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Access prioritisation

A Strategic Approach to Managing Local Paths in County Durham

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Facts and figures

County Durham is the 6th largest Local Authority in England at 859m². It is the 7th largest by population and has 2200 miles of PROW.

The project

The project, suggested by the LAF and also featured as an action in the 2007 Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWiP), was to look at how to get best value from the PROW network. This was achieved by the use of 'access prioritisation' – a strategic approach to managing local paths in the County. The hope was for the project to achieve the following:

- A prioritised work programme for PROW.
- An evidence base for additional funding.
- An evidence base for when new developments are proposed and land use policies are devised.

This required a raft of information which was sourced from the following:

- Consultations.
 - Stakeholder workshops.
 - On site consultation.
 - Web based consultation.
- On site surveys.
 - Using GIS an online asset database was created.
- Desktop analysis.
 - Existing condition of PROW.
 - Level of use.
 - Potential improvements.
 - Connectivity.
 - Access to facilities.
 - Access to open space.
 - Evidence of local need.

- Technical data.
 - Income deprivation score.
 - Health BMI score.
 - Proximity to allocated sites.
 - Tourism opportunities.

Three projects have been delivered to date:

1. 2009/10 - £27k for 2km of PROW.
2. 2010/11 - £29.5k for 2km round a major development site.
3. 2015/16 - £50k for 3 studies looking at town boundaries.

Overview

- The project has proved to be a valuable and robust tool.
- It is a great evidence base for funding.
- Delivers projects whose value exceeds the investment.
- The methodology can be weighted to suit the circumstances/funding.
- It is a high profile project.