

Rights of Way – a description of what A, B and C routes would look like

What are the implications of a path being categorised as A, B or C?

- Proactive maintenance will be primarily focused on A paths and issues will be addressed on these routes ahead of those categorised as B or C.
- The categorisation of the path will also affect how quickly issues are resolved, with an issue on a A priority route being addressed faster than the same issue on a C priority route.
- Within our detailed work processes, we are likely to take a different approach to an issue depending on the category of the path. (e.g. For example, we are likely to make more effort to require landowners to reinstate a A or B category path after ploughing or cropping including taking enforcement action. We are less likely to move to enforcement action on ploughing and cropping on a C path.

However the provisional categorisation of each right of way is just a starting point. The consultation is asking for more local information to inform the final decision.

What would happen to the Rights of Way in the ‘C’ category? Does this mean that some paths will not be maintained and will be lost?

No. The proposed approach will see us focus resources onto the most used and valued paths although issues concerning safety will be prioritised regardless of the category.

However, whilst every Right of Way is important, those proposed to be in the ‘C’ category are those that are most likely to be infrequently used and are deemed not to offer as much benefit to the public as those in the ‘high’ and ‘medium’ categories.

Whilst we would carry out our statutory responsibilities to maintain access and the surface if the paths of all Rights of Way, but would only be able to respond to non-emergency issues on C category RoWs when our limited resources allow. We would not be able to guarantee when we’d begin investigating a problem, and, if necessary, taking action to resolve issues. We feel that this is a reasonable approach to meeting our statutory duties.

This table shows the desired response times for dealing with reported issues on the public path network. These are likely to be adjusted on conclusion of the Rights of Way Review and revisited annually thereafter. Once adopted, all response times will be subject to variation, depending on competing areas of rights of way work and available resources.

	A Routes	B Routes	C Routes
What does the route look like?			
Description of the route	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nationally and regionally, long distance promoted route e.g. Staffordshire Way, Way for the Millennium, Heart of England Way, etc. Crosses a SCC country park Runs within 50m of a school, shop, community resource Likely to be urban routes Likely anticipated use is high 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locally promoted route Runs within 50m of a publically accessible green space Likely to be multi-user route (e.g. bridleway) Runs within 10m of an application to upgrade a route Likely anticipated use is medium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Other routes not classed A or B
Target Standards (users might expect the following standards and conditions)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure is in good, safe condition Path surfaces are generally in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure in a reasonable, safe condition Path surfaces are in reasonably 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some infrastructure may be difficult to use Some barriers or other obstructions

		<p>good condition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of significant encroachment by vegetation • Absence of any other obstructions • Path signed where it leaves metalled road and clearly waymarked where required along its route 	<p>good for most of the year although seasonal problems (e.g. vegetation and flooding) may occur.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence of other obstructions, although ploughing and cultivation may occasionally be a problem • Path signed where they leave metalled road 	<p>may be present</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Path runs along its natural surface and can be muddy and/or vegetation may be dense in places • Signing and waymarking is present in most cases but occasionally it may be missing or limited
Inspection Regime*		25% of paths inspected annually	25% of paths inspected once every three years	25% of paths inspected once every five years
Number	Commonly Reported Issues	A Routes	B Routes	C Routes
1	<p>Any issue which poses an imminent danger, likely to result in (or already has) a significant accident or injury. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dangerous animal • Shooting on or over path • Poorly supported tree or branch at risk of immediate failure • Bridge in immediate risk of failure 	<p>A1 - Maximum of 5 working days (including inspection within 2 working days with resolution, where possible, or made safe or priority lowered within 5 working days of problem being reported).</p>	<p>B1 - Maximum of 5 working days (including inspection within 2 working days with resolution, where possible, or made safe or priority lowered within 5 working days of problem being reported).</p>	<p>C1 - Maximum of 5 working days (including inspection within 2 working days with resolution, where possible, or made safe or priority lowered within 5 working days of problem being reported).</p>
2	<p>Any reported problem where the accessibility of the right of way is severely affected, and/or an issue where most users would find the right of way extremely difficult or unusable and where there is no easy alternative route nearby. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant trip hazards • Missing manhole cover or large hole in path. • Severely deteriorated path 	<p>A2 - Maximum of 20 working days (including inspection within 5 working days with resolution, where possible, or made safe or priority lowered within 20 working days of problem being reported).</p>	<p>B2 - Maximum of 16 weeks (including inspection within 20 working days with resolution, where possible, or made safe or priority lowered within 16 weeks of problem being reported).</p>	<p>C2 - Maximum of 20 weeks (including inspection within 30 working days with resolution, where possible, or made safe or priority lowered within 16 weeks of problem being reported).</p>

	<p>surface</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Severely deteriorated / damaged stile or gate • Severely deteriorated / damaged / missing bridge • Low level intimidation and nuisance from the landowner • Obstructions (e.g. a fence or anything that blocks access) 			
3	<p>A reported problem where the right of way is still available to most users albeit with some difficulty or inconvenience and/or where there is an easy alternative route nearby. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Damaged stile or gate • Poor surface condition • Vegetation overgrowth/ undergrowth • Fallen tree / Tree with structural issues requiring non urgent action • Barbed wire on structures e.g. gates and stiles • Encroachment to limit users' access 	<p>A3 - Maximum of 16 weeks of problem being reported (including inspection within 20 working days).</p>	<p>B3 - No specific target. Problem will be addressed as and when resources allow or by volunteers.</p>	<p>C3 - No specific target. Problem will be addressed as and when resources allow or by volunteers.</p>
4	<p>A reported problem which does not prevent a right of way being used nor has any significant impact on its accessibility. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misleading signs and notices • Missing, damaged or faded signposts and waymarkers • Poor fencing adjacent to a path • Encroachment where users' 	<p>A4 - No specific target. Problem will be addressed as and when resources allow or by volunteers.</p>	<p>B4 - No specific target. Problem will be addressed as and when resources allow or by volunteers.</p>	<p>C4 - No specific target. Problem will be addressed as and when resources allow or by volunteers.</p>

	access is not limited <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mud• Minor deviation from legal line• Minor vegetation growth			
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* This is the minimum inspection regime. Paths can happen more regularly inspected if volunteers are trained as path inspectors.