

Northamptonshire Highways

1. Widths

The following policy is to be applicable to both applications and to Council generated schemes [i.e. orders paid for by the Council to implement Council objectives and not as the result of an application].

New routes of diverted paths and newly created paths should always have a legally defined width included in the order. The position of the stated width should be identifiable on the ground, where possible by reference to landmarks on the ground which are likely to endure. Where the new route runs along an existing track or between other features such as parallel hedgerows, fences or walls, the width should normally be equal to the width physically available on the ground.

The following table gives suggested **MINIMUM*** widths for new** or diverted paths:

	Cross field***	Field edge*** And other circumstances	Where width is physically restricted****
Bridleway	3 m	4 m	2 m
Restricted Byway	3 m	4 m	3 m
Footpath	1.5 m	1.8 m	1 m

NB. The widths given above apply regardless of whether or not there is reason to believe that the new path will be fenced.

* Only in very exceptional circumstances should a path be diverted with a width less than it currently enjoys. These circumstances must be clearly set out in the recommendation to the Council officer with delegated powers.

** New paths which do not accompany an extinguishment may have widths of less than those set out in the general policy where necessary to gain the owner's consent, but only where the paths concerned provide an absolute increase in public access.

*** **Council generated schemes only** may, where necessary to fulfil the objectives of the scheme, use lesser widths if, in the opinion of the case officer, this is reasonable in all the circumstances bearing in mind the needs and expectations of the public and the objective of the scheme.

**** Restricted access will usually be where all or part of the new route is using a pre-existing alley way or where there are other significant structures which physically prevent the allocation of a greater width. Paths should conform to the general policy in as far as possible. The acceptability, or otherwise, of widths of 1m (for footpaths) and 2m (bridleways) should be assessed carefully and only implemented if those widths are felt to be reasonable in all the circumstances of the case. Where there are localised intrusions and/or very short lengths over which the path would be less than 1m wide this may be acceptable depending on the circumstances and should form an explicit part of the Council's decision-making process. That is, all such instances should be brought to the attention of the Council's officer with delegated powers and approved if that officer deems it appropriate to do so.