



# Countryside Access Strategy

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2019 - 2023



This document contains the Council's Strategic Plan for the Countryside Access Service.

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## **1. Countryside Access and Pendle's Strategic Plan**

- 1.1. The Countryside Access Strategy aims to contribute to Pendle Borough Council's Strategic Plan. The vision statement in the Strategic Plan sees Pendle as a place where quality of life continues to improve and where people respect one another and their neighbourhoods, where everyone aspires to reach their full potential and which is recognised locally, regionally and nationally as a great area to live, learn, work play and visit.
- 1.2. The Council's Countryside Access Service can play a significant role in helping to achieve this vision and therefore this strategy sets out our objectives and how we hope to implement them.

## **2. SWOT analysis of Pendle's Countryside Access Provision**

### **Strengths**

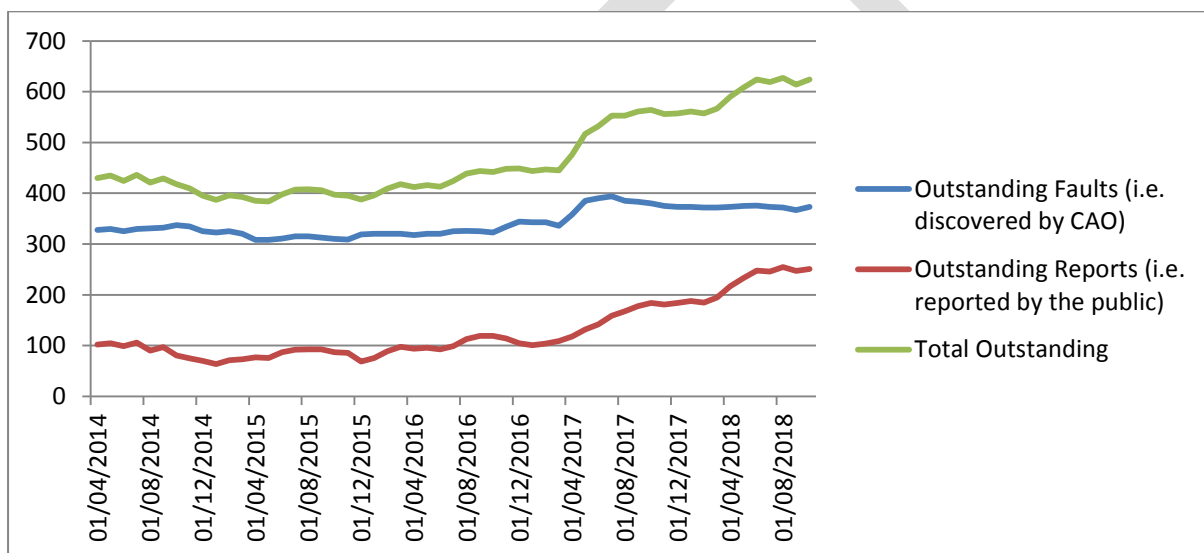
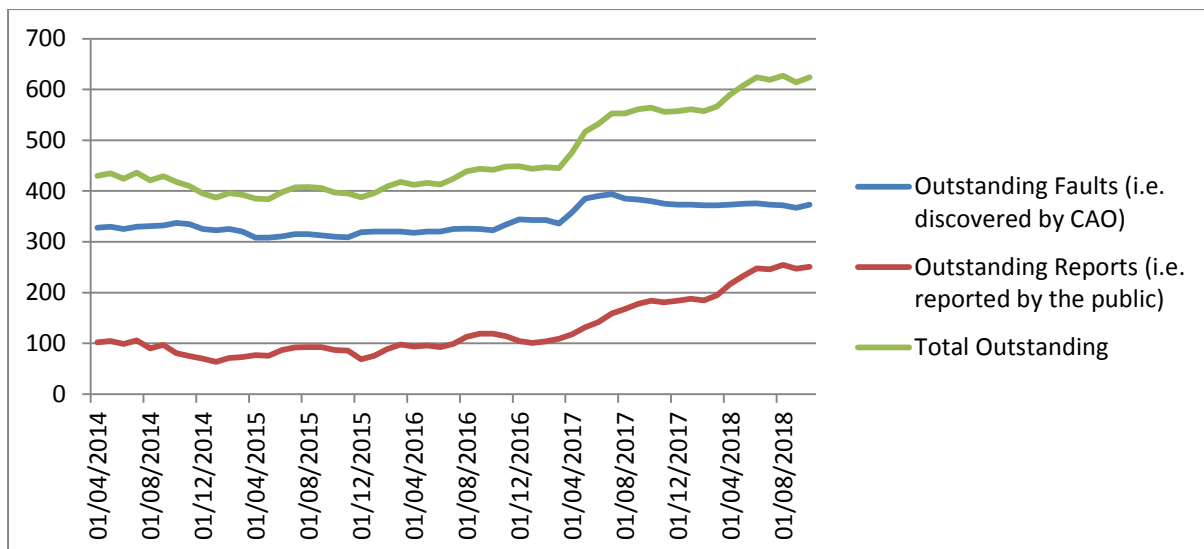
- 2.1. Pendle is fortunate in having a rights of way network which is like a spider's web of paths across the whole district. This gives excellent public access to Pendle's varied landscapes of woods, moors, fields, historic towns, villages and farms. The networks of footpaths and bridleways create endless opportunities for walks of different lengths as well as many every-day paths for short trips and walks to school, work the shops and so forth. As well as providing a fantastic resource for local people we attract individuals and walking groups from across the North West who come to walk or ride in Pendle's countryside. The extensive rights of way network also enables us to run a varied programme of walks during the Pendle Walking Festival. Thanks to our volunteer leaders this event helps hundreds of people to discover more about what Pendle has to offer.
- 2.2. The potential of the countryside for outdoor recreation has been recognised by the Council for many years, especially since the early 1990s when the post of Countryside Access Officer was created as a dedicated officer to promote countryside access and resolve problems on the rights of way network. A Countryside Access Ranger was employed from early 2000 and with two members of staff the Council was able to carry out work on thousands of issues affecting the rights of way network. This work ranged from the replacement of broken stiles with gates to improved accessibility for those with mobility problems, and included to extensive improvements on strategically important paths – such as urban ginnels and the Pendle Way. In addition we carried out work to deal with many unlawful obstructions and resolved numerous issues which had seemed intractable. For example, we have resolved many issues where rights of way had been obstructed by buildings or gardens set up across a right of way – often by public path diversion orders.
- 2.3. A visit to the countryside may just involve the use of the public rights of way network for walking, running, cycling or horse-riding but there are other community assets which walkers and riders require which can be just as important for an enjoyable visit. Examples include car parking, public transport routes, shops, pubs, restaurants, picnic areas, museums, play areas, visitor attractions, toilets, tourist information points,

organised events and other information on where to go and what to do. Pendle has a wealth of such assets which complement the rights of way network and help people have an enjoyable experience. These assets are primarily located in countryside sites at Barley, Pendle Heritage Centre and Wycoller Country Park. But we also have great facilities in our towns and villages which can each provide a base for getting access to the countryside. There are also numerous pubs and cafes away from town and village centres such as the many tea rooms in our public parks and unusual institutions such as Clarion House.

- 2.4. Pendle also benefits from having many promoted routes. The Pennine Bridleway is the only National Trail which passes through the area and this is a fantastic resource for horse riders and mountain bikers who can now enjoy a long off-road ride. Our flagship route, the 45 mile *Pendle Way* which goes right round the district, has now been established for over 30 years. The Council also promotes or supports many other walks such as the *Eight Circular Walks*, *Pendle's Three Peaks*, *The Pendle Witches Trail*, *The West Craven Way*, *The Jonas Moore Trail* and the *East Colne Way*. There are many other walks and trails which have been published by others as leaflets or in books, websites or newspaper articles. Therefore there is a huge variety of published walks, most with historical information which helps people understand more about the landscape. Even without a leaflet new walks can easily be devised and there are always new paths to discover.

## Weaknesses

- 2.5. In 2015, during the life of the last Countryside Access Strategy, Lancashire County Council (LCC) ended the agreement by which Pendle Council accepted responsibility for the maintenance of public rights of way in Pendle. The agreement had provided annual funding of £50,000 and this loss of this funding meant the loss of the of Countryside Access Ranger post.
- 2.6. The loss of the agreement and the 50% cut in countryside access staff has inevitably had a significant impact on the delivery of the countryside access service. Before these cuts it had been possible to keep the level of outstanding customer reports at a consistently low level but since 2015 the number of outstanding reports has risen, meaning that there are more issues which have not been resolved as illustrated by the graph below.



- 2.7. The current level of staff resources means that our method of prioritising has effectively had to change from making decisions about what we do first, to decisions about what we can do and what has to be left to wait until some unspecified date in the future. We can no longer afford the time to look at every issue which is reported to us and therefore we now prioritise according to the information supplied by the customer, rather than after a site visit.
- 2.8. The agreement with LCC had also delegated certain legal powers which are usually available only to the highway authority, for example the power to serve a notice requiring the removal of a structure which has been set up in a right of way. There have been occasions since 2015 where this has been an issue. We always attempt to secure the cooperation of landowners to voluntarily remove unauthorised obstructions from a right of way. However, on a number of occasions when we have exhausted our powers of persuasion our colleagues at LCC have been slow to serve the appropriate notice. This has created a built-in weakness in our ability to resolve enforcement issues.

- 2.9. Pendle's advantage of having an extensive rights of way network for people to explore can make the management of the network very challenging. With so many paths to choose from some get less used than others. The paths that are less well used can easily become overgrown and fall into disrepair. When we carry out a site visit to such paths we often find multiple and complex problems which have developed over time which cannot be resolved quickly and easily.



- 2.10. A particular issue which we are now experiencing is that the wooden gates and stiles which were installed by the Countryside Access Ranger 12 – 15 years ago are now reaching the end of their life. The benefit of the Ranger post was that a huge volume of work was carried out to put the rights of way network back into order. But the cycle is repeating again and we no longer have the resources to deal with the same volume of work. The timber posts which we have installed have a limited lifespan and therefore these often fail due to rot at ground level at which point the structure is liable to collapse.
- 2.11. Walks promoted by the Council, such as the Pendle Way, are a valuable asset for countryside access but they are also a potential liability. When new walks are launched the routes are checked and any issues with stiles, gates, signposting and so forth are resolved. However, such countryside furniture inevitably deteriorates and therefore keeping such routes in good condition requires regular inspections and for any necessary repairs and maintenance carried out. The large number of promoted walks together with reduced resources means that carrying out such a programme of inspection and repairs has become unmanageable. Thanks to the efforts of volunteers some inspections of the Pendle Way have been carried out in recent years and the necessary repairs have been arranged. However, some of our walk leaflets have been in print for many years and the routes in question have not been inspected for many years. Quite apart from the deterioration in stiles, gates and signposting there may be other changes in the landscape which may affect the enjoyment of walkers – such as a pub on the route closing down or landmarks used in the walk description being removed or changed.
- 2.12. In addition to issues surrounding the maintenance of the rights of way network the Countryside Access Officer organises the Pendle Walking Festival and deals with applications for public rights of way to be diverted. Prioritising time and resources for the different activities of the countryside access service can be very challenging with competing demands.

## Opportunities

- 2.13. Local authority funding is still declining and therefore the main opportunities are concerned with working more effectively to maintain and improve the rights of way network.
- 2.14. In the last strategy we devised a matrix which has been used to good effect for prioritising issues. However, when trying to prioritise objectively we noticed that complex issues would never reach the threshold for intervention, no matter important the path and what impact on the public. Resolving complex issues has a major impact on the volume of less difficult issues which can be resolved and therefore it is right that such issues should be tackled sparingly, but the strategy should allow some such issues to be dealt with.
- 2.15. Until recently we have primarily used treated timber for stiles, gates, waymark posts and signposts. We have recently tried using specially manufactured metal gates. These are more expensive but longer lasting. In addition the high quality design means that they are easier to install and they are less likely to fail in their functional requirements (i.e. as a stock proof barrier for livestock but easy for pedestrians to pass through). We have used metal gates in connection with timber waymark posts which provide a suitable surface for way marking the structure. The volume of improvements may be reduced if we are using metal gates but the long term benefits are significant.
- 2.16. The end of the formal agreement with Lancashire County Council resulted in a new model which is more uncertain but which is more flexible. In particular we have been able to stop doing certain activities which are now carried out by LCC such as gate authorisations and handling temporary closure applications. This has enabled us to focus on other issues. Despite the loss of the annual revenue the County Council has agreed, albeit on an informal basis, that Pendle should receive its “fair share” of the County’s rights of way budget for work carried out in Pendle. This has enabled us to re-charge the County Council for the costs, excluding staff time, of much of the work which is carried out.
- 2.17. The end of the formal agreement with LCC has also allowed us to be more flexible to shape our own priorities. In this respect we have also introduced a subscription service for parish and town councils who may opt in to an enhanced service in their town or parish council area. The system works by weighting our prioritisation system in favour of issues within these areas compared to other areas. In return we receive an annual fee from the opted-in parishes which helps to support the costs of the countryside access service.
- 2.18. There are also different opportunities for dealing with enforcement cases when we have exhausted dialogue with the landowner, where we no longer have the same notice-serving powers as the highway authority. There is a formal procedure whereby any person can enforce the local highway authority’s duty to prevent obstructions on rights of way<sup>1</sup>. This process is primarily designed for use by members of the public, but this may be a mechanism which we could use to secure the removal of a difficult obstruction. As a

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<sup>1</sup> Highways Act 1980 Sections 130A to 130D



District Council we have general powers to “assert and protect” the rights of the public. This entitles us to take direct action to remove an obstruction, but not the power of cost recovery from an offending landowner. In the case of an obstruction which would be costly to remove then one option would be to ask LCC to use its notice serving powers to secure the removal of an obstruction, and if necessary using the formal procedure to enforce their duty. But there may be a case for taking such cases to court ourselves, for the court to order the removal of the obstruction.

- 2.19. Applications to divert rights of way often present an opportunity for improvements, particularly if the new right of way can be constructed to be of a better standard for pedestrians – for example by making the new footpath more accessible for disabled people.

### **Threats**

- 2.20. Countryside Access has already been significantly affected by budget reductions, but in the current financial climate there is always a threat of further reductions in funding. For example there is no guarantee that the informal arrangement with LCC to refund the cost of stile and gate repairs will continue.
- 2.21. Similarly there may be greater pressures on Pendle’s finances which can result in reduced budgets and more staff time to be spent on income generating activities or work unrelated to the delivery of this strategy.
- 2.22. We need to be aware that countryside access is not a statutory duty for a district council and therefore it is essential that the service is focussed on meeting our objectives.

## **3. Countryside Access - Main Objectives**

There are three main strands within Pendle’s Countryside Access Strategy and these are:

- 3.1. to maintain Pendle’s network of public rights of way to a high standard so that footpaths , bridleways and byways are easy to use and easy to follow.
- 3.2. to organise the annual Pendle Walking Festival as a high quality event to allow local people and visitors from further afield to enjoy Pendle’s Countryside and learn more about this area’s rich landscape and history.
- 3.3. to provide a service to land managers who apply for public path orders to make changes to the rights of way network.

## **4. Strategy Actions – PROW maintenance**

### **Prioritising**

- 4.1. We will prioritise faults which are discovered on the rights of way network objectively and deal with the highest priority issues first. This will be based on a scoring system as set out in Appendix 1. We will only spend time on resolving issues with scores higher than a specified intervention level. The aim will be to gradually lower the intervention level as and when issues with the highest scores are resolved. The intervention level will be



adjusted from time to time in order to balance public rights of way maintenance against other strategy actions.

- 4.2. Under the scoring system we will focus on issues where we can make a significant impact for rights of way users compared to issues where we can only make a moderate impact. This is because it makes sense to concentrate our resources where we can make the biggest difference for the most people.
- 4.3. Where there are issues affecting The Pendle Way and urban ginnels these will be prioritised ahead of other promoted routes and important recreational paths, which in turn will be prioritised ahead of other public rights of way. This is because the Pendle Way is our most significant promoted route and should be maintained to a high standard. Many other promoted routes around the district incorporate sections of the Pendle Way and therefore there are wider benefits in prioritising the Pendle Way for a higher level of maintenance. Urban ginnels are similarly important because these are likely to be well used by local communities who can reasonably expect high standards on the path networks used for everyday journeys on urban footpaths.



- 4.4. The prioritisation matrix will also prioritise issues which can be resolved easily and inexpensively ahead of issues which are likely to be difficult or costly to resolve. This allows us to have an impact on more issues across the rights of way network compared to focussing on more difficult issues which can be more time consuming. However, in order to avoid the risk that difficult or expensive issues never achieve a priority score which reaches our intervention level we will identify cases where there are particular strategic benefits in taking action. To avoid becoming overwhelmed with challenging issues we will only work on one or two such cases at any time.
- 4.5. We have entered into an arrangement with the Town and Parish Councils of Barnoldswick, Bracewell and Brogden, Colne, Earby, Laneshawbridge and Trawden to provide an enhanced level of service in return for an annual subscription which helps fund the delivery of the countryside access strategy. This works by weighting the priority scores for issues discovered in these areas ahead of the similar issues in other areas. For any issue within an opted-in parish will receive a greater score than the same issue in a parish which has not opted-in. Therefore the town and parish ~~council's~~ councils which opt-in to the subscription scheme ~~receives~~ are likely to receive an enhanced level of service compared to other parishes. This depends to some extent on the number and

type of issues reported or discovered within a given parish or town council area. We will limit the enhanced service to no more than seven town and parish councils.

4.6. In addition to looking at the priority of any issue we carry out a risk assessment as part of our initial site visit. Any risks to the health and safety of the public are rated. Higher risks attract higher risk ratings. If the risk rating is higher than the priority score then we will use the risk rating instead of the priority score. In other words higher risk issues will be prioritised for action.

### Strategic Action 1

***Every new countryside access issue will be given a score according to the matrix and additional factors listed in Appendix 1. The score may be enhanced according to the additional factors. Issues with the highest scores will be dealt with first. Issues with the same score will be dealt with in date order, oldest first. Only Issues with a score above the intervention level will be dealt with. The intervention level will be adjusted up or down according to staff time and the score of any issue may be revised up or down if the circumstances of the issue change.***

### Gates and stiles

4.6.4.7. We receive numerous reports about gates and stiles, either that they have collapsed or they are otherwise in a dangerous condition, or difficult to use. The relevant legislation makes landowners responsible for maintaining gates and stiles<sup>2</sup>. Gates and stiles can be referred to be the term “limitations”. Most limitations are necessary for the purpose of keeping livestock or horses, but they can also make using the rights of way network difficult, and can present an absolute obstruction for some users. Therefore, our approach to the maintenance of such structures can have a big impact on rights of way users.

4.7.4.8. We have traditionally offered to carry out repairs and replacement of stiles and gates to assist land managers with their responsibilities to the public and their requirements for stock-proof fields. But we also aim to provide structures which are as easy as possible for people to negotiate. If land managers wish to erect any new fence or wall which affects a public right of way then they must have highway authority permission before installing any new limitations in the right of way. Therefore, before we carry out any work on a gate or stile we check with Lancashire County Council to see if the gate or stile in question is authorised. If there is a legitimate



<sup>2</sup> Section 146 of the Highways Act 1980

reason for a limitation which has not previously been authorised then we ask the land manager to apply to Lancashire County Council for the necessary authorisation. Generally LCC will authorise the least restrictive structure which would usually be a 1m wide gate for a footpath or a 1.5m wide gate for a bridleway.

**4.8.4.9.** The British Standards Institute publishes British Standard BS5709 for Gaps, gates and stiles. This sets a high standard for new structures which are designed to be effective as stock-proof barriers but which are easy to use. Where the Council has the power to specify new structures then the British Standard is to select the least restrictive option which performs the function required by the land manager. In the case of Pendle Council we specify the type of structure where a gate or stile is required in a public path order and therefore we should work to the British Standard when doing so.

**4.9.4.10.** In order to help farmers and other land managers with meeting their responsibilities we will give a higher priority weighting to reports received from land managers for stile and gate repairs.

### **Strategic Action 2**

***We will consider all of the circumstances before making an offer to carry out any work on behalf of a land manager with regards to the repair or replacement of a stile or gate.***

### **Strategic Action 3**

***We will only offer to carry out repairs or replacement of gates or stiles which are legitimate limitations in the right of way and which are needed for keeping livestock or horses. In the first instance unauthorised gates and stiles will be treated as obstructions.***

### **Strategic Action 4**

***Where the lawful limitation is a stile we may only offer to install a structure which is less restrictive than a stile such as pedestrian gate. If we install a stile it will be to the minimum standard for a stile in BS5709.***

### **Strategic Action 5**

***When specifying limitations in a public path order we will use BS5709 to specify the type of gate allowed.***

### **Strategic Action 6**

***Where budgetary and practical considerations allow we will use galvanised steel gates or recycled plastic posts to extend the length of time between repairs being necessary.***

## **General PROW Maintenance**

**4.10.4.11.** When we identify work which needs to be carried out on the rights of way network we either send a works order to a contractor or ask the landowner to carry out the work if this is appropriate. Instead of using a contractor we sometimes use the Environmental Action Group. It would be possible for some maintenance work to be carried out by volunteers but such work needs to be properly organised to ensure the safety of the people taking part, and the quality of the work completed. If the volunteers are not

already skilled in the work taking place then on-site supervision would be required. Working with volunteers has wider benefits by involving local people in productive physical activity which is good for people's physical and mental wellbeing.

#### **Strategic Action 7**

**We will explore the possibility of working with the EAG or other external partners in providing suitable logistical support and supervision for volunteer projects.**

#### **Maintenance of Promoted Routes**

~~4.11-4.12.~~ The reduction in resources for the maintenance of public rights of way means that we can no longer carry out proactive inspections and maintenance of promoted routes such as the Eight Circular Walks. However, we recognise the strategic importance of the Pendle Way and therefore we will coordinate the efforts of volunteers to inspect this route and then arrange for repairs to be carried out.

#### **Strategic Action 8**

**We will carry out inspections of the Pendle Way from time to time and arrange for repairs to be carried out.**

### **5. Strategy Actions – Public Path Orders**

- 5.1. The Council receives a number of enquiries each year about diverting public rights of way. Sometimes applications are made by landowners who wish to resolve a longstanding issue affecting a right of way, for example where a building has been constructed over the line of a footpath. Otherwise applications are generally concerned with other developments to accommodate houses, gardens and business premises where the footpath needs to be diverted to allow the development to be carried out, or to achieve better security and privacy for the applicant.
- 5.2. The Council is under no obligation to offer this service but it is entitled to recover the full costs of processing applications and therefore the income generated helps to offset the costs of having a countryside access service.
- 5.3. The nature of rights of way work is that applications for new diversions arrive erratically so there is no guarantee that sufficient applications are received to meet income targets. During the course of the last strategy the Countryside Access Service accepted cases in parts of Lancashire outside Pendle in order to generate additional income. Whilst a number of such cases were successfully brought to a conclusion, a number of new Pendle applications were received and these cases were consequently delayed by the time being taken on the external cases. With the reduction in staffing levels the risk of further backlogs in diversions and other casework now outweighs the benefit of handling diversion cases from outside Pendle.
- 5.4. Diversion applications give us the opportunity to ensure that the new right of way is constructed to a better standard than the existing right of way, for example by making the path wider, avoiding the use of stiles on the new route, ensuring a high quality path surface, ensuring adequate drainage and so forth.

- 5.5. We carry out informal consultations on proposed public path orders with the representatives of rights of way user groups and others who may have an interest in the proposals. However, this consultation only reaches a small number of people and in recent years there has been limited active engagement from our consultees. We could make better use of the internet to highlight diversion proposals which affect rights of way so that more people are made aware of the proposals before we make a formal diversion order.
- 5.6. We use an application form and guidance notes for applicants but due to changes in our relationship with Lancashire County Council on rights of way matters this information is somewhat out of date. In order to provide an efficient service we need to ensure that our application form and guidance notes are regularly updated.
- 5.7. The Council can also divert or create rights of way because it is in the public interest but such applications are costly in staff time, advertising and works costs and there is a risk that the owner of the land can claim compensation for any disturbance or loss in value of their land. Therefore we can only consider promoting public path orders in the public interest or the Council's interest if the costs, including staff costs, are fully funded from non-countryside access budgets.

#### **Strategic Action 9**

***We will recover the full costs of the application process from public path order applications.***

#### **Strategic Action 10**

***We will seek to ensure that the quality of the new route on a diverted path is of higher or equivalent quality to the old route.***

#### **Strategic Action 11**

***We will use the Council's Facebook page or the website to give better publicity at an early stage to proposals which affect a public right of way.***

#### **Strategic Action 12**

***We will revise our application form and guidance notes to ensure that the information is kept up to date.***

#### **Strategic Action 13**

***We will only consider making public path orders in the public interest if the costs are fully funded from external sources.***

#### **Strategic Action 14**

***We will only accept public path order applications for sites wholly within Pendle District.***

## **6. Strategy Actions – Pendle Walking Festival**

- 6.1. The countryside access service has been involved in the organisation of





the Pendle Walking Festival since 2011. Prior to that the Council employed freelance workers to organise the festival. The walking festival attracts local residents, visitors from surrounding areas and some from further afield and therefore contributes directly to the corporate vision of helping Pendle to be recognised as a great area to live, learn, work, play and visit.

- 6.2. Organising the walking festival is a complex task because it relies on the goodwill of a large team of volunteers to plan and lead the 60+ walks which are included in the programme. We receive mostly positive feedback each year but there are always a number of areas where we can make improvements.
- 6.3. Our declining budgets mean that we have less capacity to resolve faults with stiles, gates and path surfaces which leaders may encounter when receiving their walks. Therefore it is increasingly likely that they will find issues which could compromise the safety of festival walkers. Our approach has been to encourage leaders to find a way of safely negotiating the hazard or finding an alternative route but we recognise the need to ensure that walkers on an organised walk are not exposed to an unacceptable level of risk.
- 6.4. We have introduced a booking system in recent years in order to place a limit on the number of people attending each walk so that we can keep group sizes to a reasonable number. Small group sizes generally make walks more enjoyable for people taking part and make it easier for the leader to keep the group together. However, the current booking system can be difficult to use and therefore we need to look at how this can be improved and better integrated with the Visit Pendle website.

6.5. In order to safeguard the financial viability of continuing with the walking festival we will seek a sponsorship agreement to bring in external funding. This may include references to the sponsor in promotional activities and within the walking festival booklet.

#### **Strategic Action 15**

*We will spend more time working with walk leaders to ensure that suitable control measures are in place when hazards have been discovered.*

#### **Strategic Action 16**

*We will investigate alternative systems for people to book on to walking festival walks.*

#### **Strategic Action 17**

*We will continue to focus on ensuring that the walks in the programme are organised to high standards to ensure the safety and enjoyment of the participants.*

#### **Strategic Action 18**

*We will seek a sponsorship agreement to secure the long-term viability of the walking festival.*

## **7. Performance Indicators and Strategy Monitoring**

- 7.1. This strategy is intended to be a working document to guide the work of the countryside access service over the next five years. To see whether the strategy is proving effective requires routine monitoring. Annual monitoring reports will therefore be prepared and

made available to the relevant Council Committee and the Council's Countryside Access Forum.

- 7.2. In addition the Council monitors the following corporate performance indicators for countryside access:
- Percentage of Rights of Way service requests cleared within three months of being received. (Target 75%)
  - Total number of practical Countryside Access issues resolved as a result of action taken by, or requested by the Countryside Access Officer. (Target 150 p/a)
- 7.3. The Council has a Countryside Access Forum which is well established with members representing public rights of way user groups and parish councils. The forum receives reports on issues affecting the rights of way network, including issues which are resolved and those which remain outstanding. Statistical information is also reported to the Countryside Access Forum to ensure that the representatives of rights of way users are aware of progress.

## **8. Future Development of the Countryside Access Service**

- 8.1. We will keep abreast of any opportunities which may arise to enhance the quality of countryside access. This could include:
- the use of technological solutions to aid efficiency, such as the use of a tablet computer for use on site to help reduce reliance on paper records.
  - identifying funding opportunities which may arise for additional staff input into countryside access, such as the part time services of a "Volunteer Coordinator" to help with engage the efforts of volunteers, or an apprentice.
  - Identifying funding opportunities which may be available to make improvements and resolve complex issues.



## Appendix 1 – Rights of way reports - Prioritisation Matrix

Big Impact + Pendle Way/Urban ginnel	4	11	15	16
Big Impact+ other promoted routes/ important recreational paths	3	9	13	14
Big Impact+ other paths	2	8	10	12
Moderate impact	1	5	6	7
	Difficult/Costly	Could be difficult/ Moderately costly	Standard Contractor Jobs/ Low cost work	Quick and Easy

### Additional Factors

Multiple reports from different sources about an issue	+1
Report about a stile or gate in poor condition	+1
Report about an authorised stile or gate	+1
Land manager enquiry	+2
Report about a byway or bridleway issue	+2
Report within the area of an opted-in town or parish council	+3
Priority Case	+10

Every new countryside access issue will be given a score according to the matrix. The score may be enhanced according to the list of additional factors. Issues with the highest scores will be dealt with first. Where there are several issues with the same score we will deal with the oldest issues first. Only Issues with a score above the intervention level will be dealt with. The intervention level will be adjusted up or down according to the volume outstanding cases at a particular point in time. The score of any issue may be revised up or down if the circumstances change.

## Definitions

### Big Impact

A big impact would occur if work was carried out which resulted in significant improvements for the public. For example, by making a path fully accessible where it was not before, by removing an obstruction such as a fallen tree which completely obstructed a path, or by repairing a stile which had completely broken, or by re-opening the legal line of a path where an unofficially diverted path was poor or inconvenient.

### Moderate impact

A moderate impact would occur by replacing a difficult stile with an easy access gate. Or by re-opening the legal line of a path (or securing a diversion) where people had been unofficially diverted onto a reasonably acceptable alternative route.

### The Pendle Way

The 45 mile promoted walk around Pendle.

### Urban ginnels

Public rights of way within urban areas which are recorded on the Definitive Map.

### Other Promoted Routes

Public rights of way which are included on the route of guided walks in booklets and publications which have been published by or with the support of the Council, and which are still in print.

### Important recreational paths

Any rural paths which are recorded on the Definitive Map and which to our knowledge are important and well-used routes.

### Other paths

All other rights of way which are recorded on the Definitive Map.

### Difficult

Cases where the site circumstances will inevitably require complex legal or practical work.

### “Could be difficult”

Cases where the circumstances should be straightforward but where there is a significant risk of complicating factors.

### Easy Contractor jobs

Cases where the issue can be readily resolved by a contractor carrying out work included on our list of generic list of contract items e.g. replacing a stile with a gate.

### Quick and easy

Issues which can be resolved during an initial site visit. May include giving advice or making comments on a planning application.

### Costly

Likely to cost £5000+

### Moderately Costly

Likely costs in the region of £500 - £5000

### Low cost

Works with costings likely to be under £500

Land Manager Enquiry	An enquiry from the owner or occupier for help and advice with resolving a public rights of way issue on the land which they manage.
Opted-in town and parish Council	Any Town or Parish Council which subscribes to an enhanced countryside access service for their area.
Priority case	This is any case from the first or second columns of the matrix which has been identified as having significant strategic importance but which otherwise falls below the current intervention level. There will be no more than one or two priority cases active at any one time.

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