



Network Maintenance Management Plan

Annex B
Footways, Cycle Tracks and Public Rights of Way



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B.1 Introduction to the maintenance of Footways, Cycleways and Public Rights of Way (PROW)

As detailed in the Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy, Central Bedfordshire Council is responsible for the maintenance of;

- 2472 kilometres of metalled/surfaced footways, urban footpath and alleyways (including shared use facilities for pedestrians and cyclists), in both urban and rural environments.
- 32 kilometres of off road metalled cycle tracks in both urban and rural environments (most cycle tracks are shared use).
- 1350 kilometres of public rights of way [PROW], comprising nearly 1000 km of footpaths, 330 km of bridleways, 25 km of byways as well as other routes that have public access rights through formal permissive agreements. The PROW network is the main means by which residents and visitors access the countryside from their community and further afield respectively. As well as this leisure purpose, they also connect to local amenities such as shops and schools and link neighbouring communities.

The management of footways, cycleways and PROW contribute to key objectives of the Council. Public rights of way form part of the highway network. “The Council, as Highway Authority, has a statutory responsibility to assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of any Highway” (Highways Act 1980 section 130), and this includes all public rights of way as well as public roads. CBC has integrated the management of Rights of Way and of cycleways with the management of all other public highways. This Annex supersedes CBCs “Rights of Way Maintenance and Improvement Policy”.

Central Bedfordshire’s document “Connecting Spaces: Rights of Way” should be read for additional details on the legal background, division of responsibilities and the Council’s improvement strategy for Rights of Way. The extent of the duty to maintain (Highways Act 1980 section 41) requires that Rights of Way should be kept in such a state as to be safe and fit for ordinary traffic which could reasonably be expected to use it. In practice, the decision as to what surface to provide, is the Highway Authority’s and will be influenced by the level of use and its legal status. There is no obligation to provide a metalled surface or similar on a byway to enable the public to use the route with vehicles.

Some PROW are privately maintainable to a higher status. Dual liability can exist where the Highway Authority is only responsible for maintenance of the PROW to the public status. If a landowner, for example, has provided a sealed surface for vehicular use on a farm track that has public bridleway rights, the Highway Authority cannot be held responsible for maintenance beyond that required for reasonable bridleway use.

When the surface is disturbed and planted as part of agricultural practice, farmers and landholders have a legal requirement to reinstate the path within a set period of time.

The council works closely with land owners to ensure that public rights of way are open and available for use at all times and, generally, the majority of landowners comply with their legal responsibilities. However, for those exceptional cases, an enforcement policy is in place to ensure the reinstatement and Notices may be served against a landowner and costs recovered as a final sanction.

B.1.1 Walking strategy (LTP Appendix E)

The Walking Strategy provides a policy framework to support an increase in walking as a sustainable mode of transport in Central Bedfordshire, addressing key issues such as access to facilities and promotion of health in local communities. The strategy references the spatial planning documents for the area, as generated by the Development Strategy to ensure a coherent strategic approach to transport planning.

The Walking Strategy aims to promote an increase in the number of people walking by looking at three objectives:

- Improve the quality of the pedestrian environment
- Improve the safety of pedestrians
- Increase awareness of the benefits of walking

For each of these objectives a series of policies has been produced to set out the Authorities approach to promoting walking.

B.2 Footway, Cycleway and PROW Network Hierarchy

In accordance with the recommendations of Well Managed Highway Infrastructure, and taking into account Council policy documents, the Council has adopted the network hierarchy for the footways. This hierarchy enables the targeting of surveying and the prioritising of work on footways. The cycleways and Rights of Way are not classified into a hierarchy in the same way, but the cycleways are categorised according to their type and the Rights of Way are footpath, bridleway and byway.

B.2.1 Footway Hierarchy

This hierarchy is to provide a cost effective and auditable maintenance plan and its definition reflects the needs, priorities and levels of use of each route within the off-street network and in particular the needs of vulnerable users.

Category	Category Name	Description
1(a)	Prestige Walking Zones	Areas of towns that attract high levels of pedestrian traffic and have a high public space and street scene contribution.
1	Primary Walking Routes	Busy urban shopping and business areas and main pedestrian roads/ streets serving schools and colleges (which have the designation of 'safer route').
2	Secondary Walking Routes	Routes through local areas feeding into primary routes, local shopping centres etc. that have reasonable usage.
3	Link Route	Linking local access footways through urban areas and busy rural footways.
4	Local Access Route	Footways associated with short estate roads and cul-de-sacs that have little pedestrian traffic.

- A route or section of a route may be reallocated within the hierarchy in response to a change in local circumstances of a relatively permanent nature. A hierarchy review to include such circumstances may be delegated to the Service Provider by the Traffic Manager.
- Permanent alteration of a route's status within the network hierarchy shall take place following the annual review.
- Temporary alterations of a route's status within the network hierarchy shall only take place for short periods (not longer than 18 months) at the discretion of the Traffic Manager and will not be changed within the hierarchies. All temporary alterations shall be documented centrally by the Traffic Manager and disseminated to stakeholders by the service provider.

B.2.2 Cycleway Categories

CBC maintained cycle routes include all National Cycle Routes, Black Bridge in Leighton Route, Riverside Walk in Leighton Buzzard.

Category	Description
A	Promoted cycle route utilising the carriageway. The route can be identified by signage and lining, either in the form of cycle symbols or advisory cycle lanes. There may also be specific measures at junctions to give advantage to cyclists. For these refer to the section of the NMMP relating to the road on which the cycle route is located.



B	Cycle tracks routing over bituminous footways that may or may not be contiguous with the carriageway. The use of all cycle tracks is shared with pedestrians and there may be segregation through lining or kerbing.
C	Cycle tracks running over non-bituminous (usually aggregate) paths that are not contiguous with a carriageway. Such tracks may not be designated as public highway but are maintained by the authority.

B.2.2.1 - Cycling Strategy (from Local Transport Plan LTP 3 Appendix F)

The Cycling Strategy (CS) provides a policy framework to support improvements to support an increase in cycling as a sustainable mode of transport in Central Bedfordshire. The strategy references the spatial planning documents for the area, as generated by the Local Plan to ensure a coherent strategic approach to transport planning.

The Cycling Strategy aims to promote an increase in the number of people cycling by looking at four objectives:

- Improve the quality of the cycling environment
- Improve the safety and perceived safety of cycling
- Increase awareness of the benefits of cycling
- Increase access to a bicycle

For each of these objectives a series of policies has been produced to set out the Authority's approach to promoting cycling. These policies shall be given due consideration in the NMMP as they will affect how the network is managed and repair works prioritised, the main policies affecting network management and maintenance are:

Policy CS2: Network Hierarchy:

Investment into the provision of new cycle infrastructure will be subject to a route's position within the network hierarchy. Urban areas will be prioritised over more rural locations and route treatments applied commensurate with the characteristics of the particular link being developed.

Policy CS3: Maintenance of the Network:

Maintenance of the cycle network is the responsibility of Central Bedfordshire Council. Priority for the maintenance of the network will be determined by the hierarchy of routes and will involve resurfacing and filling in potholes, the cutting back of planting and gritting in winter months, where necessary.

The hierarchy referred to in the above is table 6.1 Cycle Network Hierarchy in the LTP Appendix F Cycling Strategy and includes all routes including roads and PROW on which cyclists ride.

B.2.3 Types of Public Rights of Way

ROW Type	Distance miles (Km)	User allowed
Footpath (FP)	679 miles (1086km)	On foot only (with/without a dog or pushchair)
Bridleway (BW)	250 miles (400km)	On foot, riding or leading a horse, or bicycle
Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT)	16 miles (26km)	On foot, riding or leading a horse, bicycle or in any road-legal vehicle driven by a legally entitled driver

B.3 Footway, Cycleway and PROW Defect Categories

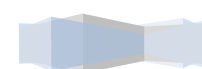
Defects on the Footways, cycleway and PROW are to be assessed with the reference to the Risk Matrix from the NMMP Core document - 12.0 Defect Categorisation.

Nationally the definitions of Category 0 and 1 defects have, and continue to be tested through the courts. It shall however be remembered that a test of dangerousness is one of reasonable foresight of harm to users of the highway, therefore, in considering the defectiveness of a footway, cycleway or footpath surface defect, recognition must be given to the type of user using the path. In particular consideration must be given to cyclists and equestrian users. When checking for defects, all users of the Footway, Cycleway or PROW shall be considered, including cyclists, equestrian users and other non-motorised users, as well as disabled and elderly users.

Where a promoted cycle route runs on the carriageway the defect criteria will be as defined in NMMP Annex A Carriageway, Road Markings and Studs.

From NMMP Core document - 12.0 Defect Categorisation:-

Degree of Deficiency	Timeframe for action
Category 0 Defects	Emergency make safe response in 2 hours
Category 1 Defects	These require prompt attention and will require a permanent repair to be made within 5 days of the defect being assessed.
Category 2 Defects	All other defects. These should be prioritised and considered for repair within planned programmes of work.



B.3.1 Definition of Footway, Cycleway and PROW surface defects at investigatory level

Investigatory level defect of Footway, Cycleway and Public Right of Way

A difference of level in a bound surface with approximately vertical sides, where material has been lost, and where any surface dimension in two perpendicular directions exceeds 100mm and depth exceeds 20mm.

A difference of level in an unbound surface, where material has been lost, and where any surface dimension in two perpendicular directions exceeds 100mm and depth exceeds 40mm.

On natural, bare earth or vegetated surfaces, a hole in the surface, where material has been lost and where the dimension of the hole in two perpendicular directions exceeds 150mm and the depth exceeds 150mm or where with linear damage greater than 40mm in depth across the path which leaves less than 0.5m undamaged.

A difference in vertical level between adjacent slabs, or between adjacent slabs and other projections such as surface boxes and the like, exceeding 20mm, including slabs which rock dangerously, missing or collapse.

Ironwork and sunken covers more than 20mm.

Other defects which may constitute a defect at investigatory level include but are not limited to:

- Cracks in asphalt surfaces that are greater than 25mm in width
- Kerbs that are missing or broken
- Damaged pedestrian guard rails, barriers or fences or other issues which constitute a danger such as overhanging vegetation

Any defect with utility apparatus assessed as Cat 0 or 1 shall require the utility provider to be notified by the CBC Streetworks Team immediately and requested to attend or make the defect safe within 24 hours. This shall be undertaken with reference and in accordance with Section 81 of the New Roads and Streetworks Act 1991.

Where defects with potentially serious consequences for network safety are made safe by means of temporary signing or repair, arrangements should be made for a special inspection regime to ensure the continued integrity of the signing or repair is maintained, until a permanent repair can be made.

B.4 Footway, Cycleway and PROWs Inspections

The inspection regime has two constituent parts, Highway Inspections and Area Team Inspections (and an associated Inspection Manual). The Highway Inspections are programmed and undertaken by the highways inspectors with the assistance of other officers as required.

Assessment Process	Contribution
Highway Inspections	To comply with statutory obligations
	To meet the user's needs for safety
Area Team Inspections	To ensure availability
	To achieve integrity
	To maintain reliability
	To minimise cost over time
	To maximise value to the community
	To maximise environmental contribution

All information from the network inspection regime, together with any immediate or programmed action, including nil returns, shall be recorded. Such information shall, whenever systems are available be recorded in a GIS format so that it may be utilised together with other relevant information in the review of the maintenance strategy, practices and the development of works programmes. Accurate recording of inspection results is crucial for defending the authority against third party claims.

The Highway Inspection Regime shall be subject to annual review.



B.4.1 – Footway, Cycleway and PROW Highway Inspections

Highway inspections are undertaken to identify defects likely to create danger or serious inconvenience to users of the network or the wider community. The risk of danger is assessed on site and categorised so as to allow for an appropriate priority response.

Examples of Defects on Footways, Cycleways and PROW

Surface defects including holes, cracks, ridges, penetrating weeds and roots, steps, etc.

Kerbs and edge defects

Overhanging and encroaching vegetation restricting usable height/width (impeding use of wheelchairs, baby buggies, etc.) or restricting sight lines (raising the risk of collisions)

Missing, loose or inappropriate covers e.g. domestic grade or incorrect gulley covers for situation, loose slabs and setts etc.

Dangerous utility apparatus e.g. covers, exposed wiring

Missing or damaged guard rails

Obstructions including A-boards, bins, etc.

Ponding water

Inappropriate cambers and excessive slopes

Damaged or inappropriate access control barriers

Dangerous debris on the surface

Frequency of Highway Inspections on Footways, Cycleways & PROW

Feature	Category	Frequency	Method
Off street Footways	1(a)	1 month	Walked
	1	1 month	Walked
	2	3 months	Walked
	3	6 months	Walked
	4	1 year	Walked
Footway adjacent to the carriageway		As per adjacent carriageway	Driven/walked (walked at least once per annum)
Cycleway	A	As per adjacent carriageway	Driven
Cycleway	9B and C	Twice annually during Quarters 2 and 4	Walked/cycled Quarter 2 concentrate on vegetation encroachment and network integrity Quarter 4 on surface quality and defects
Public Rights of Way	BOAT	Annually	Walked/cycled
	BW with significant cycle use (Usually bound)	Annually	Walked/cycled
	BW	Every 2 years or Responding to Notification	Walked/cycled
	FP	Every 2 years or Responding to Notification	Walked

Driven inspections shall be undertaken by the passenger (with the driver's assistance) from a moving vehicle. In busy urban areas, it may be difficult to obtain the necessary level of accuracy from vehicle-based inspections and walking/cycled should be used. A lone inspector may undertake walked and cycled inspections.

Additional inspections may be necessary in response to user or community concern, as a result of incidents or extreme weather conditions, or in light of monitoring information, such as an abnormally high occurrence of damages claims or if the particular characteristics make a cycleway more likely to deteriorate than other similar assets in the allocated category. These will be identified through the risk management process. A higher degree of inspection may be considered jointly with the service provider and the Council's Insurance Officers. Consideration of increased frequency of inspection should

also occur on access routes to various features which will draw additional traffic; these features include but are not limited to:

- Access to schools, hospitals and medical centres
- Vulnerable users or people with special needs
- Ceremonial routes and special events

Driven inspections of footways are only to occur for footways adjacent to a road carriageway. They shall be undertaken by the passenger (with the driver's assistance) from a moving vehicle. In busy urban areas, it may be difficult to obtain the necessary level of accuracy from vehicle-based inspections and walking should be used. A lone inspector may undertake walked and cycled inspections. All inspections shall be carried out slowly enough for defects to be seen.

Where carriageway and footway intersect, for example at defined crossing points at junctions, the more frequent inspection regime shall always take precedence in determining the inspection frequencies, defect definition and responses. This principle shall also apply to intersections between carriageways and cycle tracks and between cycle tracks and footways.

B.4.2 Footway, Cycleway and PROW Area Team Inspections

Area Team Inspections are focused on ensuring that the network meets the needs of users and include more detailed specific inspections of particular highways elements, to ensure that they meet the levels of service defined in the Highways Asset Management Policy. These inspections may be undertaken in response to:

- Community concern
- As a result of incidents or extreme weather conditions
- In light of monitoring information, such as an abnormally high occurrence of damages claims
- If the particular characteristics make a carriageway more likely to deteriorate than other similar assets in the allocated category

Responding to these is a part of the risk management process.

All components across the various categories within the network shall be maintained within the overall asset management strategy to ensure best value and optimal efficiency.

Operational efficiency is primarily a network management consideration but aspects are closely related to maintenance, for example:

- Facilities for walking, cycling may be discontinuous or poorly defined e.g. opportunities for installation of dropped kerbs or textured paving should be taken
- Street lighting is poorly positioned for users of the footway

Opportunities shall be taken to address integrity issues identified by the survey, for example:

- Replacing signs and re-lining
- Installing dropped kerbs and texture paving
- Modifying layouts

B.4.2.1 – PROW Best Value Performance Indicator Survey

Although this is no longer a national indicator, CBC continues to use BVPI [Best Value Performance Indicator] 178 – Ease of Use, whereby a 5% sample snapshot of its public path network is assessed twice a year (May and November). The results shall be made publically available and used to measure performance year on year, to set future targets and to support bids for funding.

Results shall be considered by area rights of way officers with the expectation that issues that can be resolved within annual budgets are prioritised for that year or logged for completion in the following year.

B.4.2.2 – Keeping Footway, Cycleway and PROW Inspection records

Records should be kept of all inspections undertaken including nil returns and whether they have been inspected on foot as opposed to by vehicle. Such information shall be input onto Insight for Footways and Category A and B Cycleways and onto CAMS databases for Category C cycleways and PROW so that it may be utilised together with other relevant information in the review of the maintenance strategy, practices and the development of works programmes. Accurate recording of inspection results are crucial in assisting a defence against any third party claims.

B.5 - Network Maintenance Types on Footways Cycleways and PROW

B.5.1 – Reactive and Planned Maintenance

For all Footway, Cycleway and PROW defects, a risk based approach will be undertaken, preferably by a CBC officer on site. Using the Risk Matrix in the NMMP Core document, the defect will be categorised and an appropriate response identified.

Defects in the other elements of the highway assets (for example lighting and structures) are described in the relevant asset Section of this Plan. Where an identified defect falls outside the described types, the Area Team shall undertake appropriate measures they see fit to render the defect safe in line with the Risk Matrix in the NMMP Core document.

The duty to clear land (including the highway) of litter and refuse falls under Section 89 of the Environment Protection Act 1990 and the Litter (Animal Droppings) Order 1991.



Major littering and fly tipping shall be dealt with by Waste Services Team who may decide at their discretion to install and service waste bins. Such bins shall be located at points within 30m of a vehicular access. Requests by Parish Councils for litter bins where the Parish Council consents to fund their servicing costs shall be directed to Waste Services.

B.5.1.1 – Potholes in bound surfaces

Category 0 and 1 defects (representing an immediate or imminent hazard) shall be permanently rectified as follows:

- Clean and cut back square or rectangular to a solid construction (saw cut to markings),
- Remove and brush out loose material and bond coat with cationic emulsion containing at least 60% bitumen giving particular attention to vertical faces.
- Lay preferably hot bituminous material and compact with the appropriate compacting equipment.

A cold lay material may be used as a permanent measure on Footways, Cycleways and PROW.

B.5.1.2 – Potholes in unbound surfaces

Category 0 and 1 defects (representing an immediate or imminent hazard) shall be permanently rectified with material to match existing construction. All material used shall be suitably compacted with appropriate compacting equipment.

Due to the remote nature of some PROWS, compaction will be by hand and therefore infill material should be left slightly proud of the PROW surface to ensure sufficient material is present to allow for natural compaction without potential for water ponding.

B.5.1.3 - Collapse

A physical barrier shall be erected around the hazard. If necessary, control measures shall be put into place to guide users safely around the collapse. If users have to be directed into the carriageway this may require the use of Stop/Go boards, temporary traffic signals. The means of permanent repair shall then be assessed.

B.5.1.4 - Kerb Defects

Category 0 and 1 defects (representing an immediate or imminent hazard) shall be rectified as follows:

Re-set kerbs or replace missing kerbing with fast setting mortar or similar. Reinstatement of carriageway and footway, cycleway or PROW with appropriate permanent materials.

B.5.1.5 Inspection Covers (and other Statutory Undertakers apparatus)

Category 0 and 1 defects (representing an immediate or imminent hazard) shall be rectified as follows:

- A physical barrier shall be erected around the hazard. If necessary, control measures shall be put into place to guide users safely around the missing cover. If users have to be directed into the carriageway this may require the use of Stop/Go boards, temporary traffic signals. The means of permanent repair shall then be assessed.
- If the apparatus is the responsibility of a statutory undertaker, the defect shall be referred to the utility company by the Streetworks Team. The defect will be monitored to ensure it does not deteriorate and change category.
- If the apparatus is the responsibility of the Highway Authority then a permanent repair shall be instigated.

B.5.1.6 Signs and markings

Signs that give direction or warnings to pedestrians and cyclists are maintained as to be clearly visible. Surface markings should be replaced as soon as their visibility is less than 50% of the original surface area.

B.5.1.7 Mud and other deposits

Many construction and agricultural activities can result in mud or other deposits being brought on to the highway. Such deposits can only be tolerated provided that they do not present an immediate danger to users of the highway. Those who have caused the deposit must also demonstrate reasonable process is in place to manage the risks they may cause. This may include warning signage or wheel washes.

Category 0 and 1 defects (representing an immediate or imminent hazard) shall be rectified as follows:

- The deposit shall be assessed and appropriate remedial action taken to make safe. Under Section 149 of the Highways Act 1980 the Council, as the Highway Authority, may recover any expenses reasonably incurred from the person by whom it was deposited.

For deposits that do not represent an immediate hazard to users of the highway, an approach to those causing the deposition will be made, insisting that they comply with Section 149 of the Highways Act 1980. If reasonable measures are not undertaken to rectify the situation, then the deposition shall be removed by the Highway Authority as soon as reasonably practicable and any expenses reasonably incurred will be recovered.



B 5.1.8 Vegetation

Where vegetation growth is such that a Footway, Cycleways and PROW becomes impassable then this will be recorded as a defect and prioritised accordingly. Obstructions including those caused by fallen trees that are rooted in the Highway shall be assessed in accordance with the Risk Matrix.

When vegetation rooted in the highway is inspected and found to be reducing the available width it may be cleared as part of routine maintenance. It may be added to the seasonal vegetation programme at the discretion of the Area Team.

Where the encroaching vegetation is not rooted in the Highway then CBC will endeavor to identify the owner and request that that the vegetation is cut back. When necessary the vegetation is to be cut back by CBC Highways. The owner is to be invoiced if identified.

B.5.1.9 Seasonal Vegetation Clearance (SVC)

An annual programme of surface vegetation clearance, of around a quarter of the PROW network and some cycleways, is undertaken by specialist contractors, land owners and volunteers; the programme is built up from inspections and local requests. Most paths are cut twice during May to September but can be supplemented by clearance by trained Paths People and Places (P3) volunteer groups, or other volunteer groups.

The present SVC contract specifies 2 cuts per year on selected paths, with an option on a third cut if budgets allow. The first cut starts mid May and finishes at the end of June. The second cut starts early September and finishes mid October.

Requests to include a new path within the SVC programme are subject to the approval of Area Teams and can be reassessed on contract renewal. In addition, the Council has the facility to offer a landowner a fixed priced contract to undertake at least one cut following harvest on PROW on their own land.

Although the trimming of hedges and overgrowth is not the responsibility of CBC, Area Teams shall have discretion to include this task in the SVC contract to ensure access is maintained throughout the year. Such work shall only occur during the second SVC cut to avoid work to hedges during the bird nesting season of 1st March to 31st August.

Trees that are rooted in the Highway are to be managed according to the forthcoming Highways Tree Policy.

B.5.1.10 Seasonal Cycleway sweeping

An annual programme of cycleway sweeping is undertaken on selected cycleways including Route 6, Route 51 and Blackbridge Cycleway.

B.5.1.11 Maintaining the Signage on Public Rights of Way

B.5.1.11.1 Signposts

Signposting of paths help promote the PROW network and guides the public using the paths. Signposts are installed where a PROW meets the metalled carriageway.

The Council may opt not to install or replace a damaged sign and shall record the reasons why, for example in urban situations with agreement of the town/parish council.

Arms may have specific destination and/or distance information, the wording of which to be agreed with local Councils and P3 groups. The distance information will always be shown in Imperial units of measure (following the *Traffic Signs manual Chapter 7*), and may additionally show in metric units, according to the latest guidance from the Department of Transport.

B.5.1.11.2 Cross authority routes, CBC promoted routes & circular walks

The Council promotes the following long distance walking routes which cross Central Bedfordshire and our neighboring authorities and is responsible for maintaining the bespoke signage within its area:

- Icknield Way
- Icknield Way Trail
- Greensand Ridge Walk

The Council also promotes 12 circular routes that are marked with Circular Route (CR) plaques above the waymark discs. Each route has an accompanying map which is available on-line.

Other promoted routes not maintained by Central Bedfordshire Council;

- The Bunyan Trail running from Upper Sundon to Bedford and developed by the Long Distance Walkers Association
- The Kingfisher Way, developed by the Ivel and Ouse Countryside Project (now the BRCC)
- The Hicca Way, developed by ACORN volunteers from Arlesey

Routes that cross authority boundaries have consistent signs across each authority. For routes that are not promoted by CBC the responsibility for waymarking and for producing leaflets and maps remains vested with the group or organisation that funded or developed them.

B.5.1.11.3 Waymarking

Waymark posts aid users navigate PROW for example from one side of a large field to the other.



The location of waymark posts was initially chosen on the assumption that users carry a 1:25,000 scale Ordnance Survey Map, with posts providing an aid rather than a replacement to map-based navigation. However, posts have proved very popular with users and most landowners and consequently the Council has increased the number of posts with a yellow painted top so that it becomes possible to navigate the Network without a map.

Note: Within Central Bedfordshire waymark posts typically stand 1.5m out the ground, are timber and feature a waymark disk and yellow painted top. There are some 0.6m high “stumpy” posts along the network and several tall waymark posts in locations where the topography means that a shorter post would not be visible.

Locations for waymark posts are determined following surveys work and at the request of users or landowners who notice users deviating from the ROW legal line.

Posts shall also be installed at both ends of cross field paths to aid farmers when reinstating. Waymark posts will not be located at points along paths when there is no other choice of direction to make. When creating a new PROW, CBC shall install discs with the words ‘NEW ROUTE’ in the centre of the arrow and map-boards shall also be erected. The words ‘NEW ROUTE’ shall be removed on re-publication of the relevant Ordnance Survey map or consolidation of the Definitive Map.

Where a used route anomaly exists the Council shall consider negotiating a permissive path agreement and, once in place, install permissive waymarks until the anomaly can be resolved.

B.5.1.11.4 Other signage

CBC shall erect notices to promote appropriate use of PROW, examples of which include “No parking”, “No motorcycles”, “No littering and “Please clean up after your dog”. The Council may also invite landowners to erect notices, and fund their provision, examples of which include; “Even your dog can scare or harm farm animal”.

B.5.1.12 PROW Furniture (gates, stiles and bollards)

Furniture includes the provision and maintenance of gates, stiles, bollards, barriers, benches, interpretation panels, litter and dog waste bins. Not all items of furniture are the property or responsibility of CBC.

The Council’s policy and practice on gates and stiles is set out in the document “Countryside Access Team, Structures Policy: *Achieving least restrictive access on Bedfordshire’s Rights of Way.*”

When considering the installation or replacement of a barrier the Council will seek to provide a gap that is least restrictive whilst providing best value. The British Standard 5709 details a hierarchy of: gap, staggered barrier, gate, kissing gate. Where an existing stile cannot be upgraded to allow access then it should be replaced with a barrier that

complies with this British Standard. The specification for gates to be used is in the appendices.

When installing new furniture on a PROW a landowner must obtain prior authorisation. An application form for requesting authorisation is included in the Service Structures Policy.

B.5.1.13 Maintenance of furniture for stock control

Most gates and stiles are owned and installed by landowners to prevent the escape of livestock. The Council has no statutory duty to maintain them but to ensure that they are maintained by the landowner. It has an obligation to provide at least 25% of the cost of repair or replacement.

B.5.1.14 Upgrading from stiles to gates

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 and the Equality Act 2010 place a duty on Councils to consider the needs of persons with mobility problems. Under the Act a Council can pay or arrange for furniture where it provides an improvement for people with mobility problems.

Metal kissing gates in particular require little or no maintenance and reduce the landowner or occupiers maintenance liability.

All such works will be undertaken in a consultative manner as the Council's relationship with farmers, as partners in providing access to the countryside, is very important.

B.5.1.14 Furniture at the boundaries with the road network

Where there are issues of unauthorised vehicular access onto a PROW then a structure can be justified under Section 66 of Highways Act 1980 i.e. protecting the users and preventing damage to the surface.

B.5.1.15 Benches

CBC sporadically has to consider requests for the installation of benches. Respect would be given to space requirements as a PROW should not be obstructed. The maintenance responsibility for installed benches shall remain with the body that provided it. The landowner's permission must be given.

B.5.1.16 Interpretation panels

Landowner consent for the installation of interpretation panels shall be required and a location selected that does not create an obstruction. The future maintenance of the panel lies with the body that provided it.



B.5.2 - Programmed Maintenance

In the design of a scheme the implications for maintenance is one of the most important factors considered. The use of standard details is one of the ways that we insure uniformity across the network as this reduces construction and maintenance costs. This also has safety benefits in designing out long-term risk.

Area	Description
Safety	The work should be carried out considering the safety of all users of the Footway, Cycleway or PROW. Consideration should be given to pedestrians, cyclists, and equestrian riders etc. Although safety is covered as part of a safety audit, other maintenance factors such as street lighting should also be considered as part of the safety considerations of the maintenance audit.
Serviceability	Are the works fit for its proposed purpose? All maintenance and improvement works shall be easily accessed by the user i.e. There is little point in installing a sign that will be readily obscured by overhanging vegetation.
Sustainability	Are the maintenance/improvement works necessary and will these works be easily maintained in the future. There must be an emphasis on reusing/recycling materials

The results of all inspections are to be communicated for integration (and prioritisation) into the forward 4 year Programmed Maintenance programme. If the identified maintenance items are not contained in this programme, then the rectification costs shall be included in the improvement scheme budget.

“Total package” thinking promotes the inclusion of works for all highway assets when undertaking programmed works. This facilitates works which have the potential to add value at minimum cost, for example by the inclusion of dropped kerbs to assist disabled people. The scope for inclusion of such works will depend upon the key aims of the scheme and available resources.

B.5.2.1 Programmed Maintenance of the Surface of PROW

The authority has a duty to maintain and has the power to improve the surface of all highway paths sympathetic to their composition and character. Such paths have a variety of surface treatments, including grass, aggregate, road arisings, bitumen macadam and surface dressed.

Surfaces can be repaired in a number of ways. For poorly drained or potholed natural surfaces the first priority is to increase the amount of light and wind getting to the location by clearing vegetation clearance. The second is to improve the drainage.

Grass surfaces may require levelling and/or reseeding and gradients and side slopes may need to be reduced. These approaches shall be considered before changing the type of surface as this will have long term maintenance cost implications.

B.5.2.1.1 Maintenance of PROW with private vehicular rights

Many ROW run on routes such as drives and farm tracks that are subject to private rights. Where this occurs the Authority shall plan maintenance works in respect of the public status rather than to enable private vehicular access.

B.6 Additional Policies relating to Footways, Cycleways and PROW

B.6.1 Duty to maintain the surface of Byways (BOATS)

Most Byways within Central Bedfordshire were formally Roads Used as Public Paths [RUPPs] and as such are highways maintainable at public expense.

In most circumstances this policy would mean pedestrian, cyclist or equestrian use. Where a byway is adjacent to properties then it may require a surface suitable for daily vehicular use.

The Authority shall consider making Traffic Regulation Orders [TROs] on routes receiving significant damage from vehicular use, whether lawful or unlawful, should appropriate management and voluntary restrictions prove ineffective.

Such restrictions shall be for the purpose of protecting the highway from damage and shall be minimal in terms of vehicle types excluded and period of time that will protect the byway from the previously suffered damage.

B.6.2 Permissive cycling on Public Footpaths

The use of a good proportion of its public footpath network by cyclists may be resolved by negotiating agreements with landowners, after consideration of the suitability of a path for a shared use and the appropriateness of the surface and structures.

B.6.3 Cycling on Public Bridleways

Where a Bridleway is more popular with cyclists than equestrian riders, or where there is a strategic case for resurfacing an existing Bridleway, the authority may undertake improvement works whilst ensuring legal users are not disadvantaged as a result. This will be done in consultation with landowners, the British Horse Society, parish council and ward members.



B.6.4 Dogs on PROW

The Authority encourages responsible dog walking across the PROW network. It has introduced and will enforce dog control orders to help improve local green spaces, including the public rights of way.

B.6.5 Boundaries adjacent to the highway

In the case of landowner disputes the Authority shall only become involved to protect Highway Rights.

Version	Author	Checked	Approved	Comment
16 th Nov 2017	C Nicol	J Cross		Revised draft for Committee



Contact us...

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