

# Scoring criteria for Improving Public Access

**This is an old version of the page**

**Date published: 18 January, 2019**

**Date superseded: 25 February, 2021**

For recent changes to this guidance, please see the [bottom of the page](#) .

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## Agri-Environment Climate Scheme scoring criteria – Improving Public Access

**Important Note:** Improving Public Access (IPA) will be reopening for new applications on 1 March 2021 and the guidance will be updated ahead of the reopening. The application round will close on 30 June 2021.

This section describes the scoring criteria we will use for assessing applications with Improving Public Access options.

The score sheet template is available separately for download (see below).



[Agri-Environment Climate Scheme score sheet: Improving Public Access \(PDF, Size: 176.1 kB\)](#)

doc\_external\_url: [https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/ipa\\_improving\\_public\\_access\\_-\\_scoring\\_assessment\\_sheets\\_-\\_jan\\_2017.pdf](https://www.ruralpayments.org/media/resources/ipa_improving_public_access_-_scoring_assessment_sheets_-_jan_2017.pdf)

## Connectivity

This is about the physical links created between the paths proposal and other paths and places.

Your path proposal will score points if it meets one or more of the following requirements:

- will be an improvement to a core path as designated in the local authority or national park authority core paths plan
- will improve a link directly to a designated core path
- forms part of a recognised national route such as (one of Scotland's Great Trails or the National Cycle Network)
- will create links to other paths forming effective, convenient, useable and more extensive local path networks, or long-distance paths
- will create or upgrade paths to a feature(s) of public interest, for example, a viewpoint, loch shore, along a river bank, historic or cultural feature

## Value for money

This recognises the variety of additional and different benefits that can result from the scheme funding and the relationship to scale of path project and associated cost. It ensures that the most effective outputs-per-unit expenditure are generated:

- distance leverage – this will measure the ratio between the length of path to be created or upgraded, as compared to the length of paths that then become better available for public use. This may for instance recognise new paths which open up a ‘missing link’ to make a whole route or path circuit useable, or where generally a relatively short stretch of path-work unlocks the convenient use and quality of a much longer stretch of path
- objectives leverage – this will recognise value for money where the path works will generate leveraged benefits for wider local objectives, such as a local community heritage or tourist trail, or a local wildlife project, or a local recreational initiative
- proportionate and economic level of specification – this will assess and score the extent to which the proposed scale and specifications of the work is appropriate and good value

## Barrier-free provision for shared multi-use of paths

All schemes must aim to provide barrier-free, unobstructed and good-quality paths as far as possible for shared use. This should allow for all types of users where possible (i.e. walkers, cyclists, horse-riders, wheelchair users and push-chairs).

This criterion is designed to recognise that some options may deliver a wider range of benefits than others in these respects of shared multi-use, through:

- removal or avoidance of existing access barriers and obstacles such as, steep gradients, boggy ground, stiles, kissing gates, fences, watercourses and steps
- the extent to which barrier free multi-use is achieved, including enhanced convenience and assistance for users through appropriate provision such as informative signage, suitable seating as resting points, easy to use gates and latches

## Contextual benefits

This assesses the indirect advantages of application proposals in enhancing the quality of experience of path users in their surroundings.

This may be through effective selection and design of routes, or where the access project combines with other concurrent initiatives to enhance the path surroundings:

- design and route maximises the quality and availability of landscape views
- incorporation of visual or heritage route features, such as old walls, hedges, avenues and bridges
- improving public access within eligible rural areas designated as national scenic areas, designed landscapes, local nature reserves, regional parks, country parks, national parks or local landscape designations
- opening or improving public access in association with other Agri-Environment Climate Scheme options or other schemes for enhanced biodiversity, natural interest, environmental management etc within the path corridor
- demonstrates a contribution to other strategic access objectives, such as an outdoor access strategy or an open space strategy, including any aspects that may be raised in comments from the local access authority

## Additional considerations

Assessment and scoring of benefits from collaborative schemes and in addressing multiple and/or strategic objectives:

- active involvement and support from local organisations in project
- any local consultations that have directly assisted in forming proposals
- additional value added such as partner collaboration, contributions, advice and expertise
- prospects for longer-term value, for example, volunteer involvement, follow-on projects or educational use
- the path is a priority route or link in the National Walking and Cycling Network or other strategic plan, or the path provides improved access to popular visitor destinations, or the path contributes to regional strategies such as active travel

## Recent changes

Section	Change
<a href="#">Agri-Environment Climate Scheme scoring criteria</a>	Minor changes made to each section of page to clarify guidance further

## Previous versions

[Previous versions of this page](#)

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