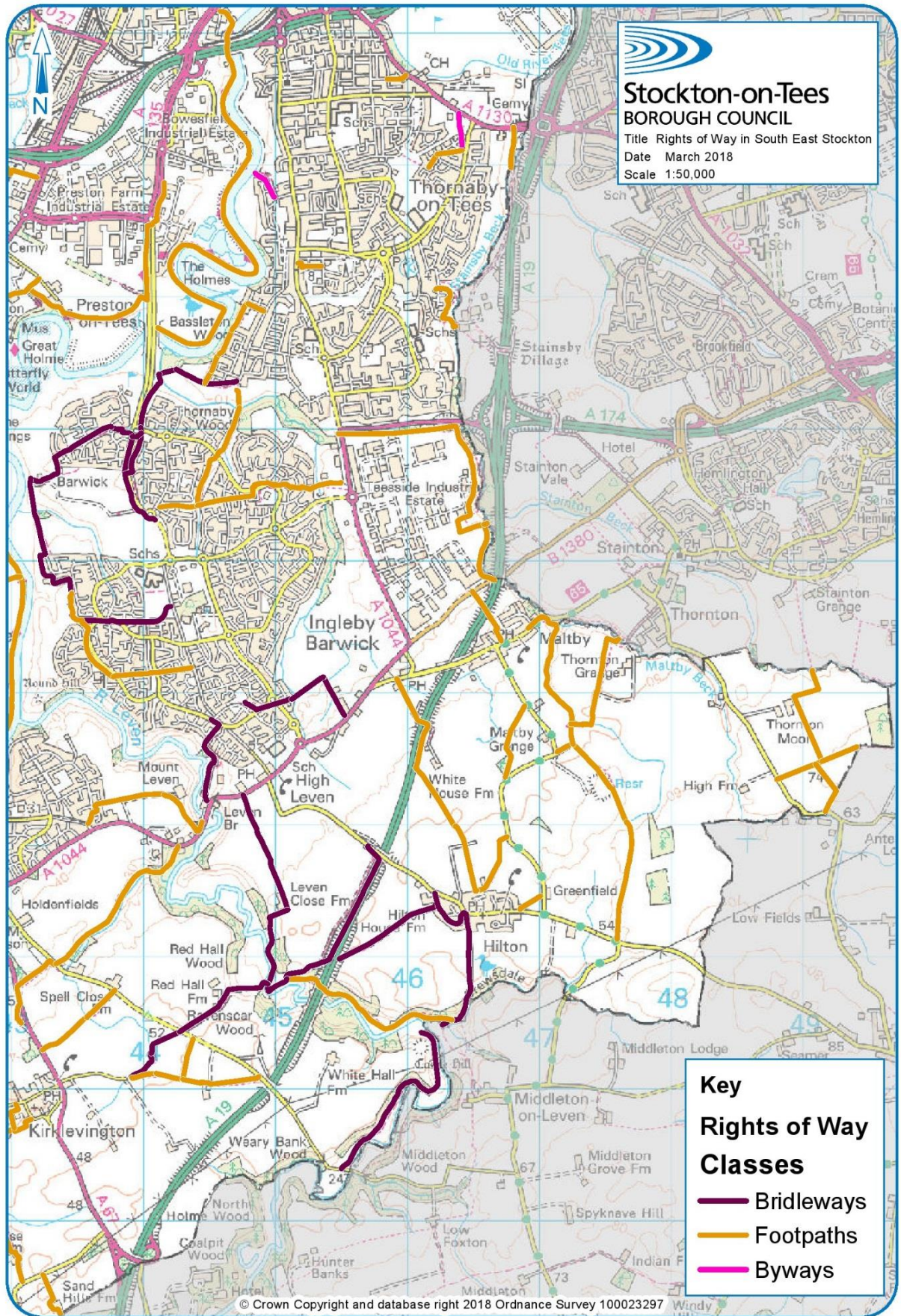
- **Cycle Routes** - often specifically designated for cyclists but they may be also have walking and horse rights. A number of these routes exist of across the Borough but they are generally confined to the urban area and the last 10 years has seen a significant increase in their number.
- **Permissive Routes** - these routes are used with the permission of the landowner and can be footpaths or bridleways. There are a number of permissive paths in the Borough and they cross land in both public and private ownerships. The majority of these routes are over Council owned land that is either disused railway line (in parts) or existing green spaces (parks and woodlands). The ability to utilise these routes improves links to the RoW network and they are an important part in the ability to deliver improvements to network through the RoWIP. Permissive routes have no legal status and can be closed at any time.
- **Adopted Road** - a road or path included on the list of streets that has been formally adopted by the Highway Authority and is maintainable at public expenses.
- **Coastal Access** - the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 placed a duty on Natural England to create a long distance coastal path around England. In Stockton a new national trail is currently being created as part of the England Coast path (between Hartlepool and Middlesbrough) and the route should be open for public use in 2018.
- **Lost Ways** - routes being used, but not recorded on the DMS.
- **Woodland Access** - the Forestry Commission and Woodland Trust has designated private woods to public access within the Borough.

4.7 The maps below shows the availability of routes across the whole Borough for its different users.

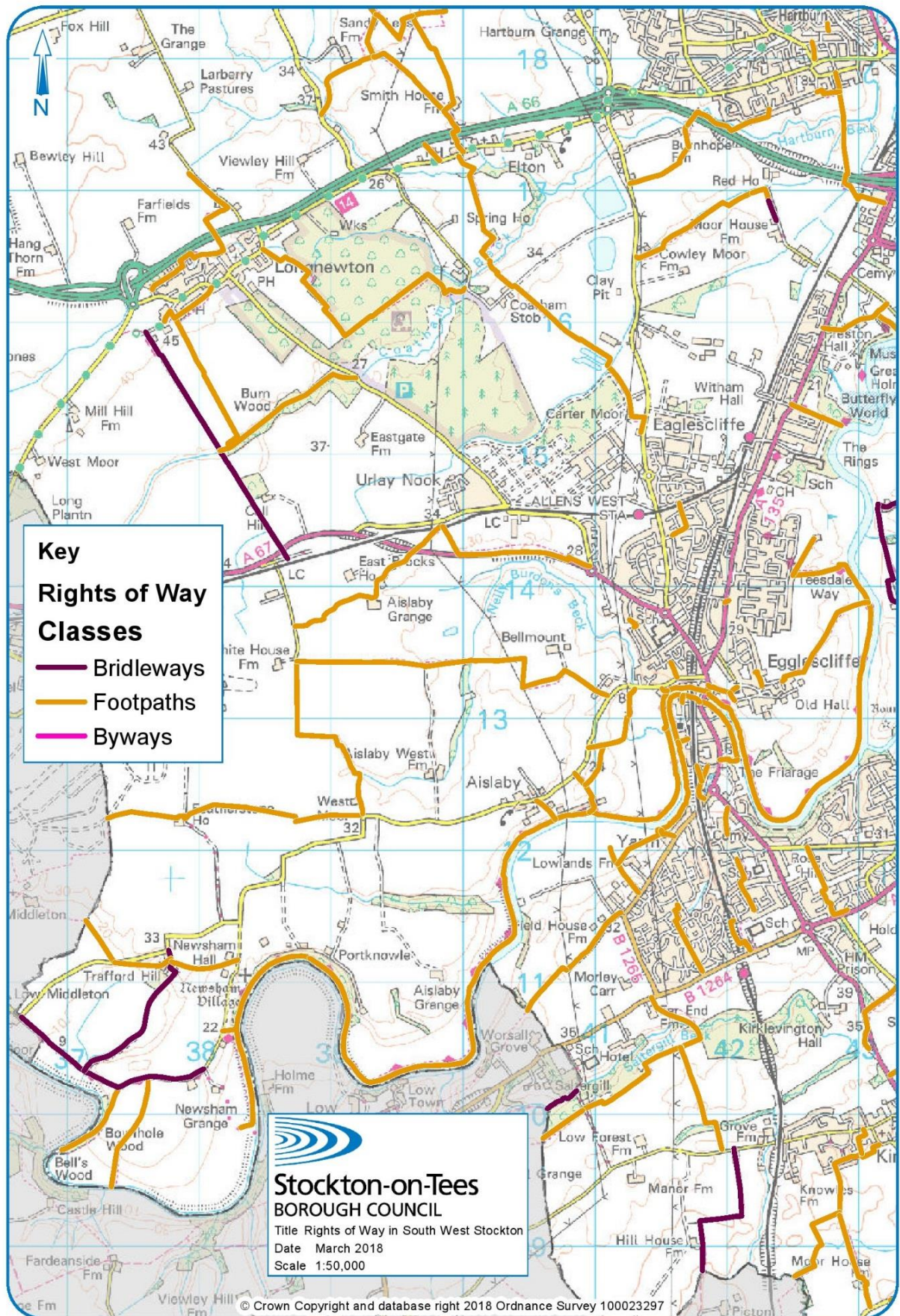
(Stockton - North West)







(Stockton - South West)



Condition of the RoW network in Stockton

- 4.8 The Highway Network Management and Flood Risk Management Section undertakes a series of path inspections based on the former national Best Value Performance Indicator No. 178 in order to assess the percentage of paths deemed as easy to use.

Each year a survey is undertaken on of 5% of the PRow network, selected at random, to establish a benchmark indicator. It is, however recognised that it is not a full quality audit but ease of use does take into account the availability of the route (i.e. it is not obstructed) and that the statutory signposting is in place.

The results returned for Stockton for the last 10 years is shown below in **table 2** and these can be compared to the national average of results, which was 58% back in 2016.

Table 2: 'Ease of use' survey results for last 10 years

Year	Ease of Use of Network (%)
2008	94
2009	87
2010	92
2011	92
2012	94
2013	92
2014	91
2015	91
2016	83
2017	88
SBC Average	81
National Average (2016)	58

Network Maintenance

- 4.9 The Borough Council as a highway authority is responsible for maintaining the surface of a RoW in a reasonable condition for their intended public use. The routes recorded on the DMS are highways maintainable at public expenses.
- 4.10 Each year the Council carries out a seasonal programme of vegetation works on priority (high usage) paths between April and October. Additionally vegetation works are dealt with following reports from users of the path or from site surveys/routine inspections which can also identify works to repair items of broken furniture, missing or damaged signs and remedial works on existing boardwalks.
- 4.11 Treatment of Noxious and invasive species, primarily Giant Hogweed, is carried out during the months of April/May on the Teesdale Way and when specific reports are received from users of the network.
- 4.12 Bridges located on the RoW network are subjected to routine inspections as part of the structures inspection programme.
- 4.13 The RoW Act 1990 sets out the responsibilities of landowners with regard to ploughing and cropping. In summary, the act requires landowners to reinstate or retain all cross-field paths and field edge paths that are likely to be ploughed or cropped.
- 4.14 Landowners are also responsible for the maintenance of stiles, gates and hedges. The RoW work team works closely with landowners to ensure that furniture on paths is safe and convenient. In reality, the majority of maintenance responsibility for RoW network is undertaken by the Council.
- 4.15 There is an ongoing programme to resurface some of the RoW's either as part of general maintenance or route enhancement. In addition these resurfacing works may be linked to other capital schemes as appropriate to gain best value for money.

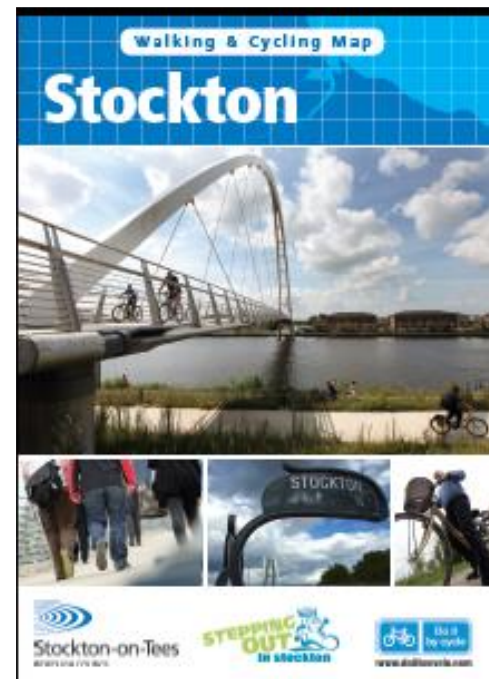
Resources

- 4.16 The management of the RoW functions in Stockton Borough network is overseen by 1 member of staff working on all aspects of RoWs with other duties within Highway Network Management Section and Flood Risk Management Section.

Network Promotion

- 4.17 The promotion of the RoW network is an essential part of raising awareness of routes located in the Borough, with a RoW guide produced in 2007 to show all RoW's routes in Stockton and try and create healthier residents through encouraging physical activity use of the RoW network. Over the last 10 years the RoW guide has been up-dated to promote the developed network and distributed free of charge from all main Council Buildings. On-line mapping can be found on the Council website link below.

<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/arts-culture-and-leisure/public-rights-of-way/>



(Walking and Cycling Guide)

4.18 Promoted routes within the Borough of Stockton include:

- The Teesdale Way
- Wynyard Woodland Park
- Three Village Loop Walk
- Thornaby Trail
- Grindon Loop Walk
- Park to Park Circular
- Teesside Retail Nature Trail
- Gravel Hole
- Portrack Marsh/Tees Barrage
- Newport Walks



(New initiative to promote the 'Teesdale Way' Via social media sites - installed January 2018)

(Selection of individual walking guides available)

The Three Villages Loop Walk

Thorpe Thewles, Stillington and Whitton
Walk Distance: Approx. 5½ miles
Walk Time: Approx. 2 - 2½ hours

The Three Villages Loop Walk

Thorpe Thewles, Stillington and Whitton
 Walk Distance: Approx. 5½ miles
 Walk Time: Approx. 2 - 2½ hours
Start / Finish: Wynyard Woodland Park, off the A177 between Stockton-on-Tees and Sedgfield.
Car Parking: Wynyard Woodland Park.
Public Transport: Buses to Thorpe Thewles village No.69. For further information contact Travel Line on 0871 2002233
Facilities: Toilets, picnic areas, play area, Visitors Centre, refreshments and planetarium and observatory at the Country Park.
General: This walk is fairly easy going, the majority of the route crossing farmland. Dogs must be kept on leads where there are livestock or crops. Horses may be encountered in the fields.

A selection of other free Public Rights of Way and cycling guides are available from most public buildings or alternatively request a copy by emailing technicalservices@stockton.gov.uk or contact (01642) 526708.

The Park To Park Loop Walk

Billingham Beck Valley Country Park to Wynyard Woodland Park
Walk Distance: Approx. 9 miles
Walk Time: Approx. 4 hours

The Park To Park Loop Walk

Billingham Beck Valley Country Park to Wynyard Woodland Park
 Walk Distance: Approx. 9 miles
 Walk Time: Approx. 4 hours
Start / Finish: Billingham Beck Valley Country Park, signposted off the A19.
Car Parking: Billingham Beck Valley Country Park.
Public Transport: Contact Travel Line on 0871 2002233
Facilities: Toilets, picnic areas, play area, Visitors Centre and refreshments at Billingham Beck Valley Country Park and Wynyard Woodland Park.
General: This walk is fairly easy going with some steep sections and several stiles. The path may be muddy after heavy rain and will require suitable footwear. There may be horses or cattle in some fields along the route where dogs must be kept on a lead.

A selection of other free Public Rights of Way and cycling guides are available from most public buildings or alternatively request a copy by emailing technicalservices@stockton.gov.uk or contact (01642) 526708.

Health

- 4.19 It has been well published that physical activity has health benefits and can protect 'persons' against heart disease, obesity, diabetes and osteoporosis. Providing a more accessible network for walking, cycling, horse riding and exercise will contribute to improvements to health for residents and visitors of the Borough.

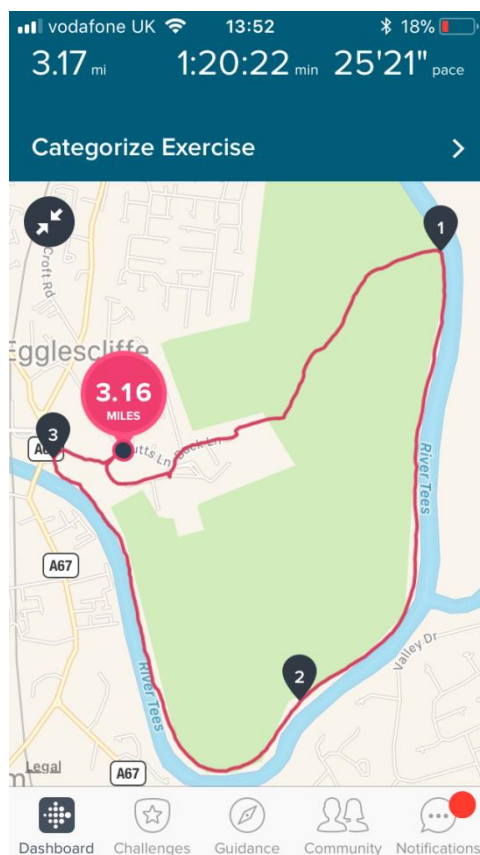
According to recent Public Health England (PHE) report 6.3 million adults aged 40 - 60 do not achieve 10 minutes of continuous brisk walking over the course of a month and as a result are missing out on important health benefits.

This report also reveals how lifestyles have changed over time, showing that people in the UK are 20% less active now than they were in the 1960's.

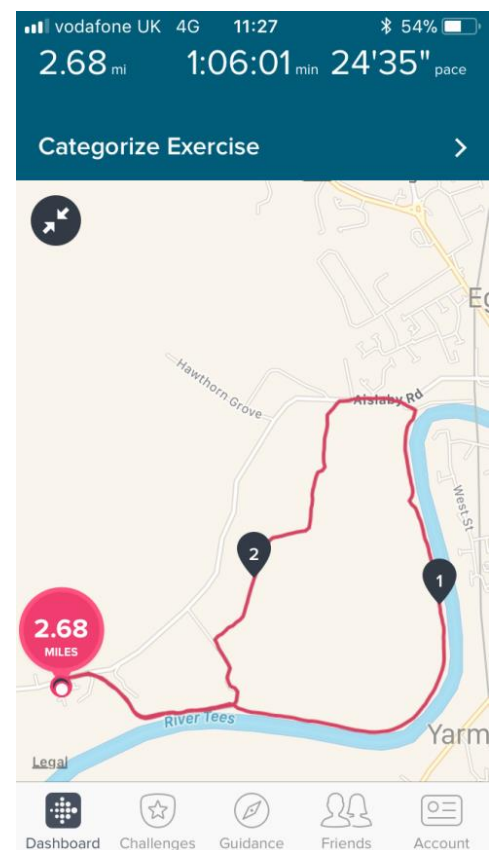
A recent PHE campaign encourages adults to build 10 minutes continuous brisk walking into their day or to achieve 10,000 steps as a simple way to improve their health.

This campaign is reflected in one of the key policy principles of the Council Plan 2018 – 2021 (help people to be healthier) and in order to achieve this for the residents of the Borough, utilising the RoW network and greenspace in Stockton offers a significant opportunity to facilitate regular exercise as recommended by the Government's PHE reports and Councils strategies and plans.

Following the adoption of the Borough's RoWIP 1, new technology has been introduced to maintain and motivate an individual healthily lifestyle using free fitness apps with smart phones and smart watches which monitor steps, calories, distance travel, heart rate and sleep patterns.



(Eggescliffe Loop)



(Aislaby Loop)

Chapter 5: Review of RoWIP 1 (2008-2018)

5.1 Since the publication of RoWIP 1 in 2008 (as a 10 year plan) it is considered that the Council has implemented as much of the action plan as resources allowed. Improvement works have been implemented by utilising existing internal budgets and, where possible, other partnership funding has been used to translate the RoWIP into actions on the ground as part of the Tees Heritage Park, River Tees Rediscovered Heritage Trails, England Coast Path and the Council's Green Infrastructure Strategy Plan.



Tees Heritage Park signal posts (10 in total) have been installed to mark the entries into the Heritage Park (as listed below) which incorporate a QR tag which enables information to be obtained via a smart phone regarding the site and surroundings.

1. Black Bobbies' Field (Thornaby)
2. Horseshoe Bend (Stockton)
3. Bassleton Beck (Thornaby)
4. Thornaby Woods (Thornaby)
5. Bassleton Bridge (Thornaby)
6. Preston Farm (Stockton)
7. Preston Hall (Stockton)
8. Highfield (Eaglescliffe)
9. Round Hill (Ingleby Barwick)
10. Yarm Bridge (Yarm)

On-line mapping can be found on 'Tees Heritage Park' website <http://teesheritagepark.org.uk/>

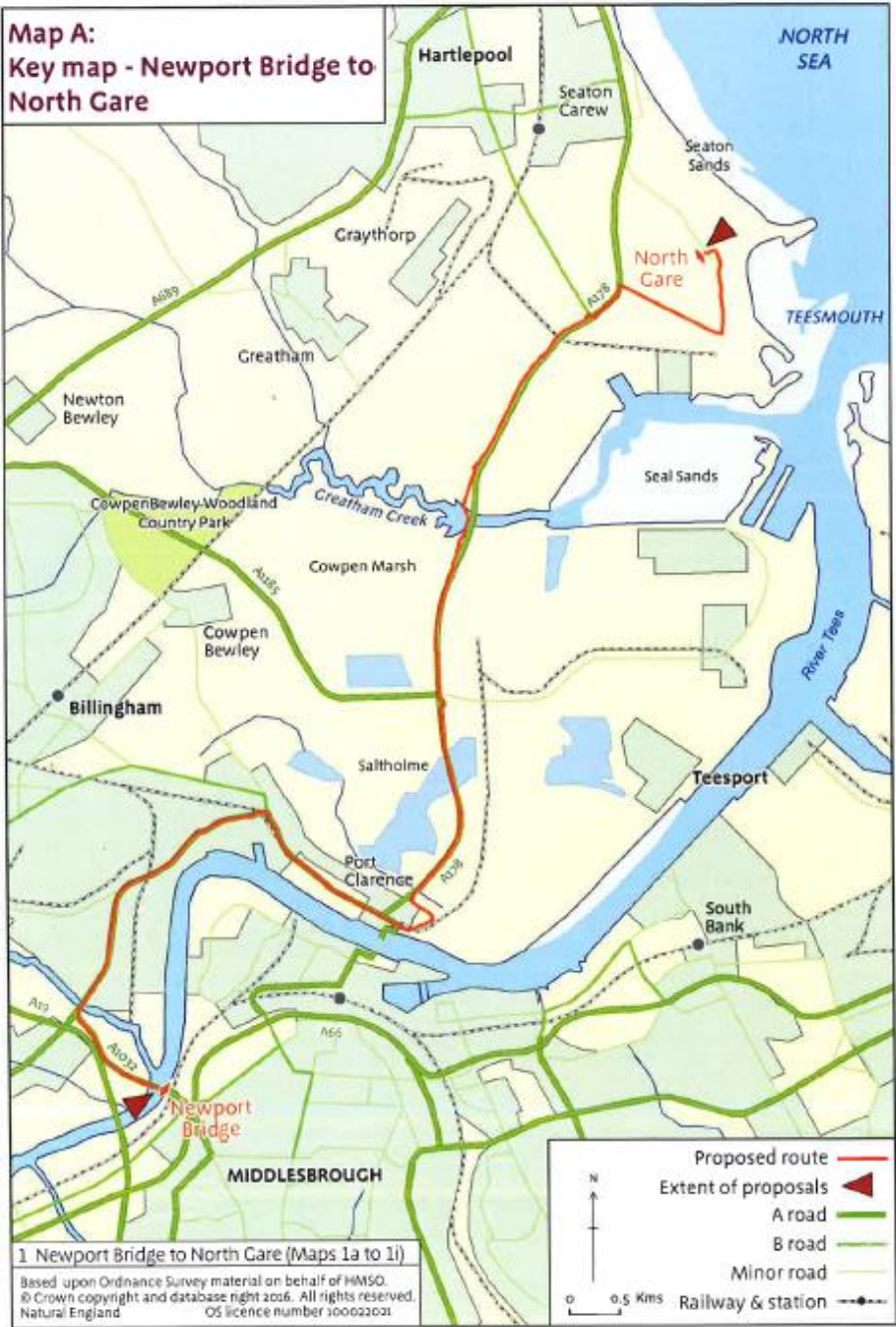
The Secretary of State announced a decision (July 2016) to approve a stretch of the England Coast Path (ECP) between Newport Bridge (Middlesbrough) and North Gare (Hartlepool).

The total length of new footpath to run through the Borough of Stockton will be 5km as part of the ECP route.

Works started on site beginning of 2017 and proposed works as part of the ECP works includes - :

- fence works
- boardwalks
- re-surface works
- footbridge crossings
- culverts works
- signage
- stone causeway
- viewing area

(ECP route should be open autumn 2018)



5.2 The diverse range of the statement of action in RoWIP 1 has allowed the Council some flexibility in the improvements it has been able to deliver as it was neither prescriptive nor reliant on funding for a few specific projects, instead it covered a wide range of actions which have been prioritised and acted on when funding became available.



South Stockton Greenway Scheme (Phase 2) provides direct route from Darlington Road (Hartburn) to Preston Park via Moorhouse Estate (780m). Phase 1 was completed back in 2012 (1073m).

This route provides a traffic free footpath and cycleway stretching from Preston Park to Sedgfield (County Durham) via Wynyard Woodland Park (NCN 1)



Wynyard Woodland Park (NCN 1) 4km resurface works

5.3 Since 2008, the RoW network has changed very little in size, but a number of new cycle paths have been constructed (which are not recorded on the DMS) within the Borough as a result of Local Transport Plan (LTP) funding to promote cycling and walking. Other sources of funding has come from agreements in approved planning applications or heritage lottery funding following approved projects in the Borough as part of the Council's Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

As part of the 'River Tees Rediscovered' project and as part of heritage lottery funding, improvement works have been carried out along the 'Teessdale Way' which have included new boardwalks, signage, promotion of route and replacing stiles for kissing gates to improve access.



Public Footpath No. 2 (Aislaby)



Public Footpath No.1 (Egglecliffe)



Public Footpath No.37 (Stockton)



Public Footpath No.2 (Stockton)

Framing the 'Teesdale Way in Stockton' project, which captures a view of the iconic landscape along the route using empty frames with Newport Bridge and Roseberry Topping as a back drop.



Public Footpath No.9 (Newsham)



Public Footpath No.1 (Eggescliffe)



Public Footpath No.2 (Stockton)

5.4 A wide variety of improvements has been undertaken throughout the life of RoWIP 1 focussing on the existing network. In particular, considerable progress has been made in the improvement of path furniture, which has allowed for greater and safer access to the network. A total of 50 gates have replaced stiles with landowners consent and 17 motorbike inhibitors have been installed following members of the public request and illegal use of paths.



Public Footpath No.6 (Thornaby)



Public Footpath No.2 (Carlton)



Two Horse Mounting Blocks installed (off Calf Fallow Lane, Norton)



5.5 An extensive programme of surface improvements works have been carried out since the publication of the RoWIP 1, with a total of 20.1 km paths having been improved during the plan period as listed in **Appendix 2 (page 51)**.



Ingleby Barwick to Preston Park (footpath and cycleway works)



Public Footpath No.21 (Stockton)

5.6 Three new footbridges have been installed on the RoW network since the adoption of RoWIP 1 and other works include new bridge decks, replacement of parapet elements, gabions baskets and repointing of structures have been carried out as listed in **Appendix 3 (page 52)**.

5.7 A number of new signs have been erected on the RoW network since 2011 in both rural and urban areas of the Borough. This includes directional signs indicating destinations and location detail finger signs which can be helpful for users of the path to identify that they are using the correct route.

Also, as part of the above, new signage for the Teesdale Way (through the Borough) can be found to include the Teesdale Way logo (the dipper) on the finger signs, which will assist persons unfamiliar with this promoted route in Stockton.

(A selection of finger signs installed on the RoW network since 2011)



5.8 An access audit was undertaken by Middlesbrough Shop Mobility in 2013 along the full route of the Teesdale Way within the Stockton and Middlesbrough Borough boundaries.



The purpose of this audit was to undertake a collation of information related to the provision of constraints and opportunities for access along the Teesdale Way within Stockton and Middlesbrough boundaries.

The survey has collated a wide range of information on current area and linear access at the point where Teesdale Way meets the borders of Darlington (western border of Stockton) and Redcar & Cleveland (eastern border of Middlesbrough).

The collated information has been used for on-going improvements along the Teesdale Way as part of the River Tees Rediscovered (RTR) projects, which is led by Groundwork (NE).

The RTR projects covers an area of 147km within the Tees Valley, focussing on the river corridor from Tees Mouth at the coast to upstream of Piercebridge linking in with the heart of Teesdale projects.

In 2014 a heritage lottery funding application was approved and unlocked £1.9m of funding support for RTR. When taking into consideration partner contributions the total funding package for RTR stands at £3.7m.

5.9 The assessment for RoWIP 1 recognised the potential benefits of linking tourism and countryside access. Since 2015, discussions have been carried out with Natural England to create a National Trail within the Borough.

In March 2016, Natural England submitted its report and proposals to the Secretary of State (SOS) for coastal access between Newport Bridge and North Gare. The Natural England report and proposal for a National Trail was approved and works started on site to construct new footpaths in 2016.

The National Trail route within Stockton should be complete and open for public use in 2018 and this section of path will be part of the 110km England Coast Path.



New Causeway (view towards Brine Pumping Station)



New boardwalk (north of A1185 roundabout)

5.10 Four new surface deck crossings (**out of 7**) have been installed by Network Rail to replace ballast crossing points on - :

- Public Footpath No.28 (Stockton) off Shearwater Lane, Norton
- Public Footpath No.5 (Stockton) rear of truGym, off A135 Yarm Road
- Public Footpath No.27 (Billingham) Billingham Country Park
- Public Footpath No. 5 & 7 (Egglecliffe) off Urlay Nook Road

Stockton Council will continue to work closely with Network Rail and aims to improve public safety over existing live rail lines on the RoW network on the following crossing points located on -:

- Public Footpath No.31 (Billingham) Cowpen Bewley
- Public Footpath No.5 (Stillington) north of Town Farm
- Public Footpath No.9 (Carlton) east of Townend Farm



Public Footpath No.5 & 7 (Eggescliffe)

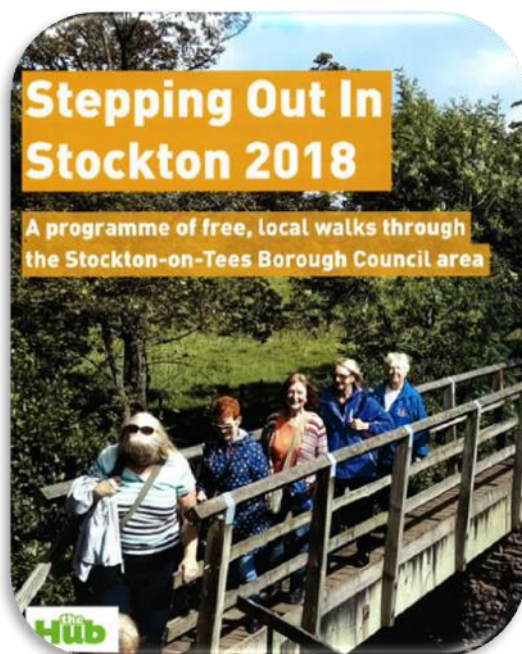
- 5.11 Twenty three anomalies were identified on the DMS in 2008 for which five 'Public Path Orders' have been confirmed to regularise the DMS. The cost per path order is approximately £1500 and it is the Council's proposal to process further PPO's as resources allow.
- 5.12 In 2016, the consolidated process of the DMS was completed which included all changes to the DMS by PPO since it was last consolidated back in 1998. For the Council to republish the RoW maps on the modern Ordnance Survey base and incorporate all changes that have been made to the network, the DMS consolidation review needs to be advertised in the local paper, which is planned for 2018. An updated DMS will not resolve existing anomalies or any unrecorded rights of way.

5.13 Over the last 10 years, maintenance works on the PRoW network has included '2 cuts' on selected footpaths (50km per cut) and 3 cuts on the Teesdale Way (20km per cut) during April and October months as part of the annual vegetation programme. In between the annual vegetation programme the RoW work team carry out additional vegetation works, stile or gates repairs, signage works, fallen trees removal, new or remedial works on boardwalks, re-surface works and giant hogweed treatment works following requests/enquiries from users of the path or identified from surveys and site visits.



5.14 The promotion of recreational walking and cycling has increased over the past decade in the Borough with the development of new routes being identified and improvements made to provide short, medium and long distance routes:

- Tees Heritage Park
- 8 Bridges Way (suitable for cyclists)
- Ingleby Hill Circular, Ingleby Barwick
- Ingleby Barwick Circular
- South Stockton Greenway Scheme (suitable for cyclists)
- River Tees Rediscovered Heritage Trails include :
 - Ingleby Barwick Trail
 - Old Tees Trail
 - Thornaby Trail
 - Thornaby & Preston Park Trail
 - Eggescliffe & Aislaby Loop
- England Coast Path (open in 2018)
- Cowpen Bewley Heritage Trail
- Norton Heritage Trail
- Stockton Town Centre
- Yarm
- Thornaby Aerodrome Trail



5.15 A range of promotional activities are or have been organised with the support of the Council by independent groups that encourage people to use the off road network within the Borough including running groups, walk to school week, heritage themed walks & talks, cycling skills training, self -guided walks leaflets, Friends of Stockton Health Walks, Rat Race, Duathlon Festival, Red Sun-flower walks, Halloween spooky walk, Stockton Sports Relief Mile, The Hub and a series of led walks currently undertaken throughout the year by Groundwork (NE) as part of the 'River Tees Rediscovered Project' inc. heritage trails and Tees Heritage Park (see 5.21 of RTR activities/walks during 2017).

Eggescliffe: Short Riverside Loop

Starting Point: Eggescliffe Medical Centre
Distance: 2.1 miles/3.4 kilometres

- 1 From the Medical Centre walk down Sunningdale Drive away from Yarm Road and past the shops and pub. When you reach the T-junction at the end of Sunningdale Drive, turn left onto Dinsdale Drive. Where the houses end on your right, take the signposted Teesdale Way public footpath alongside the golf course to the riverside.
- 2 Turn right and follow the riverside path until you reach a metal signpost on your left marked Eggescliffe.
- 3 Take this path, which goes uphill with small beck/drain on your right. Do not take the Yarm path! As you approach the farm, go straight on over the stile then turn almost immediately right over a second stile and through a field with a hedgerow on your left. At the end of this field, go left into the farmyard and right to leave it and walk straight on up the lane. Turn right along a public footpath and lane which leads up to some allotments.
- 4 Walk up this lane and after about 50m, turn left through a cut opposite the allotments, onto Grisdale Crescent. Follow Grisdale Crescent until you reach another cut on your right. Take this path and follow it around to the left, then right, to cross over Hoylake Way. After crossing the road, follow the path through the estate to Sunningdale Drive to return to Eggescliffe Medical Centre.

Stockton-on-Tees NHS STEPPING OUT in Stockton

Eggescliffe: Short Riverside Loop

A moderate walk of 2.1 miles/3.4 kilometres

change 4life

Self-guided walks information can be downloaded from the Councils website which includes 10 walks within the Borough with a range of distances between 1.7 miles to 2.3 miles. Each walk includes a detailed description and map of the route.

<https://www.stockton.gov.uk/arts-culture-and-leisure/walking-in-the-borough/>

- 5.16 In August 2014, pedestrian counters were installed on the Teesdale Way (Newsham) and the data collected from January 2015 to December 2017 shows an average 44% increase of usage for this section of the Teesdale Way over the 3 year period.

It can only be assumed the increase of usage of the Teesdale Way (in parts) is from the promotion of route and ongoing works as part of the River Tees Rediscovered project.



- 5.17 The Councils Green Infrastructure Plans and Strategies were adopted in 2009 and the range of plans and strategies are having an increasing influence on the delivery and management of the RoW network and countryside in the Borough which includes the Tees Heritage Park (200 acres of green space along the River Tees), England Coast Path (5km), Country Parks, River catchments and natural greenspace corridors.

The RoW network is an integral part of the wider green infrastructure network and implementing the actions in the RoWIP will assist in delivering the key outcomes and headline actions of the Councils

Green Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2018-21 as listed below and as highlighted in **Figure 4** and the action plan (**Appendix 1**)

In delivering the above, the Council intends to provide accessible routes throughout the Borough for a diverse range of users including walkers, cyclists, equestrian, those with mobility difficulties and visual impairment to meet the Councils Local Transport Plan targets and objectives by the following:

Strategic cycle routes and promoted trails

Further develop and enhance the Borough's strategic cycleway and footpath network with priority given to the following routes (including associated interpretation, information and promotion):

- England Coast Path, from Newport Bridge to Greatham Creek
- Wynyard to Billingham cycle route
- The Teesdale Way - providing the principal walking route between the Tees Barrage, Stockton Town Centre and the Tees Heritage Park, with potential to improve cycle access.
- National Cycle Network Route 1: Castle Eden Walkway from Stockton to Wynyard Woodland Park
- National Cycle Network Route 14: Stockton to Darlington
- Cycle route around the western fringe of Stockton, linking National Cycle Routes 1 and 14 (at Elton interchange) via new housing development.
- Elton Interchange to Durham Lane Industrial Estate cycle route
- Great North Park to Queens Park / Stockton town centre (near A177/Norton Road roundabout).

Develop and promote a series of walking and cycling trails linked to the Teesdale Way:

- Eight Bridges
- Thornaby Trail
- Ingleby Trail
- Egglecliffe and Aislaby Trail

Provide new cycle and/or pedestrian river crossings at key locations on River Tees and River Leven, linking into wider access network and improving connectivity within the Tees Heritage Park.

Potential schemes include:

- A River Leven crossing linking Ingleby Barwick and Yarm
- A River Tees crossing linking Ingleby Barwick to Preston Park
- A River Tees crossing linking Ingleby Barwick to Egglecliffe

(Most of the proposed cycle routes and bridge crossings have been identified in the draft Stockton on Tees Local Plan).

Emerging Stockton on Tees Local Plan, our safeguarded routes in Policy T11:

4. Sites and routes which play a role in developing infrastructure to widen transport choice will be safeguarded from development which would impact negatively on their delivery or attractiveness to potential users, routes include -:

- A. Bridge and link across the River Tees between Ingleby Barwick;

- B. Cycleway/footway between Tess/Surtees Bridge and Victoria Bridge on the western bank of the River Tees;
- C. Cycleway/footway on the northern bank of the River Tees at Yarm;
- D. Cycleway/bridleway from Durham Road, Thorpe Thewles to Wynyard Woodland Park;
- E. Cycleway/footway to the north of Mill Lane, Long Newton
- F. Cycleway/footway from Greatham Creek to Transporter Bridge;
- G. Cycleway/footway from Elton interchange to Durham Lane Industrial Estate;
- H. Cycleway/footbridge across the A689 (via a bridge) to connect with the wider cycleway network at Wynyard Road; and
- I. Car parking to the west of Eaglescliffe Station and footbridge over the railway line.

River Tees

Provide landing stages for small craft (including potential river taxis) at appropriate locations along the River Tees and River Leven, linked to the path networks and publicly accessible green spaces.

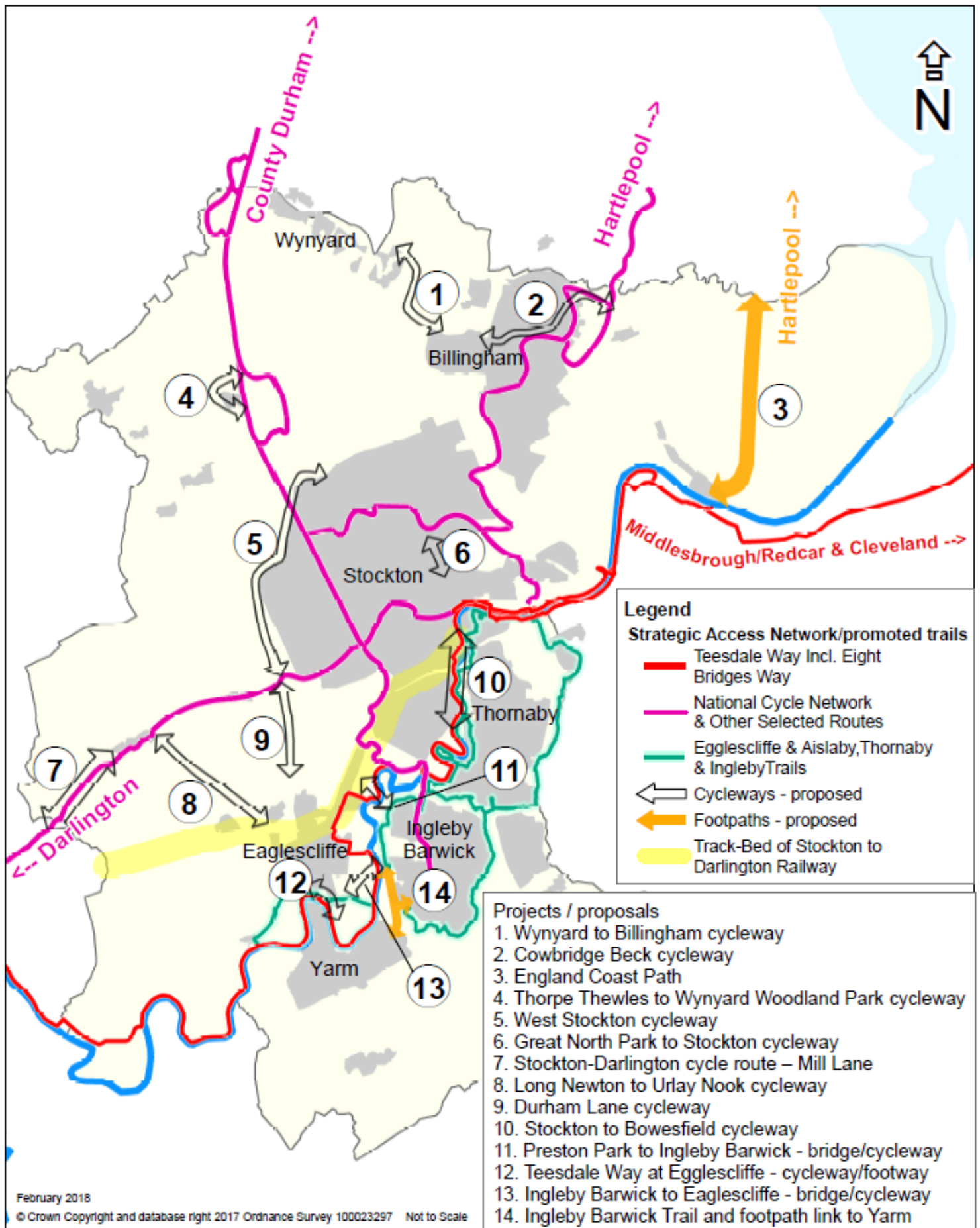
Stockton and Darlington historic corridor

Explore opportunities to improve access to heritage and other attractions along the historic Stockton to Darlington rail corridor.

Access (general)

Deliver other improvements which will extend or enhance the Borough's access network, promoting active travel and/or providing significant recreational benefit.

Figure 4 (Green Infrastructure 'Strategic Access Network')



- 5.18 Between July 2015 and January 2016 the Ramblers Association (RA) carried out a national ‘Big Pathwatch’ campaign to assess the state of RoW’s across the country.

The survey included if the paths were:

- well signed
- well maintained
- free from obstruction
- suitable surface
- provides good connectivity
- is safe to use

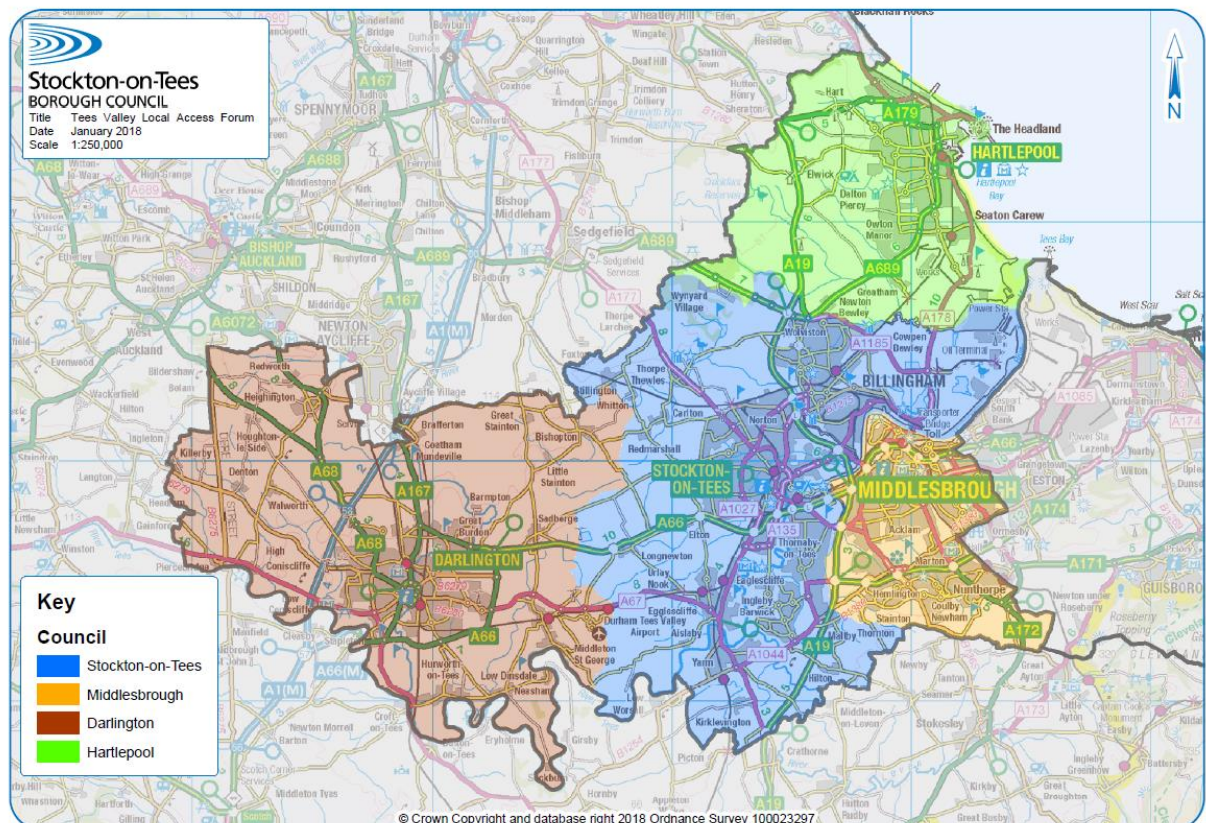


During the above campaign, Stockton received monthly reports from the RA and overall no major problems were identified, with only reports of minor vegetation overgrowth on some paths, which were on the Councils vegetation maintenance programme.

- 5.19 In 2017, three new community bus routes for residents who don’t have access to bus services were launched in the Borough. This new free service links rural villages to urban town centres including Maltby, Hilton, Yarm, Norton, Stockton Town Centre, Hartburn, Wolviston and Billingham Town which provides passengers the opportunity to access the RoW network in the Borough.

- 5.20 Tees Valley Local Access Forum (TVLAF) have continued to hold meetings throughout the period covered by RoWIP 1 during which TVLAF members have monitored the progress of Stockton’s RoWIP as well as providing independent advice to the four Local Authorities (Darlington, Hartlepool, Stockton and Middlesbrough) and other national organisations, such as Natural England, on a wide range of issues relating to countryside or coastal access.

The Forum's main purpose has not changed since it was established as statutory body, in 2003, to provide advice on how to make the countryside more accessible and enjoyable for recreation whilst at the same time taking into account environmental, social and economic interests.



- 5.21 As part of the RTR projects, 51 guided walks have been carried out during 2017 by Groundwork (NE) and other RTR Partners which has involved 900 walkers. Planned walks for 2018 include section of the Teesdale Way with a monthly promotional campaign encouraging people to walk sections of the Teesdale Way by themselves. This will also link to the RTR Heritage Trails which will be put on the Tees Valley Combined Authority website later in the year.

As part of RTR, all stiles have been replaced with kissing gates (or removed) within the Borough. Other improvement works along the Teesdale Way as part of the RTR includes new boardwalks, signage and resurfacing works. During 2018, further boardwalks works are planned to replace existing boardwalks and construction of new in areas increasingly wet and boggy to benefit walkers.

Other RTR projects include - :

- Fish For Tees
- Coastal and Wading Birds
- Rediscovering Skill
- Community Activities
- Green Shoots
- Teesdale Way & Heritage Trails
- North Tees Trail
- Complementary Activities
- Green Activities
- Community Archaeology
- Guided Walks
- Tees Cottage Pumping Station
- River Lab
- Redcar Wildlife
- Honey Pot Educational Spaces
- Alien Invaders
- Spirit of Place
- Wings of the Tees

(More information of RTR projects can be found on <https://www.riverteesrediscovered.org/>)

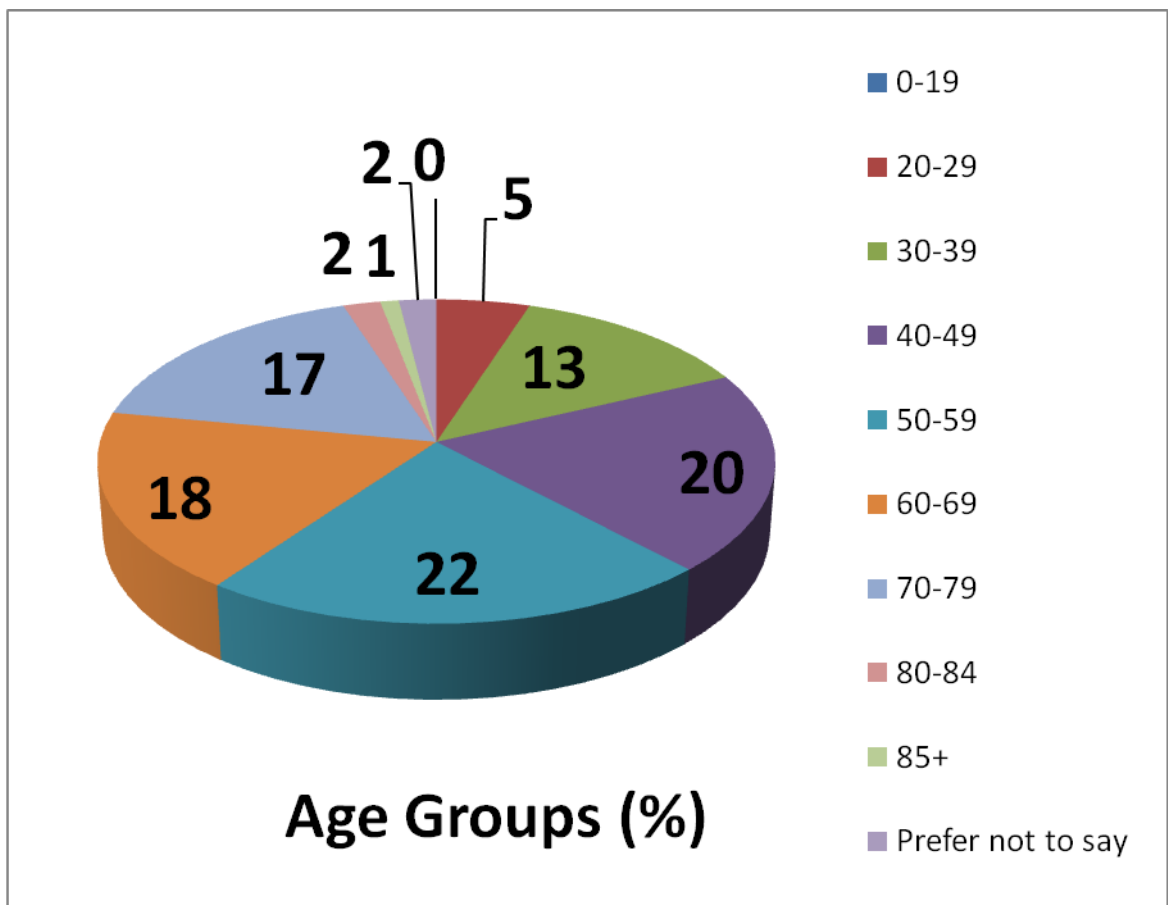
- 5.22 Stockton Council participates in the annual National Highways and Transport (NHT) public satisfaction survey which is an independent survey, conducted by Ipsos MORI, on behalf of participating local authority. Over 3000 questionnaires are posted to randomly selected residents of the Borough and ask for their views on a number of highway and transportation related topics. On the RoW's questions the Council had an excellent outcome in 2017 with a benchmark score of 62 for RoW's which ranked the Council 3rd out of 112 and 6th for cycle routes with a benchmark score 60.



- 5.23 Throughout the RoWIP 1 period, no improvements were planned or implemented on the BOAT sections of the RoW network for recreational motorists. One of the main reasons for this is the relative size of the BOAT network (at 1% of the whole RoW network) and the complexities of the existing traffic regulation orders (TRO's) on them preventing motorised vehicle use except authorised users.
- 5.24 A great deal has been achieved on improving the RoW network and access over the last 10 years. It is the aim of this plan to build on those successes to further improve access for a diverse set of users and provide the information people need to make the best use of the access opportunities available to them.

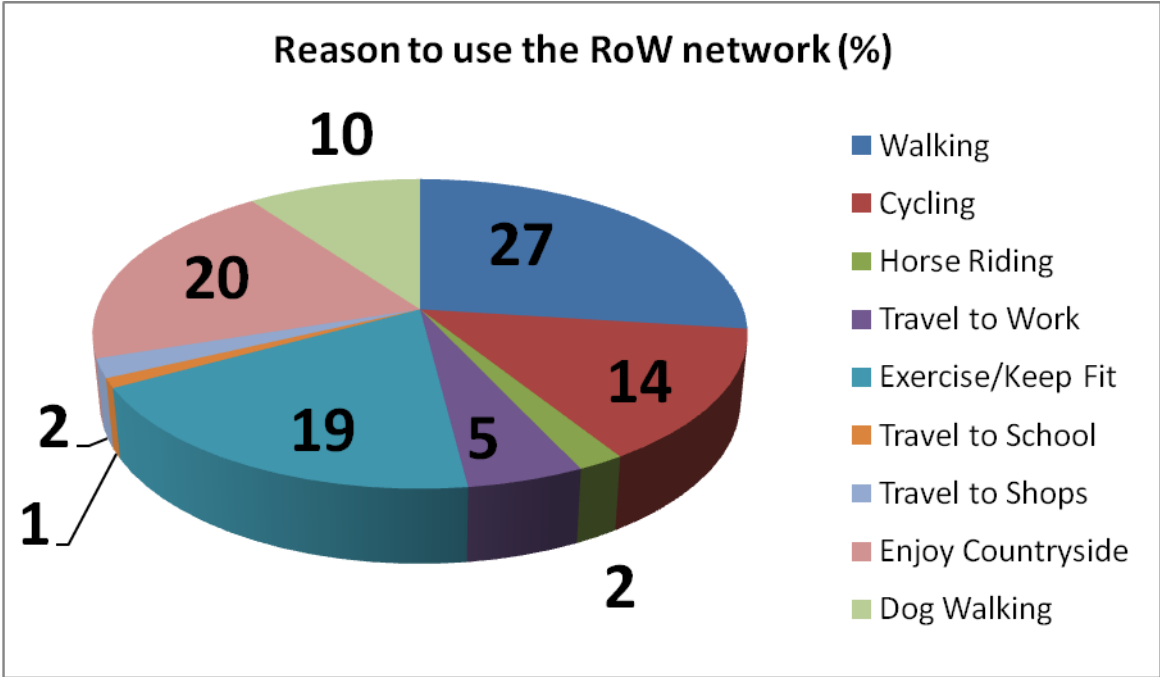
Chapter 6: Stakeholders and their needs

- 6.1 The statutory guidance for producing RoWIPs states that authorities should consult widely the needs of all users and potential users of the rights of way in their areas in order to identify what improvements they should make to their network. This was undertaken as part of the production of RoWIP 1. Further consultations have been undertaken in preparation RoWIP 2 with a **'view point survey'** being made available electronically to users, landowners, Parish Councils, Ward Councillors, neighbouring Councils, Local Access Forum and all Council media sites. Additional information leaflets were available in all Council buildings (inc. leisure centres and libraries) and articles were published in the community magazine, Stockton News, which is delivered to every household in the Borough. The survey was also sent out to the full Viewpoint panel in 2017. In total 207 questionnaires were completed.
- 6.2 Of the users that completed the recent survey, 54% were male and 46% female. A breakdown of age groups is shown in the chart below which clearly shows 60% of completed surveys were aged 50+ with a further 33% being aged between 30-49 and no response from the younger age group.



70% who completed the survey were confident **'to know where the RoW's are and use them'** compared to 44% back in 2008.

6.3 Following the first RoWIP it was identified the RoW network was predominantly used for walking. However, following the results from the updated surveys the chart below shows cycling usage has increased by 3% from the previous RoWIP along with an increase of 14% for exercise/keep fit purpose, an increase of 2% for travel to work and dog walking.



6.4 Walking remains the most popular activity on the RoW network given walkers are entitled to use all types of RoW. However, from the results from the completed survey ‘How often do you use the local Rights of Way’ a significant increase of usage can be found compared to the 2008 RoWIP findings, as below.

	2008 (RoWIP)	2018 (RoWIP)
○ Most Days	16%	21%
○ Weekly	18%	29%
○ Monthly	8%	13%
○ Occasionally	35%	23%
○ Mainly at Weekends	4%	2%
○ Rarely	14%	7%
○ Never	1%	4%
○ Don't Know	4%	1%

6.5 Promotion of the RoW network featured in the action plan in RoWIP 1 and to achieve this walking and cycling leaflets were published and made widely available to help residents of Stockton Borough and visitors to the Borough enjoy the benefits of using the RoW network. On-line mapping of RoW's network can also be found on the Councils website.

Results received from the recent surveys shows an increase of 14% from the previous RoWIP that the public have heard of a 'Definitive Map, an increase of 9% are aware of the National Cycle Route, an increase of 26% have heard of the Teesdale Way, 48% increase have heard of the Three Village Loop Walk and 31% are aware of the Stockton Walking and Cycling Map.

	2008 (RoWIP 1)	2018 (RoWIP 2)
○ Definitive Map	9%	23%
○ The National Cycle Route	54%	63%
○ The Teesdale Way	32%	58%
○ Three Village Loop Walk	11%	59%
○ Stockton Walking and Cycling Map	25%	56%

6.6 Following the completed survey, the top 6 'Rights of Way' network used in the Borough includes:

1. Riverside & Tees Barrage (inc. Portrack Marsh)
2. Yarm/Eaglescliffe (inc. Preston Park & Quarry Wood Nature Reserve)
3. Wynyard Woodland Park
4. Cycle Network
5. Greens Lane , Hartburn (inc. Ropner Park, South Stockton Gateway & Six Fields)
6. Teesdale Way

Back in 2008, the top 6 'Rights of Way' network used in the Borough was:

1. Wynyard Woodland Park
2. Cycle Network
3. Yarm/Eaglescliffe (inc. Preston Park & Quarry Wood Nature Reserve)
4. Billingham
5. Riverside & Tees Barrage (inc. Portrack Marsh)
6. Teesdale Way

No real changes of popular and favourite walks/locations in the Borough over the last ten years which range from riverside paths, woodland paths and nature reserves for users of path to enjoy the Borough landscape and local wildlife.

Chapter 7: Statement of Action

- 7.1 As part of the process of preparing a RoWIP, local highway authorities are required to prepare a statement of action. This statement should be developed using the information collected in the assessment and consultation phases of the plan. The statement of action and its associated action plan is the most important part of the RoWIP as it sets out the list of actions that authorities intend to take to improve the path network and provide greater opportunities for the users of those paths.
- 7.2 No additional government funding or resources will be made available for implementing the statement of action, therefore the RoWIP will need to make links to a wide range of strategies in order to realise many of the future opportunities for funding. Possible sources of joint working and funding opportunities have been included within the RoWIP, however, this is by no means an exhaustive list.
- 7.3 Statutory guidance states that the statement of action should stem from the Council's assessments. This has been achieved by drawing from the views received from the consultation with users and others with an interest in RoW's and setting these within the opportunities and constraints identified in the assessment of the RoW network.
- 7.4 The statement takes into account issues identified in ROWIP 1 and builds upon these taking into account factors such as:
- progress that has been made since the publication of ROWIP1;
 - what action needs to be done in order to achieve the aim;
 - resources are needed in order to delivery;
 - intelligence collected during the ROWIP 2 consultation process
- 7.5 For ease of reference, and as with ROWIP 1, this 'Statement of Action is structured around the following sections:
- Issues identified:**
- key and detailed points raised from consultations;
 - issues raised from an assessment of the condition of the physical network and
- Themes for guiding action:**
- groups of issues, which can allow the targeting of action to address general needs, or those raised, by specific stakeholder groups.
- 7.6 The themes/activities form the basis of the action plan, which is similar to RoWIP 1 to avoid any confusion. The action plan (**Appendix 1**) will assist to manage and improve the RoW network.

Issues identified

Key and detailed points raised from View Point Survey:

Subject	Issue's identified
Signing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Lack of signs ❖ Lack of waymarking ❖ Signage to include distance and destinations
Maintenance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Lack of maintenance
Surfacing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Muddy/boggy paths ❖ Better drainage on paths ❖ Poor surface maintenance
Obstructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Undergrowth / Overhanging vegetation ❖ Undergrowth should be cut more often ❖ Obstruction on routes from ploughing/crops ❖ Problem with gates/barriers ❖ Encroachment of private gardens extending over path ❖ Fly tipping
Stiles & Gates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Stiles difficult to negotiate ❖ Stiles/gates not maintained
Information Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Lack of information of routes in leaflet/guide format or on internet ❖ Lack of Information boards ❖ Make it clear who can use path to avoid user conflict ❖ Provide QR codes to provide information of wildlife, flowers etc. ❖ More notices to pick up dog fouling
User Responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Dogs off leads ❖ Dispose of dog (waste) bag – in bins provided or home
Accessibility for those with limited mobility / those with pushchairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Few routes available ❖ Unable to access routes due to type of furniture (gates/stiles) & surface ❖ Need to identify routes, accessible to people with a disability
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Concerns of illegal use of routes ❖ Concern of personal safety e.g. lack of lighting & user conflicts ❖ Concern about crossing busy roads ❖ Problems with stock in fields, crossed by path ❖ RoWs to be patrolled due to ASB events (underpasses) ❖ Cyclists to use bell ❖ Personal safety concerns/Lone walkers
Extension of the Existing Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Not enough bridleways
Accessing the Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Safe parking needed at start of route ❖ Designation parking bays for horses box ❖ Horse mounting blocks to be provided

Points raised by user type

Walkers	Urban & Rural Paths
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Better footpaths ❖ Less litter ❖ Dog fouling ❖ New footbridge (Ingleby Barwick to Eaglescliffe) ❖ Public transport to access countryside routes ❖ Lighting on routes ❖ Fly tipping ❖ More circular routes ❖ Stiles not easy to use ❖ Remove stiles for gates ❖ Clear undergrowth (more frequent cuts) ❖ To report problems/defects found (more easy) ❖ Safety (needles found on paths) ❖ More seating /rest areas ❖ Landowners stop blocking paths ❖ More signage ❖ Cyclists on footpath (user conflict)
Dog Walkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Lack of dog bins ❖ Dog stiles
Horse Riders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ More bridleways ❖ No tie points or mounting block for riders ❖ Overhanging tree branches ❖ Road safety inc. new developments, increase traffic less safe for horse riders on roads
Cyclists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ More traffic free routes and paths ❖ Suitable /better surfaces ❖ Better maintenance to sweep debris from paths ❖ Remove gates (unable to tow trailer/tag bike) ❖ Dogs off lead ❖ Poor drivers behaviour
People with Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Replacing stiles with gates / gaps ❖ More routes available ❖ Publication of existing routes available
Non Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Paths to be found in good condition ❖ Leaflets to show routes
Town and Parish Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Council online RoW mapping – not user friendly ❖ Parish anomalies to be regularised ❖ New route/links ❖ Remedial works to existing boardwalks, stiles & gates
Landowners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Dogs running loose ❖ Stock escaping ❖ Walkers and other users wandering off the path ❖ Cyclists using footpaths

Issues identified by analysis of consultations

- 7.7 An assessment has been undertaken of available data held by the authority relating to the condition of the network and the nature of issues reported (**View Point Survey**).
- 7.8 Issue identified through this process were:
- It is estimated that 89 % of the RoW network is signposted and waymarked, which includes over 200 signposts and a minimum of 700 waymarks found on the RoW network. However, due to wear and tear and as well as deliberate damage, there is a need for an ongoing programme of sign and waymarks replacement and upgrading.
 - Surface condition, and particularly undergrowth, continues to be an issue on certain paths. It is the Council responsibility to cut back vegetation growing from the surface of RoW. The Council has developed a vegetation clearance programme to tackle undergrowth on RoW network which has resulted in 2 cuts on selected footpaths (50km per cut) and 3 cuts on Teesdale Way (20km per cut).
 - It is recognised that the current clearance programme is not enough to keep other paths clear throughout the year and further funding will be needed to significantly increase the number of routes cut or their frequency during the summer growing period.
 - Majority of routes in Stockton Borough are natural surface and on occasions prone to damage in wet weather.
 - Continue to replace stiles with kissing gates with landowner consent.
 - The network continues to be disjointed with severance of some routes from the urban to wider rural area by the A19 and A66 Trunk roads, railway lines, the River Tees and the River Leven.
 - Anomalies need to be regularised to remove obstructions from the RoW network.
 - There is a demand for short circular routes, which resident can access from their home.
 - Lack of routes with equestrian rights in the Borough.
 - Good relationship with landowners
 - Consistent standards for signing and waymarking
 - Online mapping and RoW walking/cycling guides available.
 - Expectations of users of RoW has changed over the last decade within the Borough which users of the countryside paths should be mindful the RoW network is different to adopted network of paths which tend to have tarmac surfaces and be well lit. In contrast the RoW paths (especially rural paths) are in the main natural surfaces made from ground that can be uneven and steep and the paths can be muddy or boggy especially during the winter months or following adverse weather conditions.
 - There are a number of strategic projects and initiatives that are currently being delivered and which have the potential to significantly impact on the RoW network over the next 5 years.

Themes

7.9 The issues that have been identified through the consultation process and analysis of information held by the Council as part of RoWIP 1 were grouped into a number of themes. These have been continued into RoWIP 2 for consistency with six new activities/themes added into the action plan (**Appendix 1**) and includes:

- RoW maintenance (ref. 8.1.17)
- Green Infrastructure (ref.8.1.18)
- Planning and Development (ref.8.1.19)
- Parish/Town Councils (ref. 8.1.20)
- National and Regional Trails (ref. 8.1. 21)
- Health and Wellbeing (ref. 18.1.22)

A full list of 22 activities as part of the action plan is provided below -:

1. Definitive Map (to keep under continuous review)
2. Definitive Map (anomalies)
3. Existing network (easy to use)
4. Digitised Definitive Map
5. Disabled 'Accessibility' Assessment
6. Introduce 'barrier' free routes
7. Making the public aware of the rights of way network
8. Improving and extending the network for walkers
9. Improving and extending the network for equestrians
10. Provision of missing links and circular paths (Lost Ways project)
11. Public Transport provision
12. Compile details of permissive /conservations paths
13. Improving and extending the network for cyclists
14. Identify dangerous crossing (road /rail)
15. Provision of crossings over River Tees and River Leven
16. Small scale improvement identified during consultation
17. RoW maintenance
18. Green Infrastructure Projects
19. Planning and Development
20. Parish/Town Councils
21. National and Regional Trails
22. Health & Wellbeing

Chapter 8: Action Plan for RoWIP 2

8.1 This action plan (**Appendix 1**) identifies ways in which the Council can address the issues identified for each of the themes and links into the Council objective in delivering the RoWIP to make the necessary improvements on the RoW network through effective partnership working with internal and external partners.

Funding levels against each section are only indicative and do not guarantee that funding is available.

Key to Costs

- £ **Less than £5000**
- ££ **Between £5000 - £50,000**
- £££ **More than £50, 000**

At the time of ongoing funding reductions, the means of securing resources for RoW improvements is and will continue to be very challenging. The Council will need to pursue an opportunistic approach to fund the RoWIP without diverting resources from delivering statutory maintenance work. The Council must achieve improvement to the RoW network in partnership with other Council services and partner organisations and usually by responding to opportunities as they arise.

Budget allocations for RoW’s improvements have previously come from LTP capital programme. With restricted internal funding, resourcing improvements to RoW’s is a challenge. However, the RoW’s network is of great value and can contribute towards many corporate policies and priorities. This presents the opportunity for improvements by developing delivery partnerships and securing funding from a wide range of sources including heritage lottery funding, DEFRA, landfill community funds, agri-environment schemes and some charitable trusts.

Key Potential Partner's (stakeholders) to contribute towards the Councils action plan.

(In no particular order):

- Tees Valley Local Access Forum (TVLAF)
- NACRO
- Groundwork (GW)
- Natural England (NE)
- Probation Services (PS)
- Tees Valley Wildlife Trust (TVWT)
- Forestry Commission (FC)
- Woodland Trust (WT)
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- Sustrans
- British Waterways (BW)
- Canal & River Trust (CRT)
- Friends of Stockton & Darlington Railway (SDR)
- Friends of Tees Heritage Park (THP)
- Network Rail (NR)
- Highway England (HE)
- Middlesbrough Shop mobility (MSM)
- Arriva/Stagecoach (AR)
- INCA
- Developers
- Parish/Town Councils (PC & TC)
- Environment Agency
- North Tees NHS
- The Hub (Stockton)
- Tees River Trust

Objectives & Aims of Action Plan (Appendix 1)

- 8.1.1 **Definitive Map Statement to be consolidated** – to ensure that the DMS provides an accurate record of RoW's
- 8.1.2 **Definitive Map Anomalies** – work on legal anomalies on the DMS to remove cul-de-sac paths and remove (historic) obstructions found on the network (housing developments)
- 8.1.3 **Existing Network (easy to use)** – continue to collect data of network via inspections/surveys
- 8.1.4 **Digitised Definitive Map (G.I.S)** – to improve the quality of information and communication
- 8.1.5 **Disabled 'Accessibility' Assessment** – to improve RoW and access for blind or partially sighted people and others with mobility problems
- 8.1.6 **Introduce 'barrier' free routes** – continue to provide the least restrictive access
- 8.1.7 **Making the public aware of the rights of way network** – to ensure that all RoW's are signed and waymarked appropriately and improve online services (inc. interactive map)
- 8.1.8 **Improving and extending the network for walkers** – to improve opportunities for walkers
- 8.1.9 **Improving and extending the network for equestrians** - to improve opportunities for horse riders
- 8.1.10 **Provision of missing links and circular paths (Lost Ways project)** – investigate and improve connectivity of RoW network
- 8.1.11 **Public Transport provision** – to add information (bus stops) on the online mapping on the Council website and include information on leaflets and access to the countryside
- 8.1.12 **Compile details of permissive/conservations paths** – to improve opportunities through permissive access agreements
- 8.1.13 **Improving and extending the network for cyclists** - to improve opportunities for cyclists
- 8.1.14 **Identify dangerous crossing (road /rail)** – continue to improve safety over road/rail crossing points
- 8.1.15 **Provision of crossings over River Tees and River Leven** – prioritise key crossing points for improvements (linked to development and green spaces)
- 8.1.16 **Small scale improvement identified during consultation** – works added onto RoW works programme
- 8.1.17 **RoW maintenance** – to ensure that the RoW's network is maintained at an appropriate level
- 8.1.18 **Green Infrastructure Projects** – to improve connectivity to green spaces in the Borough and adds to the economic benefit of the Boroughs tourism
- 8.1.19 **Planning and Development** – to ensure that Planning process provides opportunities to sought for improvements to existing RoW where possible in accordance with the Councils strategies in place
- 8.1.20 **Parish/Town Councils** – Parish Paths Partnership to be developed
- 8.1.21 **National and Regional Trails** – Teesdale Way & England Coast Path inc. projects and promotion
- 8.1.23 **Health & Wellbeing** – to ensure that RoW's (and green spaces) help to deliver health benefits

Chapter 9: Implementation and monitoring

Implementation

- 9.1 RoWIP's are meant to be inspirational and ambitious in identifying potential improvements to the network. This plan therefore includes a number of proposals for improvements to the RoW network, that it may not be possible to implement them all immediately.

Therefore, the delivery of the improvements measures in this plan is dependent on resources becoming available and the Council will need to work in partnership with a range of organisations and sectors in order many of the proposed actions are delivered as part of RoWIP 2.

Monitoring

- 9.2 The Council will produce a report after 3 years of this plan which will include summary of progress that has been made towards the action plan. The Local Access Forum will be provided with updates periodically and monitor progress.

There is great value in maintaining the authority's participation in the NHT satisfaction survey. The survey asks specific questions on issues found on the RoW network. It allows the Council to compare performance against other participating authorities and to analyse trend data to see how performance is changing over time.

Review

- 9.3 A full review of the RoWIP 2 will be carried out in 2023 or earlier if deemed necessary.

Appendix 1 – Action Plan

To be inserted here.

Appendix 2 - Resurfacing works (include tarmac or loose stone paths)

Year	Path Ref.	Parish	Length (m)
2009	Public Footpath No. 5 & Public Bridleway No.14 (WWP)	Grindon	4000
2009	Public Footpath No.12	Stockton	550
2009	Public Footpath No. 37	Stockton	550
2010	Public Footpath No.2	Stockton	1145
2010	Public Footpath No.2	Ingleby Barwick	130
2010	Public Bridleway No.33	Stockton	720
2011	Public Footpath No.18	Thornaby	137
2011	Public Footpath No. 10	Ingleby Barwick	410
2011	Public Footpath No. 14	Kirklevington	145
2011	Public Footpath No.15	Kirklevington	50
2011	Public Footpath No.7	Ingleby Barwick	81
2011	Public Footpath. No.36	Stockton	100
2011	Public Footpath No. 14	Stockton	482
2011	Public Footpath No.5	Stockton	30
2012	South Stockton Gateway (Phase 1)	Stockton	1061
2012	Public Footpath No. 14	Stockton	583
2013	Public Footpath No. 5	Egglecliffe	270
2013	Public Footpath No. 6	Grindon	424
2013	Public Footpath No. 1	Egglecliffe	450
2013	Public Footpath No.10	Ingleby Barwick	500
2013	Public Footpath No. 28	Billingham	75
2013	Public Footpath No.29	Stockton	500
2013	Ingleby Farm (side of River Leven)	Ingleby Barwick	300
2014	Public Bridleway No.33	Stockton	100
2014	Public Footpath No.11	Ingleby Barwick	100
2014	Public Footpath No. 9	Egglecliffe	100
2014	Public Footpath No.10	Stillington	200
2015	Public Footpath No.12 (inc. new lighting)	Egglecliffe	200
2015	Public Footpath No.8	Thornaby	426
2015	Public Footpath No.13	Billingham	80
2015	Public Bridleway No.14 (inc. new lighting)	Ingleby Barwick	485
2016	South Stockton Gateway (Phase 2)	Stockton	741
2016	Public Footpath No.3	Wolviston	10
2016	Public Footpath No.5	Stockton	75
2016	Public Footpath No. 14	Kirklevington	140
2016	Public Bridleway No. 1	Maltby	84
2016	Public Footpath No.7	Eaglescliffe	174
2017	Public Footpath No.3	Carlton	50
2017	England Coast Path (Phase 1)	Billingham	1800
2017	Public Footpath No.4	Kirklevington	205
2017	Public Footpath No.21	Stockton	140
2017	Public Footpath No. 3	Ingleby Barwick	312
2018	England Coast Path (Phase 2)	Billingham	1700
2018	Public Bridleway No.3	Ingleby Barwick	320
		TOTAL	20,135

Appendix 3 - Footbridge works on RoW network only

Year	Path Ref.	Parish	Works
2009/10	Public Bridleway No. 3	Long Newton	New Footbridge
2009/10	Public Footpath No.7	Carlton	Bridge Deck Replaced
2009/10	Public Footpath No. 14	Stockton	New Footbridge
2010/11	Public Footpath No.13	Grindon	Gabion works
2012/13	Public Footpath No. 15	Billingham	Bridge Deck Replaced
2012/13	Public Footpath No,12	Stockton	Drainage works (Underpass)
2013/14	Public Footpath No,12	Stockton	New Lighting (Underpass)
2013/14	Public Footpath No.5	Eggescliffe	New Footbridge
2013/14	Public Footpath No.12	Grindon	Bridge Repairs inc. Gabion works
2013/14	Public Bridleway No.1	Maltby	New Footbridge
2015/16	Public Footpath No.12	Grindon	Footbridge Repairs inc. parapet works
2017/18	Public Footpath No.6	Stillington	Bridge Deck Replaced
2017/18	Public Byway No.30	Billingham	Re-pointing of Brick Structure

(Vegetation clearance works are undertaken on/around SBC structures, as part of the RoW works programme)

Appendix 4 - Glossary of Terms

Acronym	Definition
BOAT	Byway Open to All Traffic (A right of way open to all users including motorised vehicles)
BVPI	Best Value Performance Indicator (formerly BVPI 178 – figure returned annually to measure right of way network easy to use)
Coastal Access	The Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009 (placed a duty on Natural England and The Secretary of State to provide an England Coastal Path)
CRoW Act	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (legislation that puts a duty on highways authorities to produce a right of way improvement plan)
Cycle Track	An 'off highway' route usually only open to cyclists and possibly pedestrians but not official rights of way as they are not recorded on the definitive map
DEFRA	The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Government Department)
DMS	Definitive Map and Statement (legal record of recognised public rights of way)
DfT	Department of Transport (Government Department)
Diversion	Legal process undertaken as the only way to officially alter the line or route of a right of way
DLW	Discovering Lost Ways Project
DMMO	Definitive Map Modification Order (legal process undertaken for adding or upgrading existing rights of way on the definitive map)
ECP	England Coastal Path
Extinguishment	Legal process undertaken as the only way to officially remove a right of way from the definitive map
GIS	Geographical Information System
Groundwork (NE)	Groundwork (North East)
HA	Highway Authority
Highway	Any road, track or path over which the public has the right to pass or re-pass (includes the rights of way network)
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
TVLAF	Tees Valley Local Access Forum
LTP	Local Transport Plan (long term vision of how a highway authority will manage its highway and transportation network)
NHT	National Highway and Transport Network (organisation providing a range of national benchmarking services for the Highways and Transport sector)
Permissive Access	Access to a local footpath that is only possible once permission has been granted by the landowner through a formal agreement
PPO	Public Path Order (legal process for alteration of existing rights of way)
Public Footpath	Right of way with access on foot only

Public Bridleway	Right of way with for walkers, horse riders and cyclists
PROW	Public Right of Way (footpath, legally recorded on the definitive map)
PHE	Public Health England
RA	Ramblers Association
Restricted Byway	Right of Way with access rights for those on foot, horse, cycle or horse drawn carriage, but not mechanically propelled vehicles
RoW	Right of Way
RoWIP	Right of Way Improvement Plan
RoW Act 1990	Rights of Way Act 1990
RTR	River Tees Rediscovered
THP	Tees Heritage Park
TRO	Traffic Regulation Order
TW	Teesdale Way