

STOCKPORT COUNCIL'S PROGRESS ON THE REMOVAL OF ACCESS CONTROLS

Report of the Director of Place Management

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. Stockport Council is committed to improving accessibility to allow all residents to access and make use of the trails, routes and areas around the borough in line with our ambition to promote and increase active travel.
- 1.2. However, due to the large number of historic access controls, the Council is aware of access controls still in place which can be inhibiting some legitimate users. Access controls come in a range of forms including: A frames, Gates, Horse steps/stiles and chicanes. They are designed to make it hard for illegitimate users, for example off road motorbike, to access a route, however, are often ineffective in stopping this behaviour.
- 1.3. The Council has devised and adopted an approach to progress the removal and amendment of access controls in Stockport.
- 1.4. This report aims inform ward members on the Council's approach to access controls and provide members with an update on the Council's progress since the adoption of the [Access Controls Policy](#).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. There are different types of access controls in various locations around Stockport and the Access Control Policy provides guidance and further detail on the requirements, considerations and processes for their amendment or removal where necessary to support the council's duty under the Equalities Act 2010.
- 2.2. The amendments to access controls is being brought forward by a range of methods. All new access controls will be developed in line with the policy. When new schemes are developed that encompass current access controls these will be reviewed with controls meeting the access control policy implemented.
- 2.3. Where access controls are identified as needing repair, they will be reviewed under the access control policy and amended if necessary. An allocation of funding for access control amendments is also included in the transport capital programme.
- 2.4. The access control policy sets out clear expectations of the type and placement of access controls on different types of off-road route. The policy aims to give the greatest level of access possible for the situation under consideration. The policy advises on how to deal with the risk and likelihood of illegitimate users on the route

as well as the need to be considerate of livestock or elements of historical interest. Decision making flow charts within the policy cover pedestrian only routes, cycle paths, pedestrian and cycle shared use paths, segregated pedestrian and cycle paths, bridleways and multi-user trails.

3. PROGRESS TO DATE

3.1. The following has been achieved since the adoption of the policy in December 2022:

- Known access controls have been mapped and catalogued.
- Ten access controls have been removed or amended
- Five further access controls are planned for removal or amendment.
- A review of all 21 access controls on the Trans Pennine Trail and the development of designs for replacement access controls which do not meet the current policy are underway.

4. FUTURE WORKS

4.1. Access controls which do not conform to the council policy will be removed and amended as budgets allow. The Council does not have the ability to amend all access controls on the network at once and must prioritize funding and resources for the locations that give the most public benefit. As identified above the Council is using a range of opportunities to fund the works to address accessibility of access controls on its path and the wider council estate.

4.2. The Council recognizes that the approach will take a number of years to fully review all access controls with the resources and capacity available. We have established a policy and programme for access controls removal, we have funding committed each year to progress with the programme and we will continue to deliver on this work as funding and resources allow.

4.3. It should be noted that access controls on private land are not in the scope of this work and so any control which are on unadopted path or roads or providing access into private establishments are not subject to review.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

5.1. This report does not incur any extra financial considerations beyond those already instigated by the adoption of the Access Control Policy.

6. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1. The Access Controls Policy supports the Council's duties under the Equality Act (2010).

7. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

7.1. The Access Control Policy is delivered within current resources.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.1. By removing and making amendments to access controls, the Council is actively reducing impacts to those groups which may have been prevented from accessing trails, routes and areas around Stockport. Individual Access Control points will be assessed in regards to equalities at the point in which work is undertaken.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

9.1. The Access Control Policy was subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment at the time of adoption.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1. The scrutiny committee are requested to note and comment on the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Jamie Birtles on 07356 120 423 email on

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