Norfolk County Council

Norfolk Local Access Forum
Minutes of the Meeting Held on 04 October 2023 at 10:30 at County Hall Norwich NR1 2SG

Member:	**Representing:**
Martin Sullivan - Chair	Motorised Vehicles / Pathmakers
Ken Hawkins – Vice Chair	Walking
Fraser Bowe	All abilities access
Birgit Griem	Walking
Rob Lodge	Nature Conservation
Ruth Goodall	Access to land at the water's edge
Kevin Grieve	Health and wellbeing
Cllr Maxine Webb	Norfolk County Councillor

Officers Present:

Helen Terry	National Trail Team Leader
Su Waldron	Project Officer (Environment Team) and NLAF co-ordinator
Matt Hayward	Lead Project Manager (Greenways)
Natalie Kordeczka-Clarke	Project Officer (Greenways)
Lisa Marrison	Assistant Project Officer (Greenways)

1. Apologies for Absence

1.1 Chris Allhusen, Elizabeth Meath-Baker, Paul Baker, Sarah Morgan, Anne Killett, Simon Fowler, Rebecca Durant. Also Katy Owen, Jason Moorse (NCC staff)

2. Election of chair
Martin Sullivan was duly elected as chair for the year ahead.

3. Election of vice chair
Ken Hawkins was duly elected as vice chair for the year ahead.

4. Chair's Announcements

4.1 Consultations
Consultations that the NLAF had responded to between July 2023 and September 2024 were summarised (Appendix 1).

5. Minutes

5.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 5th July 2023 were confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chair.

6. Declarations of Interest

6.1 There were no interests declared.

7. Urgent Business

7.1 There was no urgent business

8. Public Question Time

8.1 There were no public questions received.

9. Local member Issues / Questions

9.1 There were no member questions received.

10. Feedback from Events

10.1 The vice chair attended the East Region LAF chairs' meeting in July and reported that the Essex LAF were developing access guides. Natural England had developed a SharePoint site to succeed Huddle, a platform which enabled LAFs across the country to engage with one another, although the new site was not particularly user-friendly. The Suffolk LAF chair was seeking to arrange a meeting for East Region LAFs with Defra, to discuss access issues within the Environmental Land Management Scheme.

10.2 The chair reported that he had attended the Broads LAF meeting which had covered concerns with paths lost to the river

10.3 The next regional LAF chairs' meeting would be in January 2024.

11. Task group (future meetings)

11.1 The meeting **AGREED** to set a date for a further task group of NLAF members and relevant NCC officers for November or December to take further the ideas which have emerged today, with a view to implementing the new ideas from January 2024. The main considerations for the task group concerned establishing productive links between NLAF and lead Councillors, and to find ways of encouraging greater engagement and involvement of all NLAF members.

12. Meetings Forward Plan

12.1 The NLAF received the report which outlined agenda items for the forthcoming meetings. Members were encouraged to send further topics for discussion to the chair.

12.2 The NLAF **NOTED** the Forward plan.

13. Norfolk County Council accessibility audit update

13.1 The Forum received a presentation (included with the agenda) on NCC work by the Greenways programme to review NCC's accessibility audit process to take in learnings from the Monument and Experience projects and the updated Paths for All outdoor accessibility guidance.
The work would seek to address any access issues relating to Norfolk Access Improvement Plan (NAIP) themes 1,2,4 and 7.

13.2 The Outdoor Accessibility Guidance 2023 replaces the Countryside for All guide; aligns with the By all Reasonable Means (BARM) guidance; combines Least

Restrictive Access and the Access Chain; and is based on widely agreed technical standards.

13.3 The concept considers the whole journey from getting to the start of the path and going home. Phase 1 of the NCC project will run until 31st March 2024 and will include selecting pilot sites and conducting the first stage testing of the audit processes. Priorities for improvements for users with accessibility needs would be built into proposals for project funding.

13.4 The project will work with a variety of user groups including those with different sensory needs, and all age groups. Discrimination issues which might result in poor uptake of the Trails offer outside physical and mental issues would be covered in other projects such as Experience. The NLAF recommended that the project spoke to the learning disability partnership and Norfolk Autism Partnership.

13.5 The audits will include information from the new Travel Norfolk website, which shows the location of bus stops and Norfolk Trails and circular walks on it. There is a new travel hub at North Walsham.

13.6 The NLAF **NOTED** the work to update NCC's accessibility audits.

14. NLAF Subgroups' report (Permissive Access; PROW; NAIP; Vision and Ideas; Joint Communications)

14.1 The NLAF received the reports which set out the latest discussions and recommendations of the sub-groups of the NLAF. The PRoW subgroup had met on 11th September, and the Norfolk Access Improvement Plan (NAIP) subgroup had met on 4th September.

14.2 The PRoW subgroup had noted that there between 1995 and 2023 (July 2023) 214 DMMO applications had been registered on the NCC website, of which 25 had been completed (none apparently since 2021), leaving 189 remaining.

14.3 The NAIP subgroup had discussed the NAIP monitoring report prepared for the NLAF to show progress with NAIP objectives (September 2022 to September 2023) which was included with their report for the whole NLAF to view and comment on. Overall, NCC was complimented on an excellent summary. The NLAF also commented that the current system of target reporting was difficult and recommended that when a new ROWIP is under development, that a new system of measuring progress could be investigated.

14.4 The Vision and Ideas subgroup had a new chair, Rob Lodge.

14.2 The NLAF **NOTED** the updates.

15. Pathmakers Projects

15.1 The NLAF received a report from the Pathmakers chair giving details of recent activities including development of the walking festival Walk Norfolk 23, which launched on 1st October. The charity also noted work ongoing with UEA on student projects, how they were developing social media to promote their activities, and how they desired to work with other organisations with a similar remit, to avoid duplication of effort.

NLAF members congratulated Pathmakers on its success.

15.2 The NLAF **NOTED** the report.

16. **Potential and Future Funding for Access**

16.1 The Forum received the report from the Norfolk National Trails Team Leader, who gave the NLAF an overview of funding bids in concept/development stage and update on successful applications. The overview covered relevant areas of PRoW, Norfolk Trails and Highways Teams.

- A new staff member has been appointed as a data officer, who will update the Norfolk Trails people counter network.
- A project at Brancaster 'Closer to nature: creating all abilities green infrastructure within the Norfolk Coast AONB and Norfolk Coast Path National Trail' would provide high quality access for all. The NLAF had supported the planning application to renew a boardwalk at Brancaster, whilst expecting that local concerns over the positioning of new seating would be handled appropriately through community outreach.

16.2 The NLAF **NOTED** potential and current funding opportunities and sources, for access-related projects and asked for information showing the relationships between, and remit of, the various NCC Teams working on access (Highways, Environment, Trails etc.)

17. Countryside Access Arrangements update

17.1 The Forum received the report which highlighted work to manage the countryside access network in Norfolk work in terms of the volumes of customer queries received and responded to. The report also updated the NLAF on Norfolk Trails activities.

17.2 Highlights from many Norfolk Trails and Greenways Team access improvements were reported with many photographs to illustrate what has been accomplished.

17.3 The report also summarised reported issues with PRoW logged on the Mayrise Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. There were 1,500 open issues for PRoW on 4th September 2023, an increase from the last quarter figures, with most enquiries regarding damaged or missing signs, non-reinstatement, obstructions, overgrown surface, overgrown hedges/ trees, and surface condition. Vigorous vegetation growth had led to an increase in enquiries about surface maintenance.

The number of unresolved public enquiries through the CRM system remains reasonably steady from the last quarter: on 4th September, the Norfolk Trails Team had 186 open CRM issues and PRoW had 158 open CRM issues.

No additional financial resource had been earmarked for PRoW maintenance, although 3 PRoW technician contracts will be extended to March 2025.

17.4 Performance information summarised from the CRM system which should have been included with the agenda papers is appended to these minutes (Appendix 2).

17.5 The NLAF **NOTED** with concern that in spite of the extensive work of staff since the Countryside Access Officer posts were introduced, and the appointment of 3 PROW

Technicians, a significant backlog of issues remains. NLAF draws this to the attention of the County Council.

18. **Feedback on the Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan engagement**

18.1 The Lead Project Manager for Greenways reported on work to develop a Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (LCWIP) for Norfolk. The purpose of the countywide LCWIP is to identify and prioritise infrastructure scheme to enhance opportunities for active travel. A period of public engagement on potential active travel network improvements at 20 towns was conducted over 8 weeks from May 2023, with over 1000 responses received.

Results of the consultation/ engagement would be shared with the NLAF before being reported to the NCC Infrastructure and Development Committee.

18.2 The NLAF **NOTED** the update on progress to develop a countywide LCWIP for Norfolk and looked forward to receiving further information for comment prior to the plan being reported to the NCC I and D Committee.

19. NCC Member Sustainable Transport update

19.1 The Forum received the annexed report which provided a summary of progress on key projects underway by the NCC Walking and Cycling team.

The Capability Fund Active Travel Programme had funded 35 school cycling activities, engaged with 9 businesses through Sustrans and had funded the Travel Norfolk Website https://www.travelnorfolk.co.uk/ which provides sustainable travel planning information.

A resources hub has been created collating best practices from the Experience project, to boost out of season tourism https://www.tourismexperience.org/resources-hub/

19.2 The NLAF **NOTED** the progress of the walking and cycling projects as outlined in the report.

20. Major Infrastructure Projects and Planning

20.1 The Forum received the annexed report which updated them on the major infrastructure projects that were currently underway in the County which impacted on Public Rights of Way. Latest information on each of the schemes was highlighted in the report appendix.

20.2 Key updates were noted, including revisions to the timetabling for:
- A47 dualling schemes (DCO granted)
- Third river crossing at Great Yarmouth (Vauxhall junction)
- Norwich Western link revised team activities
- East Anglia Green (now Norwich to Tilbury) pylons.

20.3 The NLAF asked if the route of the ECP through Great Yarmouth would be altered following work to establish the new bridge (3rd river crossing at Great Yarmouth). Officers said that this was under consideration.

20.4 A member of the NLAF had received a list of PRoW affected by the Norwich to Tilbury pylons project from the Ramblers, who were happy for it to be used by the NLAF.

20.5 The NLAF **NOTED** the table of major infrastructure projects in Norfolk and would study the list of PRoW affected by the Norwich to Tilbury pylons. . NLAF members were invited to examine the impact of the proposals for the Norwich to Tilbury pylons on the list of PRoW listed in Appendix 3.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 24th January 2023 at 10am at County Hall.

The meeting closed at 12.27.

Martin Sullivan, Chair,
Norfolk Local Access Forum

Appendix 1

NLAF consultations July 2023 to September 2023

1. July 2023. NLAF was invited to get involved with NCC's work on outdoor accessibility audits updates. Fraser Bowe has been directly involved.
2. July 2023. The NLAF submitted a letter of support to NCC regarding the boardwalk replacement at Brancaster. In September 2023, the NLAF submitted a comment to NNDC to support the planning application for the boardwalk (and the principles that lie behind it to provide facilities for those with mobility issues) but also expecting the applicant to consider the views of local residents regarding the siting of some of the resting places proposed.
3. July 2023. The NLAF requested that planned sea defence works at Mundesley and Cromer by NNDC should not impact access to the England Coast Path
4. July 2023. The NLAF asked NCC if provisions of s26 of the Highways Act 1980 could be applied to riverside paths lost by water erosion. NCC replied to say that mechanism is rarely used by the County Council as it could lead to high claims for compensation.
5. August 2023. The NLAF was notified of an access restriction at Santon Downham due to a motorbike event.
6. August 2023. The NLAF responded to a felling licence consultation at High Lodge with no objections, but pointing out that that the Forestry Commission practice of offering a single grid reference for a substantial area made it difficult to locate where work was being carried out.
7. August 2023. The NLAF responded to the Anglia Green pylons consultation, raising concerns over the undesirable visual impact of the pylons and requesting that (should the construction go ahead) that greatest amount of notice is given where access to PROW are affected, and closures of routes are minimised, and areas restored post construction. Also asked that compensation is awarded to those with responsibility for public access where they need to take steps to facilitate the works.

8. September 2023. PROW subgroup is in dialogue with NCC Highways over CRM fault reporting and resolution and a meeting will be arranged.
9. September 2023. The PROW subgroup noted an access restriction on the Peddars Way near Swaffham (Pickenham) and would submit a report through CRM.
10. September 2023. The NLAF responded to a Forestry Commission felling licence consultation for tree felling on Weavers' Way. The NLAF had no objection but asked that work be kept to weekdays.

Appendix 2

IN TRAN
communication for all

If you need this document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in a different language please contact Customer Services on 0344 800 8020 or Text Relay on 18001 800 8020 (textphone) and we will do our best to help.

PROW and Trail Defect Report

The information presented on this page looks at PROW and Trail defects reports. PROW & Trail defect reports are sent to Mayrise mobile tablets for investigation by the relevant team.

Alter the Report Date Range in the top right hand corner to see FAQs received over a

Volume of PROW/Trail defects by type

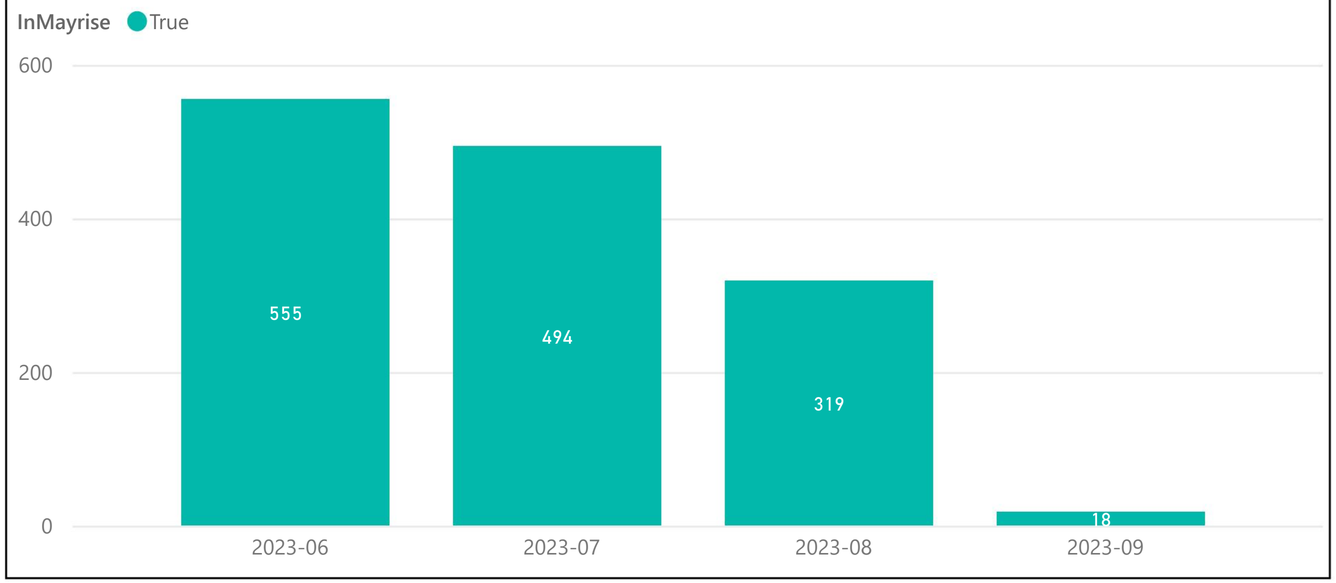
DescriptionOfFault	C	N	S	W	Total
PROW - Overgrown surface -e.g. grass/weeds		239	164	35	**438**
PROW - Overgrown hedge/tree	1	104	89	21	**215**
Trail - Overgrown surface -e.g. grass/weeds		58	57	2	**117**
Trail - Overgrown hedge/tree	5	44	54	11	**114**
PROW - Damaged or missing sign		54	45	8	**107**
PROW - Obstruction -e.g. building works, fences, ditches, locked gate		25	34	12	**71**
PROW - Crops/ploughing affecting footpath		39	28	3	**70**
Trail - Surface condition	2	19	14	3	**38**
PROW - Surface condition		20	11	3	**34**
PROW - Tree dangerous/fallen		10	11	3	**24**
Trail - Damaged or missing sign		12	8	3	**23**
PROW - Misleading sign		11	4	1	**16**
Trail - Tree dangerous/fallen	1	9	4	2	**16**
Trail- Obstruction -e.g. building works, fences, ditches, locked gate	1	4	6	2	**13**
PROW - Gate/Barrier		10	1	1	**12**
PROW - Stile damaged/too/high/other		5	5		**10**
PROW - Bridge		3	5	1	**9**
Trail - Steps damaged/other		7		1	**8**
Trail - Bridge		1	6		**7**
Trail - Illegal / Vehicle Use	3	3	1		**7**
	1	2	2	1	**6**
Trail - Crops/ploughing affecting footpath			6		**6**
Trail - Gate/Barrier	3	1	1	1	**6**
PROW - Animal(s)		3	2		**5**
PROW - Steps damaged/other		1	3		**4**
Trail - Animal(s)		2	1	1	**4**
Trail - Flooded Path		2	1	1	**4**
PROW - Flooded Path			3		**3**
Trail - Misleading sign			2	1	**3**
PROW - Illegal / Vehicle Use			2		**2**
Total	**18**	**689**	**570**	**117**	**1394**

Report Date Range

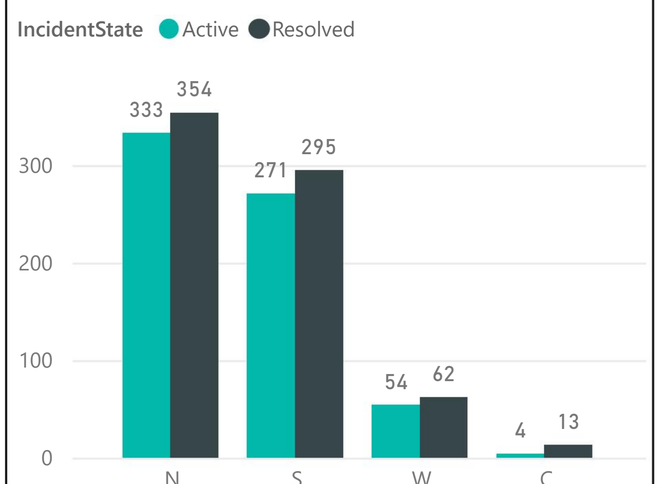
Last | 3 | Months

05/06/2023 - 04/09/2023

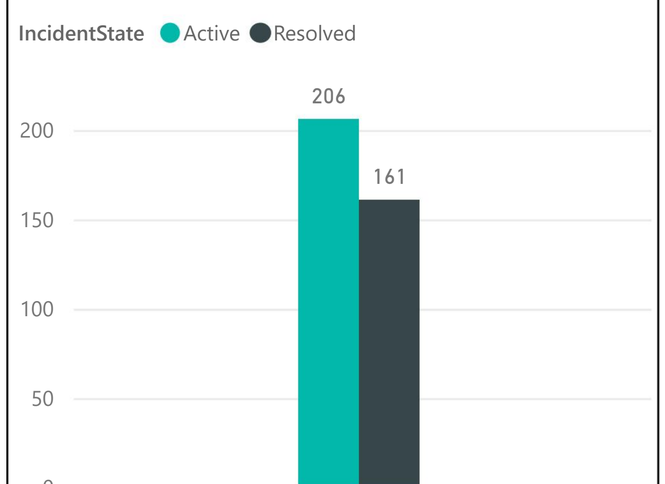
PROW and Trail defects received by month



PROW Defects by Status (in Mayrise)



Trails Defects by Status



Public Right of Way and Trail FAQ Report

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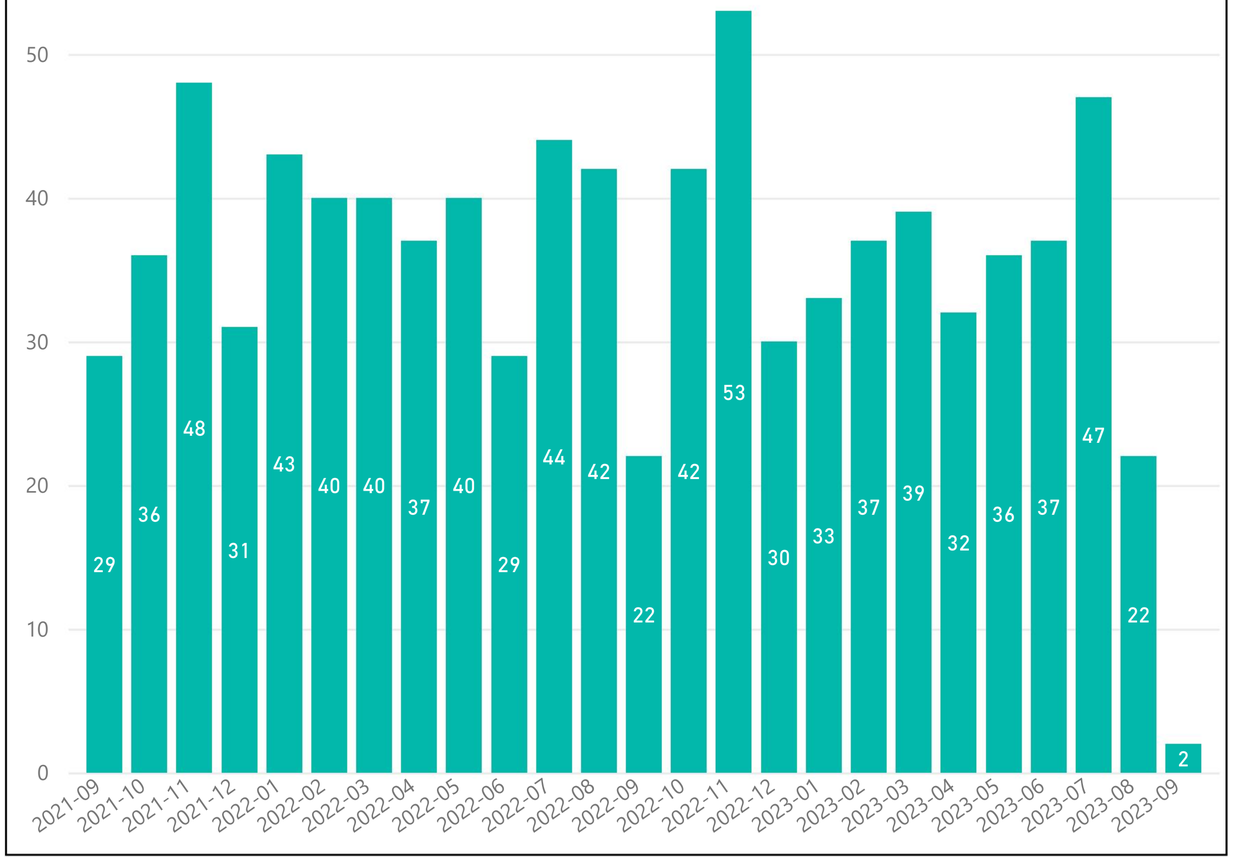
These present to either the PROW 'queue' (managed by Countryside Access Officers) or the Trails queue (managed by the Environment team).

Alter the Report Date Range in the top right hand corner to see FAQs received over a different time period.

Volume of PROW/Trail FAQs received by month



Report Date Range

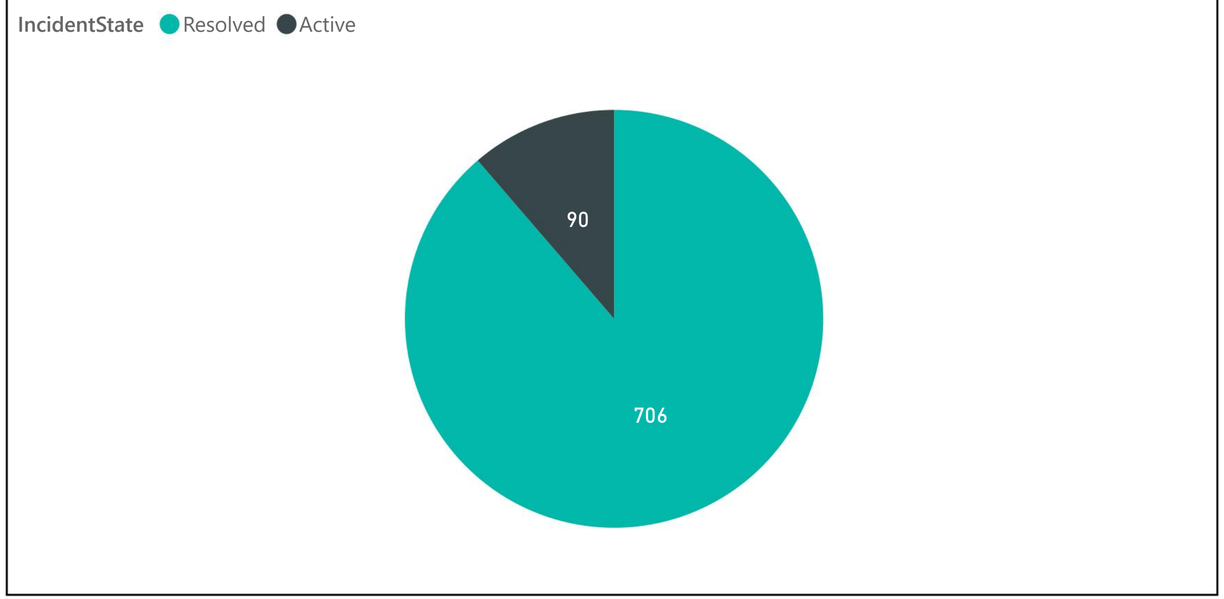
Last | 2 | Years

05/09/2021 - 04/09/2023

Volume of PROW/Trail FAQs by question

Question	Count of CaseNumber
I would like to make a town and village green application	1
Section 130 notice received	3
I've seen unauthorised cycling, driving or riding on a Public Right of Way or Trail. What can be done?	11
I have an enquiry about the definitive map	32
I would like information about a Norfolk Trail	32
	37
I have an enquiry about PROW ot Trail grass cutting	38
I have an enquiry concerning common land	40
Total	**891**

PROW/Trail FAQs received by Status

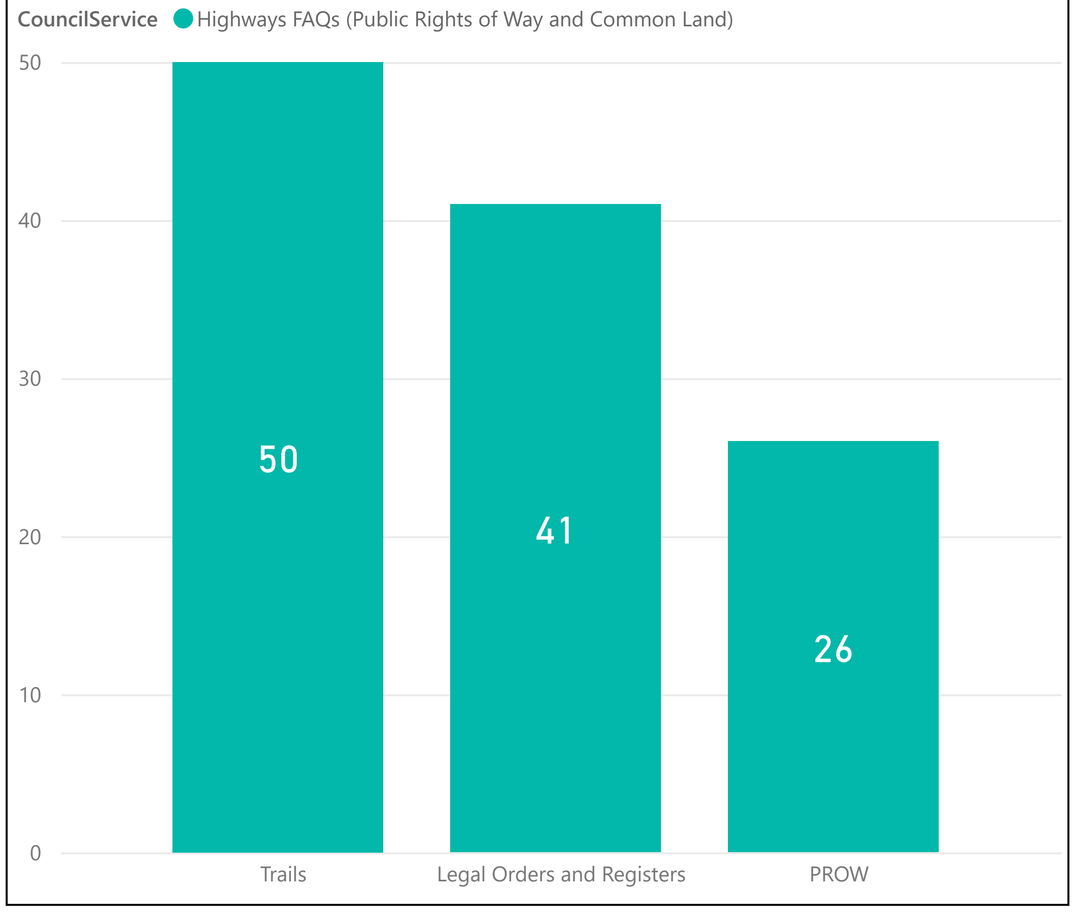


Active Enquiries

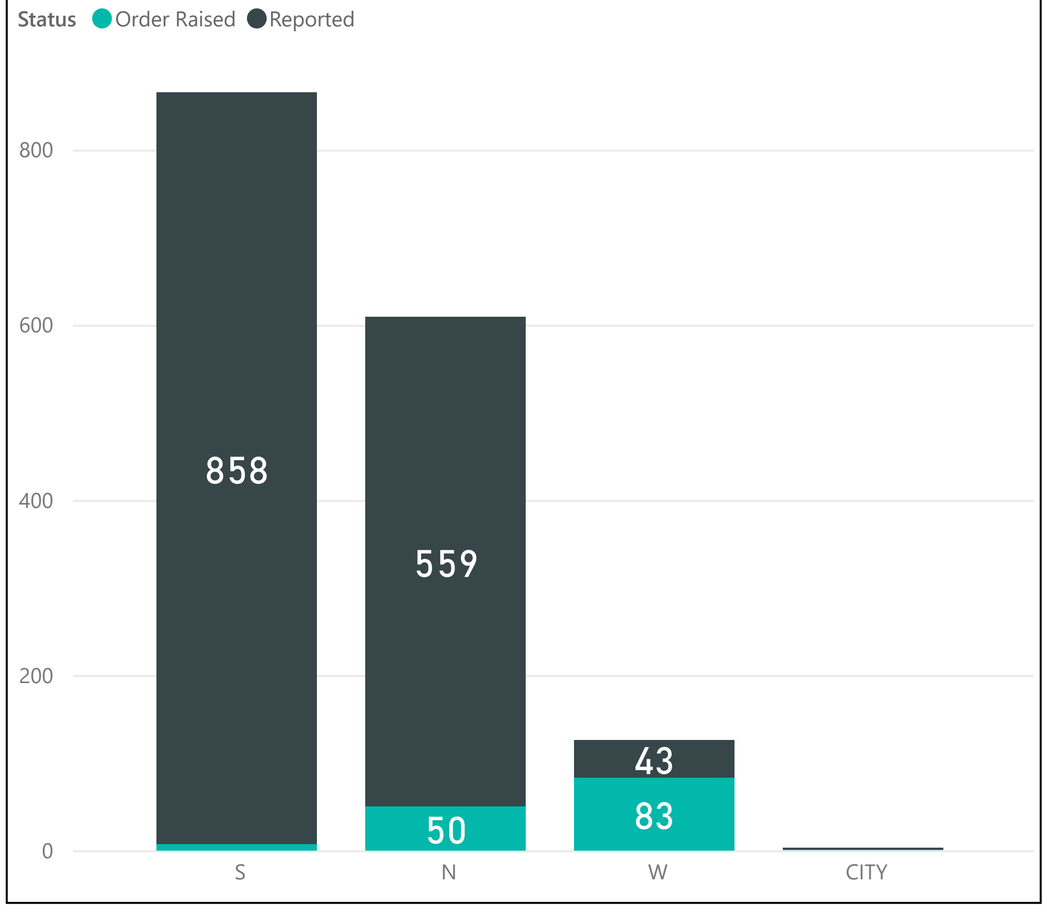
This page provides a snapshot of the customer reported defects and FAQs that are currently open in Mayrise and CRM.

The graph below reflects what is currently open in the team Queues in CRM. You will notice that some queues have both FAQs and defects. This is because before April 2019 Trails defects were managed within CRM. Defects registered on PROWs (and Trails from April 2019 onward) all automatically 'leave' CRM and are sent through to Mayrise. You can see the open PROW & Trail customer reported defects that are in Mayrise in the graph to the right. Anything with the status 'reported' indicates the defect is awaiting investigation.

Volume of open enquiries currently in CRM queues



Volume of defects currently open in Mayrise (by area)



This page looks at the average number of days from when a defect is reported to inspected and reported to repaired.

This data is for all defects within the Highways Management System (it does not include general enquiries)

Select time period

CREATEDATE

Last | 3 | Months

05/06/2023 - 04/09/2023

This is the average length of time between report and inspection (in days) for defects created in the specified time scale.

Average of Reported to Inspected Days

LEVEL2	Average of NCC_PI_Days_Reported-Inspected
PROW	7.67
TRLS	9.47
Total	**8.10**

This is the average length of time between report and repair (in days) for defects created in the specified time scale. This looks at all defects that have been completed.

Average of report to Repair Days

LEVEL2	Average of NCCReportRepairDays
PROW	29.12
TRLS	29.55
Total	**29.20**

PROW and Trail Defect Report

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Alter the Report Date Range in the top right hand corner to see FAQs received over a

Report Date Range

Last | 2 | Years

05/09/2021 - 04/09/2023

Volume of PROW/Trail defects by type

DescriptionOfFault	C	N	S	W	Total
PROW - Overgrown surface -e.g. grass/weeds	5	516	323	100	**944**
PROW - Damaged or missing sign		374	401	80	**855**
PROW - Overgrown hedge/tree	7	271	245	95	**618**
PROW - Obstruction -e.g. building works, fences, ditches, locked gate		185	193	80	**458**
PROW - Crops/ploughing affecting footpath		199	173	28	**400**
PROW - Surface condition	1	162	97	38	**298**
Trail - Overgrown hedge/tree	23	114	99	36	**272**
Trail - Overgrown surface -e.g. grass/weeds	4	133	91	12	**240**
PROW - Tree dangerous/fallen	2	100	93	35	**230**
Trail - Surface condition	8	122	78	20	**228**
PROW - Bridge		42	111	22	**175**
Trail - Damaged or missing sign		72	76	12	**160**
PROW - Gate/Barrier		57	56	22	**135**
Trail - Tree dangerous/fallen	8	80	26	5	**119**
PROW - Misleading sign		56	46	7	**109**
Trail- Obstruction -e.g. building works, fences, ditches, locked gate	3	41	42	8	**94**
PROW - Stile damaged/too/high/other		41	44	4	**89**
Trail - Gate/Barrier	9	17	24	9	**59**
Trail - Illegal / Vehicle Use	5	29	16	4	**54**
	1	27	18	5	**51**
PROW - Flooded Path		21	27	3	**51**
PROW - Illegal / Vehicle Use		19	19	11	**49**
PROW - Animal(s)		20	18	10	**48**
Trail - Bridge	4	11	22	4	**41**
Trail - Steps damaged/other	2	27	4	2	**35**
PROW - Steps damaged/other		17	12	3	**32**
Trail - Misleading sign	1	13	11	7	**32**
Trail - Crops/ploughing affecting footpath		11	20		**31**
Trail - Animal(s)		9	7	3	**19**
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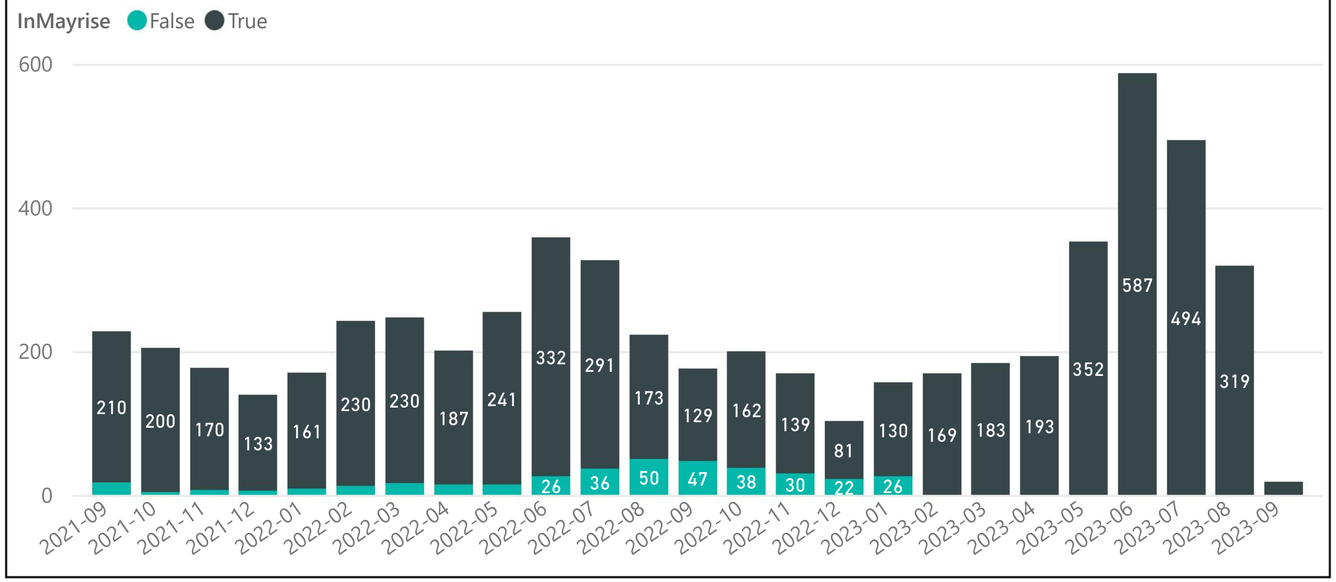
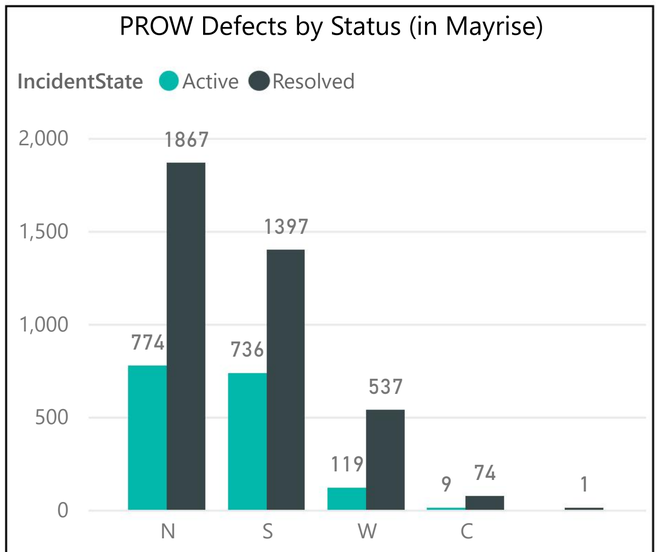
Total	**1**	**84**	**2798**	**2404**	**666**	**5953**

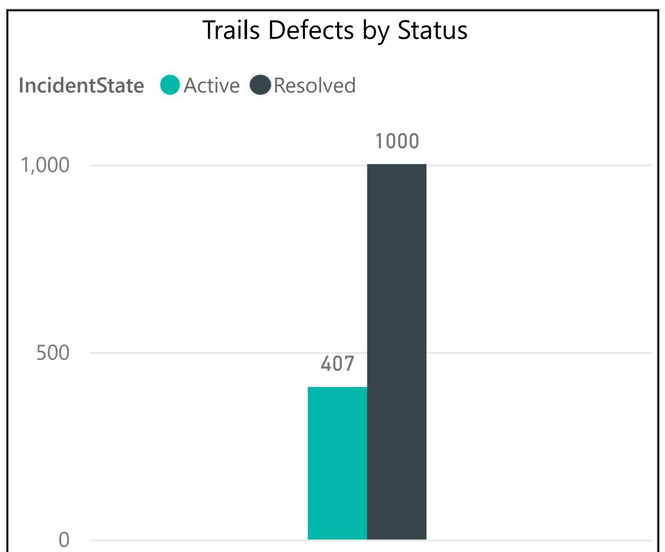
PROW and Trail defects received by month



PROW Defects by Status (in Mayrise)



Trails Defects by Status



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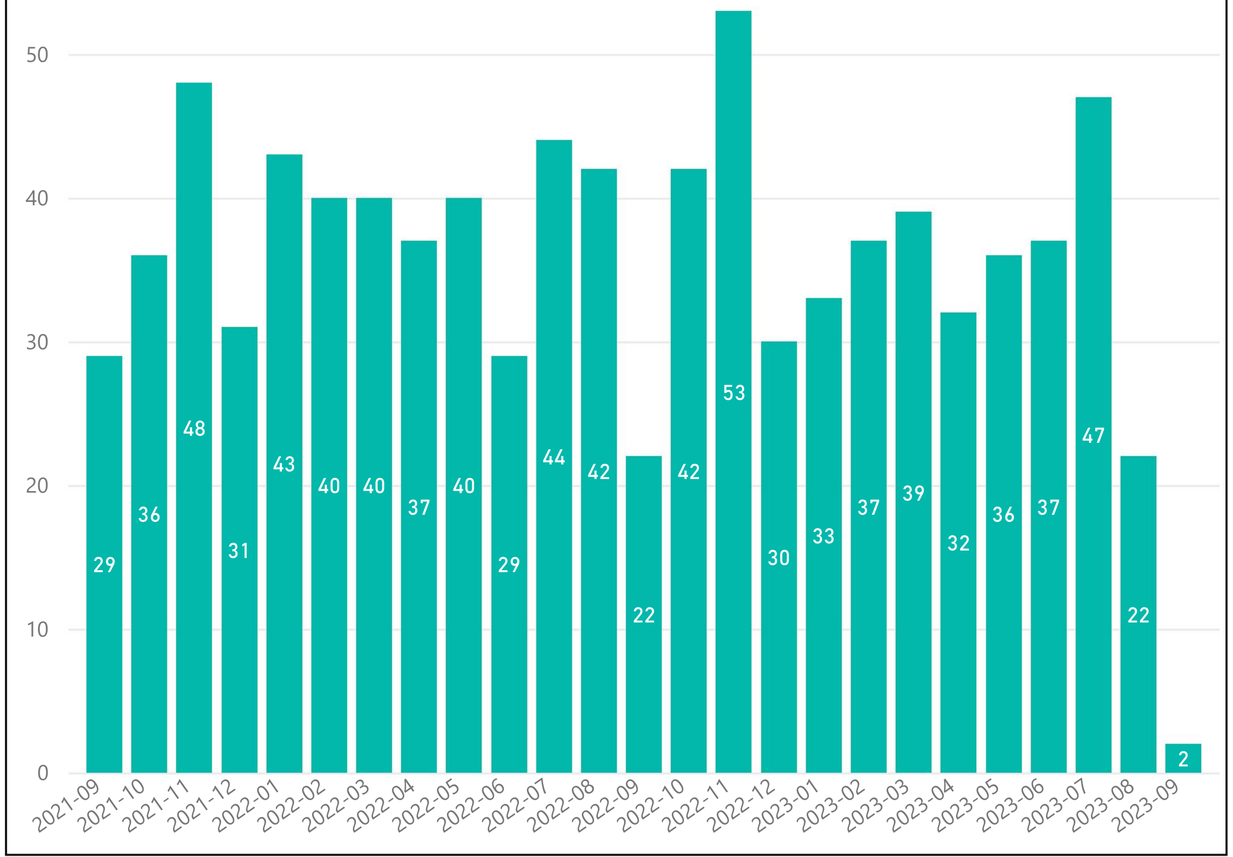

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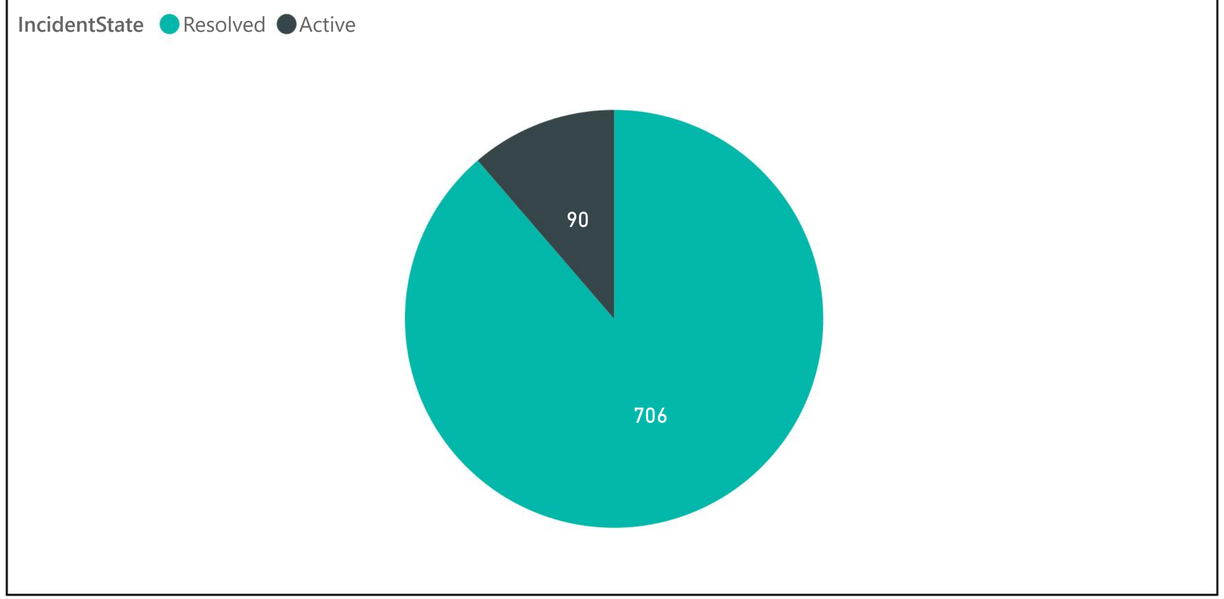

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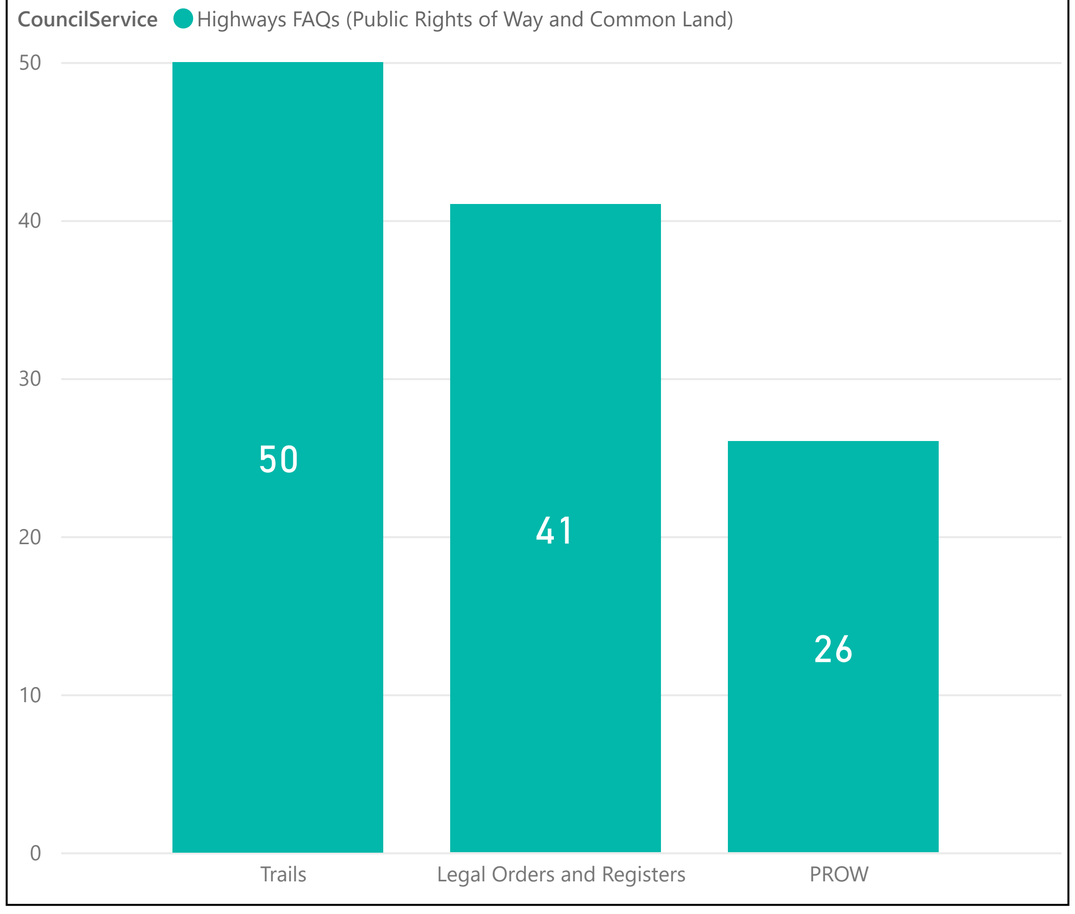
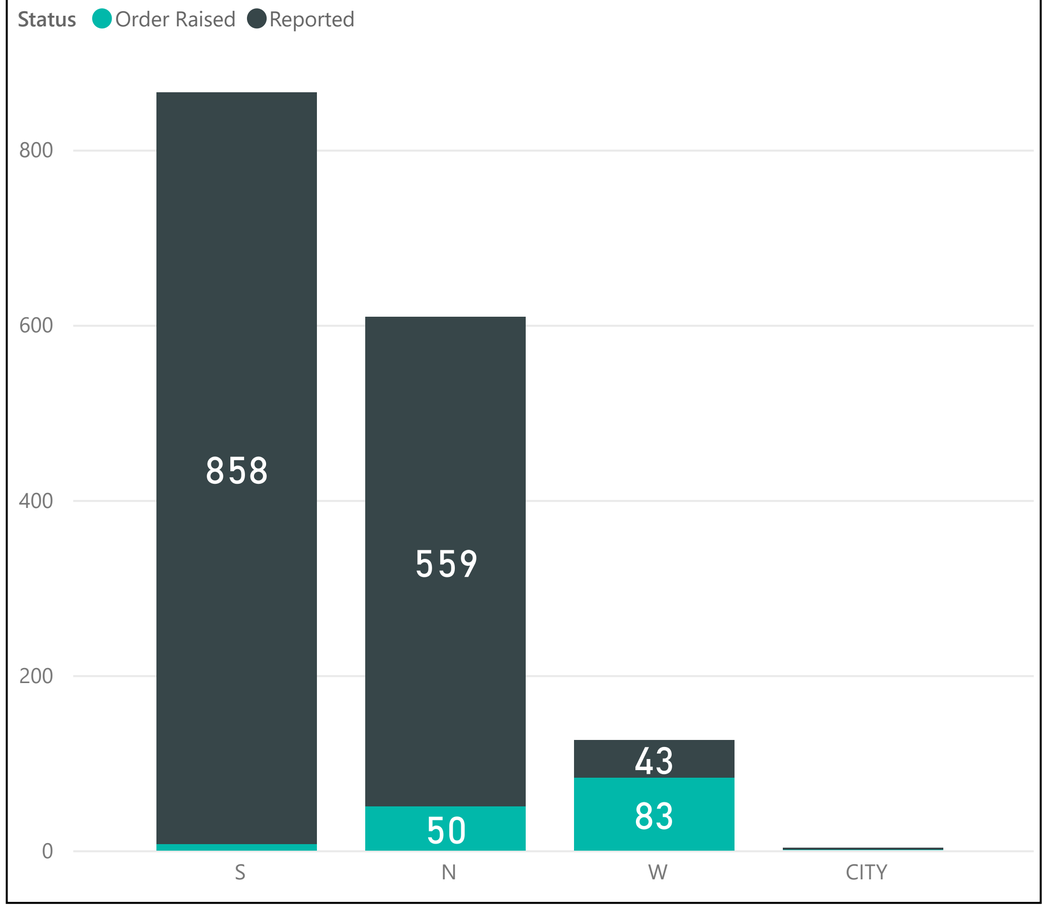
Volume of open enquiries currently in CRM queues



Volume of defects currently open in Mayrise (by area)



This page looks at the average number of days from when a defect is reported to inspected and reported to repaired.

This data is for all defects within the Highways Management System (it does not include general enquiries)

Select time period

CREATEDATE

Last | 3 | Months

05/06/2023 - 04/09/2023

This is the average length of time between report and inspection (in days) for defects created in the specified time scale.

Average of Reported to Inspected Days

LEVEL2	Average of NCC_PI_Days_Reported-Inspected
PROW	7.67
TRLS	9.47
Total	**8.10**

This is the average length of time between report and repair (in days) for defects created in the specified time scale. This looks at all defects that have been completed.

Average of report to Repair Days

LEVEL2	Average of NCCReportRepairDays
PROW	29.12
TRLS	29.55
Total	**29.20**