

Maintenance Prioritisation continued...

In order to establish the level of priority given to resolving the problem the following factors are taken into consideration:

Category of route As for Reactive Inspections

Nature of Defect

Hazard / Obstruction / Inconvenience

Cost

The practical work required to resolve the defect may incur costs disproportionate to the benefit they will provide.

Seasonality

Certain practical works can only be carried out at a particular time of year or in certain weather conditions.

Environmental

Certain practical works can only be carried out at a particular time of year or in particular conditions to avoid damaging flora and fauna. Licences may also be required from other agencies/ bodies

Work Efficiency

A number of works in the same area can be grouped together to make more efficient use of available resources.

Deterioration

The condition of the path surface or furniture may be satisfactory at present but it is apparent that it has a limited life span.

Alternative Routes

A close alternative route may be available ensuring public access.

Enforcement

If a landowner has been requested to carry out their statutory responsibility such as reinstating a path, it is reasonable to expect Herefordshire Council to carry out their responsibility at the same time.

Status of Route

The clearance of a bridleway for example is likely to benefit a wider section of the community than the clearance of a footpath.

Access Improvements

Herefordshire Council has adopted the principle of the least restrictive option when looking at access points along a path. Consideration will be given to improving access along a route and upgrading furniture to remove as many obstacles as possible.

In practical terms this means removing a stile or gate to leave a gap, replacing a stile with a gate, replacing a kissing gate with a pedestrian or fully accessible gate, or installing an easy access stile.

On receiving a report of a damaged or broken stile or gate, efforts will be made to secure access improvements. To facilitate this and where resources allow, Amey Herefordshire may offer to supply and install a gate if it replaces a stile, remove a stile or gate if it leaves a gap or carry out any other work that is regarded as access improvement, at no expense to the landowner.

If the landowner does not wish to have access improved, they will be requested to either install a gate or stile supplied by Amey Herefordshire in lieu of the 25% statutory grant.

If the landowner fails to install or repair the furniture, enforcement action is likely to be initiated as set out in the Public Rights of Way Enforcement Protocol.

Contact the Public Rights of Way Section

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If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please call Public Rights of Way on 01432 261800 or email: ameyherefordshire@amey.co.uk

Public Rights of Way Inspection & Maintenance



Herefordshire has a network of 2100 miles of footpaths, bridleways and byways open to all traffic. These paths range from those heavily used, by dog walkers, people accessing services and strategically important routes such as the Wye Valley Walk, to those used rarely and with limited public benefit such as cul-de-sac paths.

Although Herefordshire Council has a legal duty to maintain all the rights of way within the county, there are only limited resources available. In order to maximise resources a system of prioritising problems has been put in place.

This leaflet explains Herefordshire Council's Inspection and Maintenance policy.



Inspection Prioritisation

Routine Inspections

The following routes will be inspected ONCE a year to assess overall condition, signing and safety.

- Wye Valley Walk
- Mortimer Trail
- Offa's Dyke Path
- Herefordshire Council promoted Circular Loop Walks
- Any paths specifically created for disabled access

These routes are considered to be particularly valuable assets to assist Herefordshire's growth as a popular tourist destination. They attract many visitors to the county, bringing in valuable revenue to local accommodation providers, restaurants, public houses, shops, etc.

Reactive Inspections

Reports of defects or suggested improvements to the network will be prioritised depending on the popularity and amenity value of the route. In normal circumstances the timescale within which a problem or proposed improvement will be inspected are listed in the priority categories below.

Reports of defects which are considered as being hazardous will be inspected and appropriate remedial action taken within 48 hours.



Category 1 - within 2 weeks

Herefordshire Council promoted route (Wye Valley Walk, Mortimer Trail, Offa's Dyke Path & Loop Walks)

Category 2 - within 3 months

- Other published routes e.g Herefordshire Trail, Three Rivers Ride
- Paths made up specifically for disabled access
- Links to visitor attractions and other paths known to be popular

Category 3 - between 3 & 6 months

- Paths not listed in categories 1, 2 & 4
- Routes identified in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan as paths to be improved

Category 4 - between 6 & 18 months

- Cul-de-sacs
- Paths with little or no value in terms of enjoyment, access or utility.

The officer dealing with the defect will also consider the following when deciding how quickly a defect needs to be inspected:

Inconvenience

There is a defect on the path but the public are still able to use it (e.g missing sign post).

Complaint Volume

The number of reports from different sources that have been received on the same issue or path.

Work Efficiency

If an Amey officer can group together a number of defects in an area or along the same path.

Status of Route

The inspecting Amey officer will consider the range of users who can use the route.

Public Benefit

If the Amey officer believes from past experience that resolving the issue will be of particular public benefit.

Ploughing & Cropping

Alleged breaches of legislation will normally be inspected within 10 working days of receiving the report.

Maintenance Prioritisation

Once the location, nature and responsibility for rectifying the defect are confirmed, remedial action will be taken either by the landowner or Amey Herefordshire.

Landowner Responsibility

- Maintaining stiles and gates
- Cutting back of overgrowth
- Keeping paths clear of general obstructions
- Complying with ploughing and cropping legislation

Landowners will generally be requested to clear the obstruction within 2 to 6 weeks depending on the nature of the problem. If not rectified within the given time period, further action may be taken in accordance with the Public Rights of Way Enforcement protocol.

Herefordshire Council Responsibility

- Installation and maintenance and improvement of signposts and waymarker posts
- Maintenance of watercourse crossings
- Maintenance of path surfaces (unless deliberately damaged) including clearance of undergrowth

Many simple defects (e.g waymarking, small scale vegetation clearance) can be resolved immediately, either by the Amey Officer dealing with the case or the local Parish Path Officer.

Due to limited resources, work that needs to be carried out by the Public Rights of Way maintenance teams is prioritised in the following categories.

Hazard – Within 48 hours
Priority 1 – Within 3 months
Priority 2 – Within 1 year
Priority 3 – Within 18 months