

Northumberland National Park and County Joint Local Access Forum

Position Statement on Surfaces

Scope

This position statement sets out general advice from the Northumberland JLAF, with regard to the surfacing of new, permissive (non-statutory) paths and routes, bearing in mind their intended use and length. It may also be relevant where extensive repairs / alterations are necessary to existing PROW e.g. public footpaths, public bridleways, restricted byways, BOATs and UCRs*.

Principles

- 1) New routes and / or paths should be surfaced in keeping with users' needs catering for the full range of uses wherever possible.
- 2) Surfaces should be in keeping with the surrounding landscape and the geographical context in which they are located.
- 3) Rural and urban locations are very different and the choice of surface must reflect this. Particular care should be given to the surface of the access network within the urban / rural fringe to avoid the further spread of urbanisation into the countryside.
- 4) The selected surface should take the ideal of shared-use into account, where shared-use is desirable, achievable and relevant. It should be recognised that for each user group there is a preferred surface, which should be used when the route is for that user group alone.
- 5) The surface for a shared-use route must inevitably be a compromise unless there is sufficient width to provide strips for different uses.

General Guidance

- Good drainage is essential to ensure that routes and paths are usable all year round. This should be a key consideration in decision-making with regard to appropriate surfacing and maintenance.
- To ensure that the need for repair is kept to minimum, surfaces should be as natural as possible.
- Where a new shared-use route is created, it should have connections appropriate for shared use with the rest of the access network.
- Route width is an important consideration in decision making as, the wider the route, the easier it is to provide surfaces for shared use.
- The JLAF is aware that a wide range of materials and techniques is available for route and path construction. In reaching decisions on materials and techniques consideration should be given to factors such as: suitability, durability, overflow by water, drainage, cost, aesthetics, minimising environmental impact, using local materials and the surface preferences and needs of different users.

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Approved by the JLAF at their meeting on 22 April 2010

*PROW: Public Rights of Way; BOAT: Byways Open to All Traffic; UCR: Unclassified County Road

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