

Public Rights of Way Reports Prioritisation

The system of prioritising reports was developed following a LEAN review, which identified a need to ensure resources were used to best effect. In particular, there was a need to ensure safety issues and problems on well-used routes were addressed quickly. This was done in consultation with user groups and Parish Councils.

The approach used in Worcestershire has been adopted by other authorities. The network is graded on an A-D criteria based on the type and level of use the paths are likely to use. "A-routes", which are largely urban alleyways, are managed by the Highway Maintenance teams in the same way as footways. C-D routes fall under the PRoW Team. The priority is initially determined by the severity of the issue (please see attached officer guidance). Combining this with the level of use the path is likely to receive gives an overall priority (as shown on the further attached document).

In addition to this, officers consider a number of other factors when managing their workload. These include:

- Seasonal and Environmental – for example not doing heavy clearance during bird nesting season.
- Maintaining relationships with and assisting landowners, for example where they ask for assistance with improving user behaviour.
- Practical limitations – such as site access for machinery during wet weather
- Requests from MPs/Members/Parish Councils
- Requests from user-groups and other partner organisations
- Supporting volunteers and providing them with a for filling range of appropriate tasks
- Proactive work - such as improvements to key routes and assets
- Budget and staff time availability.
- Programming of work efficiently – i.e. grouping together work such as roadside signage.

Public Rights of Way Hazard Severity Guidance

Severity	Description	Example
Immediate	Hazard to users which is likely result in significant injury or where there already has been one	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As "Very High" but where immediate action is deemed necessary such as a path well used by school children
Very High	Hazard to users which may result in significant injury or where there already has been one.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridge in immediate risk of failure or has missing or very weak deck • Significant trip hazards (normally on a surfaced path). • Known significant injury has occurred • Poorly supported hung up tree or risk of immediate failure. • Missing manhole cover or large hole in path. • Dangerous animal or act by landowner.
High	Severely deteriorated structure or where a majority of users find the route extremely difficult or unusable, and there is no easy alternative*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For most of the year surface issues (such as drainage) which makes the route difficult or impossible to use (with no easy alternative). • Bridge nearing end of life or requiring significant repair • Locked gates with (no easy alternative) • Agricultural fence or other complete obstruction (with no easy alternative) • Cropped or ploughed path which prevents use (with no easy alternative) • Summer Strimming reports (between May-Sept). • Intimidation (with no easy alternative). • Gates and stiles which the majority of users cannot use (with no easy alternative). • Missing bridge or ditch crossing (with no easy alternative). • Routes which are legally closed due to a defect (and there is no easy alternative). • Severely overgrown path which prevents use (and no easy alternative). • Electric fence which is likely to shock users. • Items which could result in a claim or loss from landowner (such as potential damage to property from tree roots). • Trees with structural issues requiring non urgent action

Severity	Description	Example
Moderate	Route can be used by most with some difficulty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal drainage issues • Agricultural fence or obstruction across the path with easy alternative • Cropped or ploughed path which doesn't prevent use or with easy alternative • Bridge requiring minor repair • Gates and stiles which can only be used with some difficulty (missing steps, broken hinge). • Locked or secured gates which most people can climb easily (excluding bridleways and byways). • Missing bridge or ditch crossing with easy alternative • Routes which are closed due to a defect but there is an easy alternative. • Significant encroachment • Missing sign resulting in path not being identifiable. • Incorrect signage or waymarking. • Trees requiring minor management. • Low fences or temporary electric fences which can easily be climbed. • Trees requiring management.
Low	Minor issues which don't make the route difficult to use or prevent users from accessing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited or faded waymaking • Missing or damaged signposts when path is still identifiable. • Minor encroachment • Minor deviation from legal line. • Furniture in good order but not meeting BS standard and/or is more restrictive than the recorded limitation • Very minor vegetation • Cropped or ploughed path not cleared to legal width but still accessible. • Deviation from legal line (with no restriction to users).

* 'Easy alternative' is defined as an easy-to-use minor deviation from the definitive line which is unrestricted and easily identified. When considering the priority, the full range of legitimate users who will use the route, such as cyclists on a bridleway, should be taken into account.

Public Rights of Way: Prioritised System of Management

Path Category	Path Type	Target Path Standards (users ideally should expect the following standards and conditions)	Defect Severity*	Resolution Priority	Target Maximum Initial Inspection/Assessment Time	Target Resolution Time
B	Secondary community routes e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> popular dog walks Leisure routes and recreational routes e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> waymarked circular walks and rides waymarked trails (e.g. Worcestershire Way) secondary walks in country parks links to viewpoints, landscape features, access land, canal towpaths Many Bridleways , especially those providing alternatives to busy roads or forming a comprehensive network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Path furniture in good, safe condition (gaps or gates where possible) Reasonably good, largely un-metalled, surfaces (although including range of gradients) and drainage (allowing for weather conditions) Vegetation encroachment kept to reasonable levels Absence of any other obstructions Thorough signing and waymarking 	Immediate	1	1 Working Day	Maximum of 1 working day (resolved or made safe & priority lowered)
			Very High	2	Up to 5 Working Days	Up to 5 working days (resolved or made safe & priority lowered)
			High	3	28 days	16 weeks
			Moderate	4	28 days	No specific target
			Low	6	28 days	No specific target (resolved by volunteers or other work programmes as available)
C	Wider network of Public Rights of Way i.e. PROW not included in categories A, B, D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majority of path furniture in reasonable, safe condition Path signed at roadside Waymarking where necessary along route of the path Varying gradients and some surfaces will be rough and uneven Path may be muddy and/or overgrown in places 	Very High	2	Up to 5 working days	Maximum of 5 working days (resolved or made safe & priority lowered)
			High	4	28 days	No specific target
			Moderate	5	28 days	No specific target (resolved by volunteers or other work programmes as available)
			Low	6	28 days	No specific target (resolved by volunteers, or other work programmes as available)
D	Paths with very limited demand e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> short cul de sac, e.g. to motorway or quarry little or un-used duplicate path where better adjacent path or paths exist paths through natural, challenging locations (e.g. severe gradient), especially where better alternatives exist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Path furniture may be difficult to use and some barriers or other obstructions may be present Signing and waymarking may be missing or limited Varying gradients and some surfaces will be rough and uneven Path may be muddy and/or vegetation may be dense 	Very High	2	Up to 5 working days	Maximum of 1 week (resolved or made safe & priority lowered)
			High	6	28 days	No specific target (resolved by volunteers or other work programmes as available)
			Moderate	6	28 days	No specific target (resolved by volunteers or other work programmes as available)
			Low	6	28 days	No specific target (resolved by volunteers or other work programmes as available)

*See Severity Guidance

Please note some reports are assessed as a desk exercise, such as when clear photos and details have been given by the person reporting.

Public Rights of Way Volunteers and Volunteer Groups

Parish Path Wardens

Over the past 12 months we have had an increase in coverage from 61% to 72% of Parish Path Wardens (PPWs) across Worcestershire. We also now have 8 supervised volunteer groups with a further 8 parish self-sufficient volunteer groups. The Ramblers will be shortly assisting us with a recruitment campaign within their membership.

Volunteer Groups

The Public Rights of Way Team has carried out 37 supervised volunteer work parties over the past 12 months. We ran an extremely successful series of volunteer work parties on a route just outside Tenbury Wells incorporating several differing volunteer groups opening up a path that has been un-usable for many years. We also have one new supervised volunteer group in Catshill. The group is meeting monthly at present, with the potential of it becoming self-supported in the future. The work is sourced by a mixture of officer inspections and a local PPW carrying out inspections and discussions with landowners.

There are another two groups in the process of being set up, namely:-

- British Horse Society (BHS): We are running the first new, supervised volunteer work party with the BHS in the coming weeks. This will potentially start the creation of a new group in the West of the county. They are mainly interested in carrying out works on bridleways across the county.
- Honeybourne: A new volunteer group is in the process of being formed in Honeybourne. We are currently waiting on a member of their group to attend a supervisor training course before getting started.

We are also looking at a project in Worcester with the disabled Ramblers. It has the potential to enable them to be involved in practical work.

Volunteer Training

In the past six months, we have carried out three Introductory Essentials Courses. We also have twelve volunteers attending a strimmer competency course at the beginning of August.

Household Waste Collected

The indicator reported to the Panel is the kilograms of Household Waste (HHW) per resident of Worcestershire. This indicator was originally part of the national Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) framework. The calculation is as follows:

$$\frac{\text{Total tonnage of household waste arisings}}{\text{Population in authority area}} \times 1,000$$

The total tonnage of household waste arisings excludes rubble and re-use, but includes all other waste collected at the kerbside and waste received at Household Recycling Centres.

The figures are from WasteDataFlow, the national database used to record these tonnages. The population in the local authority area is based on Office for National Statistics mid-year figures for population, which are updated annually.

Worcestershire's figures for each financial year from 2014/2015 to 2020/2021 are shown below. The figure for 2021/2022 will be confirmed towards the end of 2022.

Financial Year	Household Waste Collected (tonnes)	Population (rounded estimate)	Household Waste Collected per resident (kg)
2014/2015	264,163	574,525	459.80
2015/2016	271,742	578,600	469.66
2016/2017	276,030	578,600	477.07
2017/2018	270,312	589,750	458.35
2018/2019	272,537	593,575	459.15
2019/2020	272,641	597,025	456.67
2020/2021	283,369	598,700	473.30

Pothole Defects

Defects Identified by Inspectors

1st April to 31st July

Category	Defects
1-hour	144
1-day	286
7-day	1,739
28-day	5,395
Totals	7,564

Public-Reported PEMs*

1st April to 31st July

Potholes	747
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* Some PEMs reported by the public may have been identified previously by an inspector. In such cases, there may occasionally be instances where the inspector assigns the defect to a category other than 'pothole'.

Completed

1st April to 31st July

All categories	7,233
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