

# WEST PENNINE MOORS

## Bridleways Strategy 2006 ~ 2013



Moor Bottom Road Bridleway, Red Brook Valley, Holcombe

A vision to provide a strategic network of bridleways within the West Pennine Moors able to meet the needs of local communities and visitors and contribute to the economic and environmental well being of the area.

A Reponse to 'Rights of Way Improvement Plans' for the West Pennine Moors



Councillor Jean Rigby

#### Foreword

The West Pennine Moors Bridleway Strategy is a key document to support the management and development of access for the West Pennine Moors over the next few years. It is anticipated that the development of new bridleways will not only improve access management in the area, but will provide benefits for the rural economy of the West Pennine Moors.

The strategy comes at an important moment for access management in England, particularly with new local transport plans being developed by local authorities and the developing agenda of the new countryside agency, Natural England. I commend this strategy to you and hope that you can play your part in making it happen in the coming years.

#### Explanation of the West Pennine Moors Partnership

The West Pennine Moors is a partnership of seven Local Authorities\*, United Utilities and local interest groups. The partnership aims to achieve a sustainable approach to managing the social, economic and environmental interests of the area, by working in partnership and developing initiatives and resources for the future benefit of the environment and those living in, working in and visiting the area. The objectives of the partnership are as follows:

- Protect, conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the West Pennine Moors.
- Promote sustainable regeneration of the area, particularly where such activity conserves and enhances the environment.
- Encourage enjoyment of the area, where it is consistent with the first two objects.

\* *Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council, Bury Metropolitan Borough Council, Chorley Borough Council, Hyndburn Borough Council, Lancashire County Council and Rossendale Borough Council*

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If you prefer this document as a PDF, supplied on a CD, please contact one of the above Officers. Larger scale maps depicting the proposed network are also available on request.

You may also view the document by visiting the Countryside Service website at:

<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/environment/countryside/bridleways/index.asp>

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# WEST PENNINE MOORS

## The Vision

To provide a strategic network of bridleways within the West Pennine Moors able to meet the needs of local communities and visitors and contribute to the economic and environmental well being of the area.

## Objectives

- Identify existing provision of bridleways, Public rights of Way (PROW) and permissive bridleways
- Identify needs and opportunities
- Identify an appropriate network of routes taking into account identified needs and opportunities
- Set out how the agreed network is to be implemented and maintained

## Background

The provision and improvement of 'multi-use' bridleway routes provides improved opportunities for quiet enjoyment of the countryside and achieving healthier lifestyles. Principal user groups for bridleways include horse-riding interests, off-road cyclists, walkers and those with impaired mobility.

### *Horse Riding*

Riding as a leisure pastime is increasing annually. In 1967 it was estimated that 100,000 people in Britain rode each week. In 1974 this had risen to 500,000 and in 1995 to 3.5 million (Peat Marwick). There is a demand for increased facilities not only from local riders on short rides but for longer routes linked to accommodation provision. Contrary to the image often associated with equestrian activities, riders come from the widest range of age, and occupation, as well as background.



This steady increase in recreational use, combined with increasing road traffic speeds and volumes, does, however, create very real risks to all classes of road user. British Horse Society records show that there are at least 8 horse/traffic related accidents a day nationally and that in 2002, 11 riders were killed on the roads. It is therefore in the interest of the public as a whole, as well as riders, to secure a meaningful network of safe riding routes.

Equestrian interests already make a major contribution to the economy and social fabric of many communities. In 1996 the British Horse Society published information suggesting that the average local spend on the upkeep of one horse was £1,636 a year (BETA National Survey, 2000), which when adjusted to take into account of inflation equates to £1,896. This figure doubles if spend on livery and transport is also factored in (City of York Council, 2000). Up to 50,000 people are directly employed in the horse industry, and its gross output nationally has been estimated at £3.4 billion (DEFRA, 2004).

### *Off-road Cycling*

Participation in off-road cycling appears to be increasing over recent years. Whilst existing demand is difficult to quantify, British Cycling states it has approximately 16,000 members. In addition, the Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC) has 55,000 members (including associate members) and Sustrans has 38,000 'supporters'. Statistics specifically relating to the numbers of participants for off-road cycling and mountain-biking are not readily available, however, anecdotal evidence gathered from land managers and countryside service staff seem to indicate that numbers are increasing (Crowe/Mulder 2004).

An additional benefit to the development of safe horse-riding routes will be the opportunities to develop "multi-use" facilities for off-road cyclists, pedestrians and access for the mobility impaired. The majority of off-road cycling is enjoyed by those who simply wish to cycle away from traffic, and are sufficiently challenged by accessing the same routes available to horse and rider.



However, increasingly mountain bike riders are looking for more technically challenging routes. Most multi-use bridleways do not provide a sufficient level of challenge for these riders. In some cases, this has led to a minority of mountain bike riders to ride illegally on definitive footpaths. These routes are not designed for this use, and to better manage off-road cycling this strategy proposes some mainly upland routes that offer a challenge to mountain bikers yet remain available to walkers and the more experienced horse and rider.

The UK cycle industry employs around 20,000 people, mostly involved in distribution and retail ([www.bikebiz.co.uk](http://www.bikebiz.co.uk)). There are about 400 bicycle and bicycle accessory suppliers, and the Association of Cycle Traders has around 730 shop members.

The Forestry Commission 7Stanes Project, which has developed mountain-biking centres across Southern Scotland, has demonstrated the contribution mountain-biking activities can make to the local economy. During summer 2004, independent research was undertaken at Glentress, Mabie and Dalbeattie centres. This study established that approximately £2.99 million was being brought into the South of Scotland economy annually ([www.7stanes.gov.uk](http://www.7stanes.gov.uk)) through these three centres.

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## Local Context

The West Pennine Moors (WPM) covers an area of approximately 90 square miles and is dominated by large moorland blocks and reservoir valleys. It lies between significant areas of population with Blackburn to the north, Bury and Bolton to the south, Chorley to the west and Haslingden to the east.

The West Pennine Moors is recognised as a Core Biodiversity Resource at both Regional and Sub-regional levels, supporting a range of UK BAP Priority Habitats and Species. Habitats of principle significance include Blanket bog, Upland oak woodland, Wet woodland and Species-rich grasslands. In addition to the natural heritage value the cultural heritage interest is of similar significance, stretching from Neolithic times to the remains of 18th-19th century industrial and farming activities - such as mines and quarries, field systems and abandoned farmsteads. The extensive hill peat or blanket bog is of particular importance for preserved plant and animals remains and in providing information of past climates and weather patterns. Most importantly it has a significant role in future carbon dioxide sequestration to mitigate climate change and in water catchment.

Due to its landscape, natural and cultural heritage interest the area has had a long history of recreational use being very popular with walkers, ramblers, naturalists and historians.

Over the last 20 years significant investment has brought about improvements in terms of visitor facilities and the PROW network, most notably for footpaths, however, other interests have not been funded to the same extent.

On the moorland fringe are significant areas of grazed farmland and as farm incomes have fallen over recent years, so there has been a proliferation of liveries and a sharp increase in horse ownership. However, the extensive existing rights of way network is unable to absorb the large numbers of riders seeking off road routes resulting in the use of public highways and definitive footpaths. Information provided by local groups shows the extent of the problem. In a 10 square kilometre area a population of 288 horses (and riders) has been recorded, however, this district contains no definitive bridleways (Wheulton and Brinscall Bridleway Group, 2004). Riders therefore use either the public highway or definitive footpaths, which in turn causes highway safety issues and conflict between users.

The development of the National Pennine Bridleway and the Mary Towneley Loop to the east of the West Pennines provides an example of off-road bridleway routes and offers valuable lessons in terms of their development and management. Research has highlighted the benefits in terms of supporting the rural economy (Countryside Agency, 2004). As a result of the loop the following businesses have been established:

- Seven new bed and breakfast establishments with stabling and other facilities,
- Five other new stabling facilities mainly linked to existing accommodation,
- One new self catering establishment,
- One new cycle hire business
- Two new booking/package companies.

The West Pennine Moors partnership have for a number of years been active in promoting horse and cycle use on suitable definitive and concessionary networks, a number of publications exist in support of this usage. The National Pennine Bridleway Feeder Route has proved to be a useful catalyst for partners to share ideas in consultation with user representatives. This strategy also aims to build on work that mapped the County area for suitable routes (*Lancashire Bridleways Strategy Team 1997*). The result being an agreed strategy which best serves those who wish to access the West Pennine Moors on horse or bike, and provides an agreed way forward for the development of bridleways within the area.

### Strategic Fit

Consultation Draft – Strategy for the Horse Industry in England and Wales, 2005, British Horse Industry Confederation

The British Horse Industry Confederation and DEFRA, in response to the growth in horse ownership in the UK, have prepared a draft strategy which is currently out for consultation. The government recognises the importance of the industry and the need for a more coordinated approach to its growth. Specific aims include:

- To boost economic performance of equestrian businesses
- To increase access to off-road riding

### National Pennine Bridleway Trail, Countryside Agency

This follows a 208-mile (335km) route from Derbyshire to the remote hills of Cumbria developed and supported by the Countryside Agency. The trail incorporates 3 feeder routes one of which is within the WPM. These feeder routes connect areas of high horse ownership to the national trail. The southern section including the Mary Towneley Loop is now open.

### WPM Statement of Intent, 2000, WPM Area Management Committee

The Statement of Intent provides the strategic framework and a 10-year management plan for the WPM. It was produced by the WPM committee after an extensive period of consultation and identifies a series of actions for partners to address. The development of bridleways is an important element within the document and identifies the following actions

- Pennine Bridleway regional link
- Development of bridleway network



Burnt Edge, Smithhills

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WPM Sustainable Tourism Strategy and Action Plan, 2004, WPM Area Management Committee

The strategy considers ways to support the rural economy that can enhance and support the environmental quality of the area through sustainable forms of tourism. The strategy identifies outdoor activities and in particular horse riding and mountain biking as key opportunities. The strategy identifies the need to improve the existing bridleway network and develop links to liveries and potential accommodation providers.

Rights of Way Improvement Plan {RoWIP}, Lancashire County Council

The RoWIP has been developed by LCC as part of the requirements of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, and is a key strategic document in terms of the development of the public rights of way network. The completion of an access demand study and an audit of currently available access have highlighted gaps between provision and demand and have helped form the basis of ten key RoWIP themes. A number of these ten themes have either direct or part links to this strategy and, if implemented will greatly improve rights of way provision in the WPM.

RoWIP themes encompassed by this strategy:

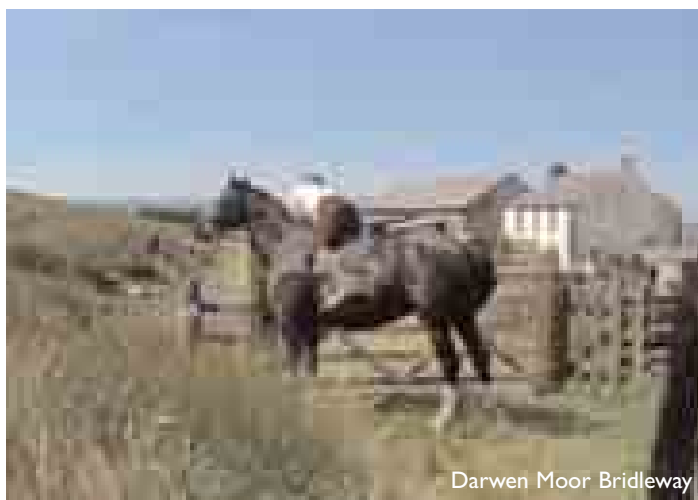
- Access to bridleway & off-road cycling circuits
- Completion of medium & long distance trails
- Provision of access from town into country
- Improve overall low mobility access to the wider countryside
- Provide traffic free cycling

Local Transport Plan, Lancashire County Council

Lancashire County Council are currently preparing the 2006-11 Local Transport Plan. The rights of way network is recognised as a key component of the development of sustainable transport solutions for Lancashire. Multi user routes are seen as important in terms of meeting key targets of improving road safety, increasing accessibility and encouraging healthy lifestyles. The Lancashire ROWIP will form a key component of the existing and new Local Transport Plan.

## Current Bridleway Provision in West Pennine Moors

The majority of improved and promoted routes exist in three “hotspots” on the western half of the West Pennine Moors, namely; Smithills, Rivington and Roddlesworth/Darwen Moor. In these areas there is proliferation of liveries and in response local authorities and United Utilities have worked together to establish local networks of definitive and concessionary bridleways providing circular off road routes. Elsewhere, bridleways exist around Holcombe Moor and other short isolated sections.



Darwen Moor Bridleway

There is however, a lack of coherence to the bridleway network in the West Pennine Moors highlighted by the often fragmented and isolated nature of individual routes or in many areas a scarcity of definitive bridleways altogether.

In total there are just over 20kms of definitive bridleways in the West Pennine Moors area. These shortcomings have been highlighted by the proliferation of liveries within the area and the growing demand for useable off road routes. The locations of liveries, which provide either a full time or part time income, are identified on Map 1, together with the existing bridleway provision in the area.

In 2003, Lancashire County Council commissioned a study to consider the provision of off road recreational cycling in the county. This highlighted the need for additional routes and the fragmented nature of those routes that did exist. Also identified was the need for a more strategic approach to the future provision and development of off road routes.

### **West Pennine Moors Horse Numbers**

The figures below show an indication of current ridden horse numbers across areas of the West Pennine Moors;

North East Bolton & Darwen areas – 629 Horses  
(North Bolton & Darwen Bridleways Group - October 2003)

North West Bolton and Horwich areas – 545 Horses  
(Smithills & District Bridleways Association – Spring 2004)

Wheelton & Brinscall area – 288 Horses  
(Wheelton & Brinscall Bridleways Group – 2004)

### **Consultation**

#### *Bridleway Groups*

In response to the growth of liveries and horse ownership in the area, local groups have formed to take forward specific issues and concerns. These groups provide the mechanism for local authorities to consult with local riders in a particular area. Through a process of discussion and negotiation with user group representatives a series of routes has been formulated which provides the basis of this strategy. The groups involved to date have been:

- North Bolton & Darwen Bridleways Group
- Darwen Moor and Tockholes Access Group
- Smithills and District Bridleways Association
- Wheelton & Brinscall Bridleways Group



## *Mountain Bike Groups*

The bridleways strategy will, where possible cater for a variety of multi-use informal access requirements. In particular, the ever-increasing demand for off-road cycling can be met in part by this strategy.

There are however, increasing numbers of mountain bike riders looking for challenging and technical routes. They view the many multi-use bridleways as a means of getting to more challenging routes and landscapes.

Consultation has taken place with:

- I.M.B.A. International Mountain Bike Association (*Regional Representative*)
- Blackburn & District Mountain Bikers Group

## *Disabled Groups*

Members of the Blackburn with Darwen Disabled Users Group have requested provision be made for those with mobility issues. Officers, field staff and contractors involved in the planning and outworking of this strategy will take full account of current legislation and guidelines;

- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- BT Countryside for All (Standards & Guidelines)
- Fieldfare Trust guidelines
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan

When planning and implementing practical works the 'least restrictive option' will be considered and, in particular, accessibility standards in the variety of landscapes from urban to open and wild country will be adopted where reasonable to do so.

Social inclusion and true multi-use routes are now adopted as a part of everyday working practices. This strategy will seek to offer a range of routes in different landscape types for those with mobility restrictions.

## **The Strategy**

The WPM Partnership aims to implement the Bridleway Strategy over a seven-year period, between 2006 and 2013. The Schedule of Works outlines proposed timescales for the completion of each route (Years 1-3, 3-5 and 5-7 respectively).

The Strategy proposes five key elements to achieve its aims and objectives:

- Pennine Bridleway - West Pennines Feeder
- West Pennine Moors Perimeter Route
- Village and Area Routes
- Town to Country Link Routes

## *National Pennine Bridleway - West Pennines Feeder*

A feature of the Pennine Bridleway is a number of feeder routes joining the trail, one of which will run from Bolton through the West Pennines to meet the national trail as it passes through east Lancashire. The key criteria for this route is that it passes close to populated areas along the urban/rural fringe, thereby feeding the many liveryies into the Pennine Bridleway.

The line of this feeder route has been identified and all legal/ground works are due for completion by 2007. The development of the route has been supported and resourced by the Countryside Agency and Sport England.

### *West Pennine Moors Perimeter Route*

The feeder route forms the catalyst for the strategy by creating an urban/rural fringe bridleway to the north, west and southwestern areas of West



West Pennine Feeder Route, Green Haworth

Pennine Moors. It is proposed to continue this route to form a complete circuit around the West Pennine Moors capable of access by the many urban fringe liveries. The perimeter route would then be capable of linking strategically to other areas (Sustrans National Cycle Route).

### *Village and Area Routes*

An internal network of village based routes already requested by user groups, each of these will seek links onto the perimeter route to provide a coherent network for those who live in the West Pennine Moors.

### *Town to Country Link Routes*

The creation or upgrading of existing urban links into the perimeter route, and thereafter, opportunities to access local village/area rides or link into wider strategic routes. The proximity and accessibility of urban areas to routes is particularly important in encouraging the wider population to access countryside on foot, bike or horse.

### *Upland Challenge Routes*

The upgrading of existing footpaths to provide more technical and challenging routes for mountain bikers, capable horse riders or those more mobile. These routes are largely aspirational and will require substantial movement from key landowners

### *Named Routes*

The following lists named individual routes requested and researched in liaison with user groups: (see schedule of works page 16)

### *West Pennine Moors Perimeter Route*

- Extension of the Feeder Route from Smithills Country Park east and northward to incorporate the National Cycle Route 6 and link with the Feeder Route at Baxenden.

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## *Village & Area Routes*

- Entwistle – South Darwen link
- Edgworth – Huddlesden link
- Pickup Bank circular via Haslingden Grane
- Egerton – Catherine’s Edge
- Roddlesworth link
- Egerton circular
- Wheelton & Brinscall

## *Town to Country Links*

- South Horwich
- Walker Fold
- Eagley Valley
- Bradshaw Valley
- Hawkshaw
- Redisher
- Standish/Rivington
- Helmshore

## *Upland Challenge Routes*

- Winter Hill Traverse
- Horden Stoops – Great Hill
- Brinscall – Great Hill
- White Coppice – Crookfield Lane
- Crookfield Lane – Cadshaw
- Cadshaw – Entwistle
- Irwell Vale/Edenfield to Mary Towneley Loop Link



Helmshore From Holcombe Moor

An overview of the proposed network is provided on Map 2.

## **Route Development Framework**

### *Guiding Principles*

The challenge is to produce a high quality, sustainable and safe system of routes, which pass through scenic and varied landscapes for the benefit of those that both reside in, and visit the West Pennine Moors.

The impact on the natural and working environment has to be carefully considered. Any disturbance to the working countryside and to upland habitats must be kept to a minimum. Well constructed, managed and maintained routes created with these issues in mind, need not cause undue disturbance to wildlife, farming, shooting or water catchment interests.

An appropriate and sustainable surface that can stand up to the expected level of use must be present or be created at the outset. This will help minimise erosion problems and ensure that maintenance costs are kept as low as possible. It is therefore essential to engage with relevant Highways Authorities at the development stage to ensure that routes are adopted into annual maintenance programmes.

### *Structured Approach*

The following criteria are to be investigated in the development stages of any proposed route. Where there appear to be constraints a range of mitigating measures will be investigated with a view to resolving or minimising conflict:

- Existing bridleways, byways and unsealed unclassified county roads (UCRs) should be used wherever possible. Any additional links that need to be created should preferably follow an existing public path, concessionary, permissive or de-facto route or follow a fence/wall line in order to minimise any impact on the landscape, environment and farming operations
- Water catchment and raw water quality issues (*where applicable*)
- Sporting tenants and other existing land usage (*where applicable*)
- Localised erosion
- Likely disturbance to existing/proposed agricultural activity
- Disturbance or damage to Biological Heritage Sites, key biodiversity habitats and species
- Consideration of “no-go” areas for bridleway and mountain bike users
- Development and promotion of a code of conduct for bridleway and mountain bike users
- The safety of other users with existing rights of access
- Tourism potential and the capability to bring economic benefits to the area
- Provision of opportunities for people with different needs and capabilities to enjoy access wherever possible
- Exploration of links to the wider public rights of way network, particularly where this would make accessibility by public transport easier
- Long-term sustainability and maintenance of route surface/drainage

### *Mitigating Measures for Route*

#### *Development Criteria*

- Aim to use historic routes with former industrial or other transportation usage
- Avoidance where possible of private dwellings
- Use of the Pennine Bridleway Design Guide to direct route construction techniques
- The adoption where applicable of the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA)

trail design guide, with the aim of providing challenging, sustainable surfaces and reductions in user conflict

- Adoption of new routes into annual Highway Authority maintenance programmes
- Recognised and agreed system (With reference to Specialist Advisors – Ecology and the WPM Biodiversity Working Group) for Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs), where route proposals pass through either statutory/non statutory wildlife sites or involve Lancashire or UK BAP Priority Habitats or Species. EIAs would be appropriate where route proposals would incur significant construction and possible disturbance or damage to habitats/species



Ancient Highway, Entwistle

## Implementation of the strategy

### *Bridleway creation*

The majority of the proposed routes within the strategy involve the upgrading of existing footpaths to bridleway status rather than the creation of completely new routes. There are several different legislative procedures that can be followed to achieve bridleway status and these are outlined below.

### *Current legislation*

Current legislation relating to the creation of new bridleways is referred to as Definitive Map Modification Orders (DMMOs), the procedure for which is set out within the `Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981` and is outlined below

- Modification order to claim a new public right of way – made where no definitive right of way currently exists
- Modification order to upgrade/downgrade a public right of way – upgrading from a public footpath to bridleway, or downgrading to a bridleway from a RUPP or byway.

Both of these modification orders require members of the public to serve notice on landowners and forward documentation in support of their claim to the highway authority. If the Authority accepts the application there then follows a consultation period and an often-lengthy legal process.

- Landowner dedication - Where there is agreement between the landowner and the Authority and provides for the dedication of new routes maintainable at public expense and allows for the inclusion of any limitations on use required by the landowner.
- Creation Order – If following negotiations a dedication is not forthcoming; the highway authority may consider issuing an order to create a bridleway. Criteria for approval are no longer based on past usage but on the need for a bridleway having regard to amongst other things the extent of public benefit and the effect on those whom have an interest in the land. In such cases landowners are entitled to compensatory payments. The levels of such payments are not prescribed and can be problematical to agree.
- Concessionary routes - where the formal creation of a bridleway proves time consuming and costly a further option may be the creation of a permissive or concessionary route. These are routes created with the consent of the landowner, which do not formally become public rights of way. A form of contract is drawn up between the Council and landowner, which protects the landowners' rights and is supplemented by plans and statements. Such agreements give the landowner control over when the route is open and for how long. Concessionary routes can be used to create new routes or to modify an existing PROW, for example from a footpath to a concessionary bridleway or cycle route. It has been shown that such agreements can be part of wider agri-environmental schemes and opportunities could be explored through farm advisory services such as Lancashire Rural Futures.

Experience has shown, particularly with the development of the Pennine Bridleway Feeder Route, that the creation of bridleways can be a time consuming process and involve officers from a variety of local authority departments, including legal, countryside, PROW, highways and that agreements are often preceded by lengthy negotiations with landowners, tenants and land agents.

During the past five years of Feeder Route negotiation and creation it has not proved necessary for members of the public or bridleway user groups to serve notice on landowners. This option may foster poor community relations and is seen as a last resort. It is clear that Highways Authorities will continue to take a lead in the development of the proposed network.

### *Bridleway design and construction*

In the construction of bridleways the challenge is to provide safe and accessible routes for horse riders, walkers, mountain bikers and where possible those less mobile. Their design including furniture, routing and surfacing should take into account the requirements of each user but should not compromise its use by horses. The construction and design of bridleways particularly over upland areas is an evolving process and techniques are constantly being reviewed. There will be a particular test through this strategy to provide engineered and sustainable upland routes in open country, routes that provide interest to experienced mountain bikers and a challenge to horse riders and walkers whilst maintaining and appropriately enhancing natural and cultural heritage. This test will involve close liaison with users and landowners at the design stage and the adoption of national best practice.

The development of the Pennine Bridleway National Trail focussed attention on construction methods and bridleway design, and in response the Countryside Agency produced in 1999 a design guide to assist those in implementing the trail. The guide sets out detailed specifications for a variety of path types and bridleway furniture and provides a good reference for the development of the network within West Pennine Moors (Pennine Bridleway National Trail Design Guide, Countryside Agency, 1999). As a multi user route the design will need to take into account wherever possible the needs of mountain bikers. The International Mountain Bike Association has produced a design guide which provides a variety of techniques and which can be used as a reference (Building Better Trails, IMBA, 2001). The durability of the trail is a key consideration at the outset, long-term maintenance also needs to be taken into account at the design stage.



Restoration of Heapey Fold Lane Bridleway

Bridleway design can also impact on landscape, heritage and ecological considerations; it is therefore good practice or a requirement to liaise closely with specialist advisors particularly with respect to relevant action plans and planning guidance relating to fragile landscapes, habitats and biological heritage sites. (Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan, Landscape and Heritage Supplementary Planning Guidance). In upland areas there is a need to deal firstly with drainage with regard to hydrological changes on potentially recovering blanket bog habitats balanced with the need to effectively deal with rainfall in order to maintain route surfaces. A key principle here is to ensure that paths are slightly elevated so that water drains off the path onto the surrounding land, rather than the reverse which is the cause of many current problems.

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## **Management**

The WPM Access Working Group will act as the steering group for the development and implementation of the strategy. The Access Working Group was formed in 2004 and meets on a quarterly basis and is represented by Public Rights Of Way (PROW) and Countryside Officers from the six local authorities in the West Pennine Moors together with United Utilities. The terms of reference of this group are: -

*'To strengthen partnership working, encourage a more coordinated approach to delivery and seek to add value to existing activity.'*

One of the primary tasks of the group to date has been to oversee the development of this strategy.

In terms of implementing the strategy the majority of works required involve the upgrading of existing footpaths to bridleway status.

This will require physical improvements to path surfaces and furniture, and officer time to negotiate with landowners and set agreements in place. This will involve officers from relevant highway authorities, WPM Countryside Officer and Project Officer and the contracting of specialist support as and when required to undertake legal, design and construction work. Lancashire County Council will lead the overall coordination for the delivery of the strategy.



Two significant parts of the network include schemes that are already underway, which have their own management and delivery arrangements in place. These are the Pennine bridleway feeder route and the Sustrans National Cycle Route (NCR) 6.

### *Pennine Bridleway (West Pennine) Feeder Route*

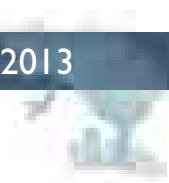
The development of the feeder route is managed by the Countryside Agency.

A steering group combining WPM partners and user groups oversee the implementation of the scheme and bring together PROW, legal and engineering staff.

### *NCR section*

National Cycle Route 6 forms part of the national cycle network and passes through Hyndburn and Rossendale making a link between Bury and Blackburn. It passes within the eastern boundary of the West Pennine Moors area. Funding for the project is sourced from Active England, Lancashire County Council, Remade, East Lancashire Regional Park, Landfill/aggregates tax, Railway Paths, private sector.

Parts of the route have been completed but many are in the development stage. The attached schedule identifies the sections that form part of the WPM bridleway network. This is between Irongate Lane, Helmshore and its juncture with the Pennine Bridleway Feeder Route at Baxenden.



Lancashire County Council are leading the development of this section in partnership with Groundwork Rossendale, Sustrans and Hyndburn Borough Council. The schedule of works for the project includes the provision for bridleway use along the relevant sections which form part of the WPM perimeter route.

### **Resource implications**

#### *Schedule of Works*

The schedule of works (set out in the tables attached) identifies significant resources that will be required in order to implement the strategy. The West Pennine Moors Partnership have an annual revenue budget which will be able to make a contribution, but other resources will need to be secured in order to make significant progress in the short to medium term.

It should be noted that the Upland Challenge Routes are included as an individually costed table due to the fact that they are aspirational and subject to wider landowner, water catchment, biodiversity and construction considerations.

#### *Maintenance and Monitoring*

The Mary Towneley Loop situated to the east of the WPM provides a practical example of bridleway construction and maintenance techniques. Its design has been based on the Countryside Agency design guide. However, techniques have evolved and lessons have been learnt as to what is appropriate in particular landscapes. Maintenance was identified as a key issue as the route was being devised, and the Countryside Agency and local authorities have made resources available to put in place a dedicated Ranger to manage and maintain the route.

Maintenance work on bridleways can be divided into two types of work:

- Annual Maintenance – the cost of maintaining bridleways can be kept to a minimum by regular checking and small-scale maintenance works, thus avoiding the need for more expensive restoration work at a future date. Work includes regular path inspection (at least twice annually), strimming and clearing overhanging vegetation, clearing blocked drainage channels and replacing waymarkers and gate catches.
- Furniture/Path Restoration – the costs incurred where larger scale work is required such as surface repair, gate replacement and major drainage works.

Costs of maintenance will need to be addressed within WPM by the contributing partners (Lancashire County Council, Bolton MBC, Blackburn with Darwen BC and United Utilities) and The Countryside Agency (Natural England, after Spring 2007).

Annual maintenance could be addressed by the employment of a WPM Bridleway Ranger or through local Parish Lengthsman Schemes. Furniture/Path Restoration works would need to be addressed within the annual WPM budget. However, given that the annual WPM budget is modest, external funding will need to be sought from appropriate sources.

Where access routes involve natural or cultural heritage assets there will be a need for monitoring to ensure that the features of interest are maintained, this to will necessitate the identification of additional funding.

### West Pennine Moors Bridleway Strategy - Schedule of Works

Ref	Name	Current Status	Land	Works required	Costs	Lead Partners	Funding	Estimated Completion
<b>Pennine Bridleway (Bolton) Feeder Route</b>								
	Clowbridge, Rossendale to Smithills Country Park, Bolton. Approx 50km	Part open, part under development (Definitive, concessionary bridledways. Footpaths and open fields) Quiet Road links	UU and other private landowners. Section through Bolton MBC complete.	Substantial new sections required Anglezarke to Roddlesworth, Darwen to Pickup Bank, Beithorn to Baxenden and across Hameldon Hill.	£450k	Project managed by CoAg and implemented by Lancashire County Council, Blackburn w Darwen BC (BwDBC), Bolton MBC.	Sports Lottery and Countryside Agency (70%), Local authorities (30%). Due for completion Spring 2007	Spring 2007
<b>WPM Perimeter Route</b>								
P1	Tippett House to Horrocks Fold Farm	Open, concessionary bridledway	Track through Horrocks Fold community woodland	Serviceable bridledway	Nil			Open
P2	Horrocks Fold Farm to Dunsicar Golf Club	Definitive footpath to be upgraded to bridledway	Farm track and footpaths through open field pasture	New grass/gravel surfacing, drainage, fencing. Crossing for A675	c£30 / metre x 1 km = £30k	Project to be managed by WPM Partners implemented by Bolton MBC & Lancashire County Council (LCC)	WPM, Local Authorities, Lancashire Rural Recovery Action Plan, East Lancashire Regional Park, Sport England	Yr 1-3
P3	Dunsicar, GC to Longworth Clough	Open, existing bridledway	Track alongside golf course	Drainage, vegetation/tree clearance, Minor surface improvements	£3.5k	As P2	As P2	Yr 1-3
P4	Longworth Clough to Longworth Road	Definitive footpath to be upgraded to bridledway	Track	Useable bridledway width track No works required	Nil	As P2	As P2	Yr 3-5
P5	Longworth Road to Cox Green Road	Open, Public road	Through Egerton village	Grass/gravel construction to road verge. Road crossing at A666	£5k	As P2	As P2	Yr 1-3
P6	Cox Green Road to rear of Turton Tower	Definitive footpath to be upgraded to bridledway	Footpath alongside open field, track through golf course	Grass/gravel surfacing, fencing, drainage, gates, signage	400m x £25 = £10k Gates/signs £2.5k	BwDBC LCC	As P2	Yr 1-3
P7	Rear of Turton Tower to Green Arms Road	Definitive footpath to be upgraded to bridledway	Surfaced track	Signage	Signage £2.5k	As P6	As P2	Yr 1-3
P8	Green Arms Road to Strawbury Duck	Definitive footpath to be upgraded to bridledway	Footpaths and surfaced track, metalled road	Grass/gravel surfacing, drainage, signage, gates	200m x £25 = £5k Gates/signs £1k	As P6	As P2	Yr 1-3
P9	Strawbury Duck to Crowthorn Road	Open, public roads	Public roads, established tracks	Minor road crossings	Signs £1k	As P6	As P2	Yr 1-3
P10	Crowthorn Road to Blackburn/Bury boundary	Definitive footpath to be upgraded to bridledway	Track	Minor improvements to track, gates	£1k	As P6	As P2	Yr 1-3
P11	Blackburn/Bury boundary to Holcombe village	Open, definitive bridledway	Track	Minor improvements to track, gates	£3k	Bury MBC LCC	As P2	Yr 1-3

## West Pennine Moors Bridleway Strategy - Schedule of Works (Cont)

Ref	Name	Current Status	Land	Works required	Costs	Lead Partners	Funding	Estimated Completion
<b>WPM Perimeter Route</b>								
P12	Holcombe village to Alden Road, 4.3 km	Open, definitive and concessionary bridleways	Track	Some sections suffered from washout requiring complete surface/drainage restoration	£30k	As P11	As P2	Yr 1-3
P13	Alden Road to Helmshore Road	Undefined track to be upgraded to bridleway	Metalled road and path	Minor road crossing, signage	£11k	LCC	As P2	Yr 1-3
P14	Helmshore Road to Raven Shore (Irongate Lane)	Definitive footpath to be upgraded to bridleway	Track	250 metre track heavily potholed, requires 'Meri-crusher' with cement / stone track	7k	LCC Groundwork Rossendale	As P2	Yr 3-5
P15	National Cycle Route 6 Raven Shore to Chemical Works, Baxenden (ref: sections 24-36, Project Delivery Plan for the Implementation of NCR 6 – Between Whitebirk, Hyndburn and Stubbins, Rossendale, Lancashire County Council 2004)	Open, under development or closed (Sections either footpaths and cycleway requiring upgrading to bridleway or public highway.)		Large scheme for Helmshore viaduct required, funding currently being sourced. Alternative route possible via Clarke Bridge and Holcombe Road. Ogden Bridge currently under construction. Other works either require surfacing works and/or upgrading to bridleway status.	Surfacing works yet to be carried out £400k Helmshore viaduct £400k	Project managed and delivered by Lancashire County Council. Main partners, Sustrans, Hyndburn BC, Groundwork Rossendale.	Active England, LCC, REMADE, East Lancs Regional Park, Lancashire Environmental Fund, Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, Railway Paths, Private sector. Due for completion summer 2007	Yr 3-5
<b>Village and Area Routes</b>								
V1	Entwistle – south Darwen link	Upgrading of definitive footpaths to bridleway status.		Re-construction of 'The Kings Highway' sunken lane together with grass/gravel and fencing through pasture	£30k	BwDBC LCC	WPM, BwDBC	Yr 1-3
V2	Edgworth – Hoddlesden link	Definitive footpaths & quiet roads	Tracks, footpaths	Surfacing of significant lengths, drainage, signage	£60k	As V1		Yr 5-7
V3	Pickup Bank circular via Haslingden Grane	Definitive footpaths	Former quarry & cart tracks, section of Rossendale Way	3km of the track requires machine work, drainage and moderate surfacing	c.£20/metre x 3km = £60k	LCC BwDBC	WPM, BwDBC, LEF, Local Heritage Initiative	Yr 1-3
V4	Halliwell Fold Bridge to Stones bank Road	Open, concessionary and definitive bridleway			Nil			Open
V4/1	Egerton to Catherine's Edge	Improvements required to road culverts upgrading of definitive footpath to bridleway	Public roads, footpaths	Surfaced bridleway required alongside public highway, signage	£20m x 1km = £20k Signs £11k	BwDBC LCC	WPM, BwDBC	Yr 1-3

West Pennine Moors Bridleway Strategy - Schedule of Works (Cont)								
Ref	Name	Current Status	Land	Works required	Costs	Lead Partners	Funding	Estimated Completion
<b>Village and Area Routes</b>								
V5	Roddlesworth link	Definitive footpaths Largely completed	Mix of open field paths and well defined tracks	Gate systems, grass/gravel surfacing & drainage, fencing	£3k	BwDBC	WPM, BwDBC	Yr 1-3
V6	Egerton circular	Definitive footpaths and public roads	Footpaths and defined tracks,	Some lengths require minor improvement and drainage. Major road crossing/signage	£10k	Bolton MBC LCC	WPM, Bolton MBC, LHI	Yr 3-5
V7	Wheulton & Brinscall	Definitive footpaths and public roads	Tracks, roads and footpaths	Signage and surface improvements	£15k	LCC	WPM, LHI, LEF	Yr 3-5
<b>Town to Country Link Routes</b>								
TC1	South Horwich	Upgrading of definitive footpath to bridleway status	Tracks and public roads	Surfacing, signage for road crossing required	£12k	Bolton MBC	WPM, Bolton MBC, ALSF	Yr 3-5
TC2	Walker Fold	Open			Nil	Bolton MBC		Open
TC3	Eagley Valley	Definitive footpath, requires upgrading to bridleway	Steep sided river valley	Path Widening	£12k	Bolton MBC	WPM, Bolton MBC	Yr 5-7
TC4	Bradshaw Valley	RUPP, Definitive footpaths, non -definitive footpaths	Steep sided river valley	Path Widening	£12k	Bolton MBC	WPM, Bolton MBC	Yr 5-7
TC5	Hawkshaw	Upgrading of definitive footpath	Footpath through open fields	Surfacing	£12k	Bury MBC LCC	WPM, Bury MBC	Yr 3-5
TC6	Redisher	Existing bridleway definitive footpaths requiring upgrading to bridleway status	Existing track and footpath through open fields	Footpath requires grass/gravel surfacing	£12k	Bury MBC LCC	WPM, Bury MBC	Yr 3-5
TC7	Standish to Rivington	Open			Nil			Open
TC8	Helmshore	Mostly definitive footpaths in need of upgrading	Valley and moorland route partly along the Rossendale Way	Extensive improvements to many unsurfaced and poorly drained grassland/moorland tracks	£80k	LCC Groundwork Rossendale	WPM, LEF, ALSF	Yr 5-7
Cost of construction works (excluding feeder route and NCR6 section)					£441,500			
Additional costs associated with legal agreements, design and project management @ 25%					£110,000			
Compensation costs					£120,000			
Contingency @ 10%					£67,000			
<b>Total costs of works (excluding Feeder route and NCR6)</b>					<b>£738,500</b>			
Total costs including feeder route and NCR6					£1,998,500			

## Upland Challenge Routes: Appendix - Schedule of Works

Ref	Name	Current Status	Land	Works required	Costs	Lead Partners	Funding	Estimated Completion
<b>Upland Challenge Routes</b>								
UC1	Winter Hill Traverse	Private road to transmitter mast, thereafter; definitive footpath to Belmont	Private and United Utilities	Minimal; Route from mast to Belmont widened and improved by LCC in 90s to accommodate bridleway usage. Some surface and drainage repairs envisaged	£5k	Lancashire County Council, WPM Local Authorities, United Utilities, International Mountain Bike Association	WPM, Local Authorities, East Lancashire Regional Park, UU, LEF, Sport England, Private Sector	Yr 1-3
UC2	Horden Stoops to Great Hill	Concessionary footpath	United Utilities (UU) Largely flagged route	Extension of flagged areas to Horden Stoops	£60/metre x 1km £60k	As UCI	As UCI	Yr 3-5
UC3	Brinscall to Great Hill	Part definitive footpath, part private track	UU; driveable pitched cobbled track	Minimal	£3k	As UCI	As UCI	Yr 3-5
UC4	White Coppice to Crookfield Lane	Definitive footpath	UU; Largely improved for walkers by stone pitching techniques	Upgrades and widening, from Great Hill summit eastward, improvements to moorland track and hill slope	£50k	As UCI	As UCI	Yr 5-7
UC5	Crookfield Lane to Cadshaw	Definitive footpath	Follows Witton Weavers Way along former historic track, partly surfaced	Substantial upgrading required	£60k	As UCI	As UCI	Yr 3-5
UC6	Cadshaw to Entwistle	Definitive footpath	UU, well surfaced farm track	Gate systems and signage	£2k	As UCI	As UCI	Yr 3-5
UC7	Irwell Vale/Edenfield to Mary Towneley Loop link	Definitive footpaths & private tracks	Mostly UU owned	Largely well-surfaced track from Edenfield to Mary Towneley Loop. Upgrading and improvements to other sections	£25k	As UCI	As UCI	Yr 1-3
<b>Total costs of works</b>					<b>£205k</b>			

### Abbreviations

<b>WPM</b>	~ West Pennine Moors
<b>LCC</b>	~ Lancashire County Council
<b>UU</b>	~ United Utilities
<b>BwDBC</b>	~ Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
<b>MBC</b>	~ Metropolitan Borough Council
<b>CoAg</b>	~ Countryside Agency
<b>LEF</b>	~ Lancashire Environmental Fund
<b>LHI</b>	~ Local Heritage Initiative
<b>ALSF</b>	~ Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund

