

Executive Summary

The public rights of way network is a significant part of Kirklees' heritage and a major recreational resource. It enables people to get outdoors and away from increasing motor traffic and to enjoy the countryside which they would not otherwise have access - or simply to use it for fresh air and exercise. These rights of way are also important in the daily lives of many people who use them for travelling, particularly on short journeys, to shops, schools and other facilities as well as being an important link between neighbourhoods and settlements.

As part of Kirklees Vision, the Rights of Way Improvement Plan is to have a rights of way network; that is accessible for all, helps towards improving the health and well being of our residents, supports the economy through tourism and helps to reduce Kirklees' "carbon footprint". It aims towards improving sustainable transport with member authorities within West Yorkshire as well as working with other neighbouring authorities whose aims and objectives are the same or similar. The aims of the plan are to:

1. Protect, improve and develop the rights of way network as an important means of access both within urban areas and the wider countryside to meet with the present and future needs of the public.
2. Ensure the condition of the rights of way network is maintained and enhanced in keeping with the needs of local communities.
3. Afford opportunities for safe and sustainable travel and for access to work, schools, shops and other facilities and amenities as well as providing further opportunities for outdoor recreation and enjoyment of the area.
4. Improve the accessibility of rights of way for all members of the community in particular those from ethnic and deprived areas and especially for those with mobility problems or other impairments.
5. Identify opportunities to further improve public access in Kirklees by working with partners and volunteer groups in providing well-connected, well maintained, traffic free routes that are safe, attractive and well used by residents and visitors.
6. Enable and encourage people to enjoy the benefits of regular exercise whilst going about their daily business and to take advantage of the wide variety of countryside that exists within Kirklees.
7. Ensure the rights of way network contributes to the development of economic opportunities in Kirklees through tourism.

Each highway authority is required to prepare "A Statement of Action" for the management of its Rights of Way Network and for securing improvements to local rights of way, with particular regards to the matters dealt with in the criteria contained in the Countryside and Rights of way Act 2000.