

Scoring criteria for Improving Public Access

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Improving Public Access scoring criteria

Important note: Improving Public Access (IPA) **is not opening for applications in 2024.**

The following guidance relates to the 2022 application round when this item was last available. Previous versions of this page can be found at the [Previous versions](#) section of this page.

This section describes the scoring criteria we will use for assessing eligible applications for the Improving Public Access options. IPA is a competitive scheme with higher scoring applications being offered a contract subject to where the threshold score is set each year.

The IPA scoring criteria document, including further detail on how to apply the scoring, is available separately for download (see below). Applicants are recommended to read the scoring criteria to gain an understanding of the schemes priorities.



[Improving Public Access 2022 Scoring Criteria \(MS Word, Size: 263.8 kB\)](#)

doc_external_url: <https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/Improving-public-access---scoring-criteria---2022.pdf>

Your path proposal will score points depending how well it meets the criteria which are grouped into 4 themes summarised below:

Connectivity

This criteria is designed to recognise how well the proposals will contribute to the improvement of strategically important paths and connectivity to the wider path network, features and destinations of significant interest and importance. In particular:

- a core path, a link to or between core paths (see local authority or national park authority for a map of core paths in your area).
- a path providing access to a point of interest or a specific feature or destination such as a significant viewpoint, a local landmark, park, nature reserve etc.
- a path which links directly to other paths, including creating new or improved path links to other paths at the boundary of the landholding unit, forming effective connections to another path or the wider path network.

Benefits and Value

This criteria recognises the range of benefits and value that a proposal would provide focusing on its location, levels of support for the project, how well it addresses issues and its fit with delivering strategic access objectives relevant to the area.

Accessibility

All projects will aim to provide shared multi-use paths that are as barrier-free and, unobstructed as possible, giving access opportunities to most or all types of users such as walkers, cyclists, horse-riders, wheelchair users, adapted bikes and push-chairs. This criteria is designed to recognise that some proposals may deliver wider benefits than others in respect of improving accessibility and removing obstructions and barriers.

Design Quality

This criteria looks at how well the path proposals and any infrastructure have been designed in the context of the location, anticipated users and environmental factors. The proposal should aim to provide a quality experience for path users, maximising opportunities to enjoy views, natural and cultural features alongside the path, as well as ensuring the experience of walking, cycling, riding or wheeling along the path is good. Building in appropriate drainage is key to the success of a path project and in particular as bigger rain/weather events impact as a result of climate change.

Recent changes

Section	Change
Important Note	Updated to explain IPA will not be open for applications in 2024

Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

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