

St Austell Business Improvement District

Public Rights of Way (PRoW) Maintenance - Service Baseline

Responsible authority: Cornwall Council

Head of Service: Peter Marsh (Environment Service Director)

Responsible Officer: Jon James (Environment Manager)
Toby Lowe (Countryside Team Leader)

Service Provided	Works are provided as part of Cornwall Council's statutory duty to maintain, assert and protect the 4,300Km of Public Rights of Way (PRoW) (Footpaths, Bridleways & Byways) in Cornwall. Work is prioritised on a needs basis across the county, with funding available for the upkeep of the South West Coast Path, addressing Health & Safety concerns on the inland network alongside some routine maintenance. Occasional capital funds are available to improve the standard of existing PRoW. Cornwall Council (the Client) delegates the maintenance and protection functions of managing countryside assets (including Public Rights of Way network) to Cormac Solutions Ltd (the Provider).
Number of Staff & Equipment	Currently the county is split into six areas each one covered by a dedicated Countryside Ranger employed by Cormac Solutions. These are supported by two additional office based Countryside Information Officers who deal with incoming enquiries, log issues as they arise and respond to the public.
Specification	<p><i>Maintenance of Public Rights of Way</i></p> <p>The Council has a duty to maintain Public Rights of Way to a standard commensurate with their use as footpaths, bridleways and byways open to all traffic, ensuring safe use to the public throughout the town including the BID area. This involves all issues relating to surface conditions including vegetation and some structures (i.e., bridges, boardwalks). Landowners are responsible for side and overhanging vegetation and limitations (stiles & gates) though Cornwall Council do have a liability in some cases to partially assist by providing: i) material items i.e., kits, or ii) financial reimbursement. Cornwall Council complies with the requirements of BS5709 for gaps, gates and stiles and will consider the least limiting structure.</p> <p>Health & Safety issues, hazards and potential dangers are dealt with immediately upon report, if necessary by a Countryside Ranger from another area. A Cormac emergency response gang operates outside working hours providing 24 hour cover for all highways including Public Rights of Way.</p>
	<i>Routine Maintenance</i>

For non-hazardous defects and repairs of a more minor nature, remedial work takes place within allocated budgets as part of ongoing programmed works. This could arise as a result of inspections, follow-ups to temporary responsive repairs and/or third party reports. Typically it involves small areas of surface repair, replacing damaged or missing signage, fixing/replacing/erecting steps, bridges and boardwalks, repairing gullies/drainage, and alerting landowners to problems with limitations (stiles& gates), unlawful obstructions and other 'beside path' issues such as side vegetation.

An aspect of maintenance, routine vegetation trimming extending occasionally into minor footpath works, is also carried out in the BID area under a Local Maintenance Partnership by St Austell Town Council including footpaths 1, 3, 4, 5.

An inventory and record of all maintenance reports/activity is kept on a Countryside Access Management System, proprietary GIS software to help manage the maintenance programme more effectively.

Programmed Maintenance

More significant works (i.e., resurfacing & drainage) are currently identified through reactive inspections. Cornwall Council budgets for improvements are allocated within defined areas according to a priority system (Gold/Silver/Bronze paths) based on criteria such as location, utility, environmental value, use etc.

Other Improvements

Including works above and beyond minimum statutory requirements. Where practicable Cornwall Council look to make improvements to structures and surfaces which aid access to users with disabilities according to recommendations laid out in the Equality Act

Further statutory functions

Cornwall Council is responsible for keeping a legal record of Public Rights of Way through the Definitive Map and Statement, updating the map and making any necessary amendments through various legal processes

Responsible for enforcement

Cornwall Council and its Provider, Cormac Solutions Ltd are charged with taking enforcement action, either informal, or legal as appropriate, against obstructions on Public Rights of Way; surface interference or damage including ploughing and cropping; intimidating or misleading notices; and planning decisions which lead to encroachments on the line of the path.

Responsible for signage

Cornwall Council is responsible for waymarking and maintaining signage on all paths, bridleways and byways according to an

	<p>agreed standard.</p> <p>Also where practical and when financial circumstances permit, Cornwall Council provides bespoke signage directing the public to destinations of interest within the local area.</p>
Performance Measures	<p>To maintain/improve access to the countryside/coast</p> <p>To promote environmental sustainability by providing traffic free routes through towns</p> <p>To increase tourism and raise visitor numbers</p> <p>To encourage outdoor recreation and help meet allied health and well being targets</p>
Boundary Area	St Austell BID Area