

## Record of operational decision

<b>Decision title:</b>	<b>Highways Act 1980, Section 119</b> <b>Proposed Public Path Diversion Order Footpath CD27 in the Parish of Cradley</b>
<b>Date of decision:</b>	17/09/2025
<b>Decision maker:</b>	Chief Operating Officer
<b>Authority for delegated decision:</b>	Directorate scheme of delegation: Economy and Place, section 75.  To act on behalf of the council in respect of the legislation specified in the foregoing: Highways Act 1980
<b>Ward:</b>	Bishops Frome and Cradley
<b>Consultation:</b>	Consultation undertaken by the applicant included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prescribed organisations as set out in the Defra Rights of Way Circular 1/09 – No objections</li> <li>Local Member Councillor Tully - No objection to the proposal</li> <li>Cradley Parish Council – No objection to the proposal</li> <li>Statutory Undertakers – No objections to the proposal</li> </ul>
<b>Decision made:</b>	THAT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) A public path diversion order, for definitive footpath CD27 in the parish of Cradley, is made in accordance with section 119 of the Highways Act 1980, as shown in the draft order and plan D567 in Appendix 1 attached to this report and;</li> <li>(b) In the event that there are no un-withdrawn objections to the formal advertising of the order, it is then confirmed.</li> <li>(c) If sustained objections are received, the matter can be passed to the Secretary of State for a decision.</li> </ul>
<b>Reasons for decision:</b>	<p>The rights of way department undertook to divert the right of way following a request from the applicant because <i>“this proposal is to formalise the small diversion of a short part of the route of Public Right of Way (PROW) CD27, to the current permitted route, agreed in 1974 between the previous landowner Mr White and Herefordshire County surveyor.</i></p> <p><i>The formalisation of the current permitted route has the following benefits:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>It has been used buy the general public for over 50 years.</i></li> <li>• <i>Follows the path indicated by the current footpath sign.</i></li> <li>• <i>Is shorter than the route shown on the Herefordshire County Council PROw map.</i></li> <li>• <i>Removes any potential ambiguity of this short length of CD27.</i></li> <li>• <i>Will not require any additional costs in signage or gates.</i></li> <li>• <i>Affected landowners have no objection to the proposal.”</i></li> </ul> <p>The council considers this an acceptable proposal because;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The diversion resolves a long-term obstruction of CD27.</li> <li>• CD27 is diverted out of two property gardens onto a well used permissive route that is of similar length and gradient with an improved surface.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The diversion improves privacy and security for the affected properties CD27 currently passes through in accordance with DEFRA guidance.</li> </ul> <p>The applicant has agreed to pay the costs associated with advertising the order and any works required.</p> <p>The applicant has carried out a pre-order consultation based on a proposed route (see Appendix 2). There were no objections to the proposal.</p> <p>The Local Member, Councillor Tully, has no objections to the proposal.</p> <p>The proposed diversion meets the specified criteria set out in Council policy and in accordance with the provisions of section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 in that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposal is expedient as it benefits the owner of the land crossed by the existing path.</li> <li>It is expedient to confirm the order, given the proposal is not substantially less convenient to the public, and it is expedient, having regard to the effect which (i) the diversion will have on the public enjoyment of the path as a whole, including any compensation which becomes payable (ii) the coming into operation of the order would have as respects other land served by the existing right of way and (iii) any effect the new public right of way created by the order would have as respects the land over which the new right is created, including any compensation payable.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</b></p>	<p><b>Community impact:</b> The applicant has carried out a comprehensive pre-order consultation, which included Cradley Parish Council, local user groups, and statutory undertakers, to which there were no sustained objections.</p> <p><b>Equality:</b> Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:</p> <p>A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;</li> <li>advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;</li> <li>foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.</li> </ul> <p>The majority of public rights of way are in a very rural environment, often remote, with uneven surfaces and varying gradients. There are stiles and gates on many paths which are necessary for stock control. There are also bridges and steps on many paths which aid access to paths by providing crossings for streams and rivers and to help with steep gradients. The nature of the paths means that access may be difficult for members of the public with mobility issues or a disability.</p> <p>Diversion/creation orders seek to remove stiles wherever possible and improve access by installing gates in their place which allow use by a wider group of people. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan also aims to improve access to public rights of way in this way.</p> <p>For this proposal the gradient of the existing and proposed route of CD27 are similar. The existing route of CD27 runs through a house whilst the proposed route is unobstructed resulting in a positive impact for the public.</p>

**Finance:**

All administration and advertising costs associated with this order are to be covered by the applicant. There are no works necessary to bring the new route into being. If the matter has to be referred to the Secretary of State, the costs associated with any Inquiry or Hearing will be met by the Council.

**Environmental Impact:**

This decision/proposal seeks to deliver the Council's environmental policy commitments and aligns to the following success measures in the County Plan.

Improve residents' access to green space in Herefordshire

Increase the number of short distance trips being done by sustainable modes of travel – walking, cycling, public transport.

**Resource implications:**

The landowner has agreed to defray any compensation that may become payable and the affected landowners have agreed to waive their right to compensation which may become payable under the Highways Act 1980 S.28 as applied by S.119(5) as amended in consequence of the coming into operation of any said diversion. If the matter has to be referred to the Secretary of State, the costs associated with any inquiry or hearing will be met by the budget allocated to the rights of way service through the annual plan.

**Legal:**

The Council has a discretionary power under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 to make diversion orders in relation to public paths where it is 'expedient' to do so. This power is exercisable if it is in the interests of the owners, lessees or occupiers of land to do so or of the public and provided that the termination point of the path is onto the same highway or a highway connected to it. In making such an order the Council must consider any material provisions of its Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

It is considered that the criteria under Section 119, referred to in paragraph 6 above, are met. Once an order is made it must be advertised as prescribed in Schedule 6 of the Highways Act 1980 and in accordance with the Public Path Order Regulations 1993. A minimum of 28 days must be given for objections to be made from the first publication of the notice of order.

If no objections are received to the formal advertising of the order, or any received are withdrawn, then the Council may itself confirm the order, provided that it is satisfied that the criteria in Section 119(6)(a) – (c) and 6A (b) of the Highways Act 1980 are met. These are listed in 'Reasons for Decision' above.

If there are objections which are not withdrawn, then the order will be referred to the Planning Inspectorate which will act on behalf of the Secretary of State to determine the order. The Secretary of State will appoint an Inspector who will either hold an inquiry or hearing or deal with the matter by way of written representations before making a decision on whether or not to confirm the order.

**Risk Management:**

There is a risk that if the Order is made as proposed, it may receive objections. If objections are so received, the matter must then be referred to the Secretary of State for a decision, which will place an increased demand on officer time and resources. The costs necessary for this referral cannot be passed onto the applicant.

In this case a comprehensive pre-order consultation has been carried out by the applicant, to which no objections have been received and, therefore, the risk of receiving objections at Order making stage is relatively low.

<b>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</b>	Under the provisions of Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 the Council has the discretionary power to make diversion orders but has no duty to do so. The Council could therefore reject the application on the grounds that it does not contribute sufficiently to the wider ambitions and priorities of the Council. As the application meets the tests set out in Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 it may be considered unreasonable for the Council to not make an order.
<b>Details of any declarations of interest made:</b>	If any officers or members involved or consulted in the decision-making have declared an interest you should include the declaration here. N/A

Signed..... Date: 17 September 2025

**Please ensure that signatures are redacted before publishing.**