

ROWIP Best Practice

An Overview of Successful Project Delivery



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1. Introduction

These 3 case studies highlight some example suggestions to improve public rights of way access between 2011 and 2015 as part of Cumbria County Councils ROWIP programme. They also serve to highlight where and how schemes can succeed. They are also broadly representative of project suggestions received by the Countryside Access Team.

2. ROWIP Facts and Figures

- 426k of capital funding invested in ROWIP by CCC between April 2011 and March 2015.
- 479k of ROWIP external funding secured by Countryside Access Team during same period.
- 89 ROWIP projects delivered during same period requiring 270 days of staff time.
- For every staff day spent on delivering ROWIP CCC secured 1.7k of external funding to be invested in the PROW network. This should be viewed against an average staff cost of £170 per day.

3. Case Study 1 – Harrington Community Walkway

3.1 Project Background

Public footpath 262036 was added to the definitive map in 2008 by way of Public Path Modification Order following a successful claim from the members of the local community who had used the route since the closure of the former railway line it follows in 1973 when the track bed was lifted. Although forming a convenient car free access to Beckstone School and wider network it was unattractive to parents deeming it unsafe and unwelcoming and in some cases inaccessible.

In early 2011 CCC Highways [Allerdale] were approached by the local County Councillor regarding the development of a scheme to improve public footpath 262036 to encourage walking to school. The potential scheme subsequently moved across to the CA to design, manage and implement with the promise of technical support from the Area Highways Team.

Once agreed, the scheme aimed to improve the entire length of public footpath 262036 and a short section of public footpath 262007 to facilitate both improved access to Beckstone

Primary school and wider access opportunities for the local community. Public footpath 262026 was also recognised to have local historical significance; being a mineral railway line since 1879 which connected to an earlier waggonway dating back to 1760, supplying coke to the steel works in Workington.

3.2 Outcomes

- CA team's allocation of 3k from the ROWIP budget enabled the securing of a further 27k grant from WREN and subsequently 34k from other sources.
- 1384m² of vegetation cleared as part of enabling work to provide clear sight lines for users
- 1.1km of path surfaced requiring the importation of 1000 tonnes of stone and aggregate.
- 100m of flooded path drained.
- 2 new ramps constructed to where bridge had been taken to provide easy access to school.
- Increase in number of parents walking children to school and thereby reducing traffic congestion near school.
- A local public house subsequently offered use of carpark to parents at school drop off and pick up times as a further assistance allowing those parents and children to walk part of the route that otherwise wouldn't have done so.
- Catalyst for further externally funded projects in the local area.

3.3 Why it succeeded

- Community derived scheme fulfilling a clear community need which provided the CA team with a very clear and concise brief to work towards.
- The scheme was realistic; the community understood what was practicably achievable and took on board our additional suggestion during the design stage.
- No landowner objections; landowners contacted at the earliest opportunity and made aware of scheme and timeline for delivery.
- External funding opportunities identified at an early stage; there was no expectation that CCC would fund everything.
- Community engagement and partnership working throughout. It's important that the community identified the project as theirs throughout the scheme.
- Limited risks to CCC – the scheme, once funding was secured, did not leave a future liability of high maintenance assets to maintain. Similarly there was never a financial risk to CCC as works could not commence until the grant funding was

approved. With increased financial pressure risk assessment is an important stage of project development.

3.4 Photos



Before



After

4. Case Study 2 – Waverley Viaduct

4.1 Project Background

In March 2012 a local action group approached the CA team regarding a long standing wish to see the reopening of the Waverley Viaduct to provide an additional crossing point over the River Eden. The project was subsequently added to the list of potential ROWIP projects.

The Waverley line between Edinburgh and Carlisle closed in 1969 but traffic as far as Longtown MOD site continued until 1973. Since then, pedestrians had used the viaduct as an unofficial footpath, although there have been repeated efforts to prevent access by the British Rail Board (Residary) Ltd, the body responsible for the land, which erected steel fences at each end of the viaduct to prevent access on health and safety grounds. In 2013 the British Rail Board (Residary) Ltd was abolished and the viaduct became the responsibility of Highways Agency Historical Railways Estate.

4.2 Outcomes – Why it stalled as a ROWIP Project

- Scores lowly when risk assessed. The current risk factors affecting the bridge detailed below resulted in it scoring poorly and will not be addressed as part of the ROWIP programme until the significant risks to CCC are addressed.
- No landowner permissions exist on the north bank of the river. Post 2005 flood defence works removed the railway embankment on the north side making access off and onto the bridge problematic.
- In December 2015 Storm Desmond removed a substantial section of a public right of way that approaches the bridge
- The Railway Act 2005 has not been repealed so technically, the railway is still active and as such a public right of way cannot be added to the definitive map. Highways Agency Historical Railways Estate has offered a permissive access agreement for 25 years.
- Financial Risk and potential asset liability. Doubts were raised about the integrity of the structure post Storm Desmond and the extent of work required to the bridge. As two public rights of way pass under the bridge the CA team has requested that Highways Agency Historical Railways Estate undertake a structural assessment, in part to defects noted in the structure after the flooding.

4.3 The Next Steps

In July 2015 the Waverly Viaduct Trust was formed [from what was the Waverley Viaduct Action Group] and subsequently registered with the Charity Commission. This has triggered the following actions

- The group has taken ownership of the project and recognised the need for them to drive it forward.
- A feasibility study has been commissioned by the trust to ascertain the project cost, landowner agreement etc.
- A drive towards working in partnership
- An informal offer of a potential grant of up to 100k from railway heritage trust towards the project

The CA team will continue to monitor the project, offer public rights of way advice and review the current risk assessment as required.



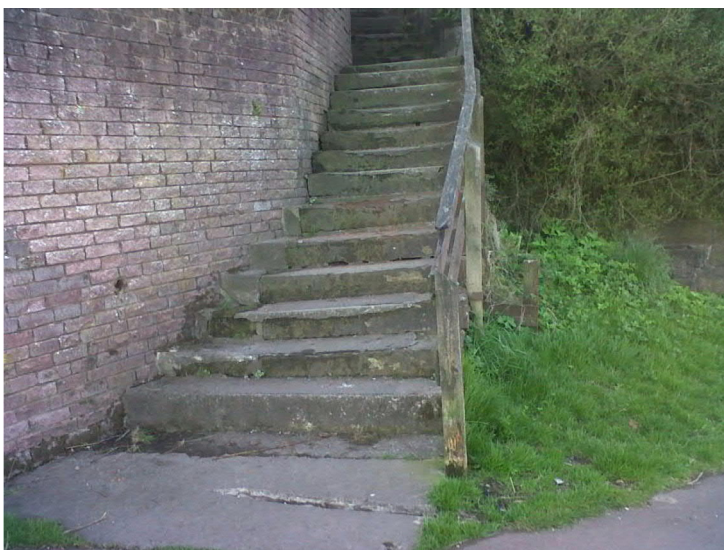
View westward of devastated alignment of public footpath 109080 towards the Waverley Viaduct

5. Case Study 3 – Longtown Steps

5.1 Project Background

A ROWIP project initially with Carlisle City Council prior to the April 2013 handback of Highways management to CCC, its aim was to refurbish and upgrade a flight of sandstone steps in Longtown north of Carlisle. The steps which carry public footpath 101002 provided direct access to the River Esk.

The steps had previously been repaired previously with an attempt to fit a non-slip surface. The perceived deteriorating condition had concerned the local parish council.



View of steps May 2013

5.2 Outcomes – Why it failed as a ROWIP Project

- At no stage was a source of external funding clearly identified and targeted. The project wasn't risked assessed at an early stage which would have identified these issues and development work should have stopped
- Scattergun approach to the commissioning of works. An initial estimate received was from a contractor who was not part of CCC's Public Right of Way contractor framework.
- An EA consent was applied before funding or the final specification was finalised
- The steps were not ultimately the responsibility of the CA team to maintain. As they were a sealed surface path they are the responsibility of the local Area Highways team as part of work instruction for sealed surface public rights of way.

5.3 The Next Steps?

The local Area Highways team are currently planning to undertake works to address the surface of the steps

6. 5 Simple steps for Successful ROWIPs

1. Clearly presented and practical project suggestions from users

A clearly present project regardless of the scale of work required can be quickly costed as a desk top exercise. This may require an initial meeting with a member of CA team so that the requirements of user or user group are fully understood and taken on board.

The user or user group who has suggested the scheme is effectively a client and they should be kept updated on developments. They can also be important in the delivery of the project and time invested in it can in some cases be viewed as contribution in kind towards match funding.

2. Identify possible funding

The CA team will not be able to fund 100% ROWIP schemes so it is vital that external funding is identified at the earliest stage and a partner is identified to secure the funding. Schemes that have no identified funding are unlikely to progress.

3. Communicate with Landowners

Landowners should be made aware at the earliest opportunity to ascertain whether they will grant permission or whether they will require any input into the design stage. Early consultation can prevent wasted staff time and an early informal approach from a parish council can often reap rewards.

4. Risk Assess

A project may have identified funding sources and landowner permissions but it doesn't preclude the existence of otherwise overlooked risks or liabilities to either CCC or the landowner. A low scoring project doesn't necessarily automatically fail only that actions are required taken to mitigate against the identified risk so it's lowered to an acceptable level. These actions are not necessarily for CCC to undertake.

Although a process undertaken by the CA team, the individual or groups suggesting the project should be kept informed.

If the 4 steps above are undertaken with successful outcomes then projects can be prioritised, designed and implemented by the CA team