

20 December 2023

Clerk  
Haslemere Town Council

Countryside Access Team  
Surrey County Council  
Whitebeam Lodge  
Merrow Depot  
Merrow Lane  
GUILDFORD  
Surrey  
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claire.saunders@surreycc.gov.uk

Dear Haslemere Town Council Clerk

**Subject: Review of Surrey County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan**

Surrey County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) is an important strategic policy document, which the council is required by law to have in place. It sets out how Surrey County Council can make sure the public rights of way network meets the needs of the public, now and in the future. More information on ROWIPs can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-authority-rights-of-way-improvement-plans>

A public right of way is a public highway and is part of, and connects with, the wider highway network. Although they are mainly in the countryside, there are public rights of way in towns and villages too. There are four types of public right of way:

- **Public footpaths** – a public right of way only for pedestrians (including dog walkers, users of wheelchairs, mobility scooters and people with buggies);
- **Public bridleways** – As per public footpaths, and in addition can be used horse riders and cyclists;
- **Restricted byways** – As per public footpaths and bridleways, and in addition can be used by horse-drawn carriage drivers;
- **Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs)** – a public right of way for all users, including motor vehicles.

Surrey County Council is writing to inform Haslemere Town Council that the process of carrying out a new assessment and review of Surrey's ROWIP is beginning.

The process of reviewing the ROWIP, and the engagement being carried out before a new ROWIP is drafted, will help Surrey County Council to better understand the needs of Surrey's residents. The ROWIP aims to address the priorities of the area in terms of health and wellbeing, supporting people living with disabilities and mental health issues,

regeneration, growth, transport, climate change, tourism and other priorities. The views of parish and town councils are important to do this. To help us, we'd like the views of Haslemere Town Council. The feedback will help to develop the priorities and actions of the new Rights of Way Improvement Plan, which will be produced later in 2024.

**I would be grateful if Haslemere Town Council could fill in the questionnaire below.**

<https://www.surreysays.co.uk/environment-and-infrastructure/rowip>

**The questionnaire closes at midnight on 10 March 2024.**

Please submit only one official response on behalf of Haslemere Town Council. This link is for parish and town councils only and should not be shared with the public.

So that you can discuss your answers before filling in the questionnaire, a copy is appended to this letter. It is preferred that you submit your response to this questionnaire through the online link above; however, electronic or paper responses will also be accepted.

If you wish to submit an emailed response, or additional information, please email Sharon Bayne at [sharon.bayne@blackwoodbayne.co.uk](mailto:sharon.bayne@blackwoodbayne.co.uk) who is working on behalf of Surrey County Council to support the development of the new ROWIP. Paper copies should be sent to Blackwood Bayne Ltd, 8 Herts Crescent, Loose, Maidstone, Kent ME15 0AX. Please submit your parish response by midnight on 10 March 2024.

#### Views of Individual Councillors and Members of the Public

The views of individual councillors and members of the public are also important and welcome. To gather these, we have also set up an online public questionnaire. We would be grateful if you could publicise this questionnaire and encourage people to complete it. We have attached a poster to this email which you may wish to display on site or use on social media.

The questionnaire for the public is online at:

<https://www.surreysays.co.uk/environment-and-infrastructure/rowip-public>

**This questionnaire also closes at midnight on 10 March 2024.**

If you need to discuss the process of preparing the new ROWIP or specific questions about the engagement exercise please contact Sharon. She can be contacted on [sccrowip@blackwoodbayne.co.uk](mailto:sccrowip@blackwoodbayne.co.uk) or 01622 746316. Alternatively contact [sccrowip@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:sccrowip@surreycc.gov.uk).

Visit <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/culture-and-leisure/countryside> for more information about public rights of way and country parks in Surrey. To report an issue on a public right of way, visit Surrey County Council's website at <https://rightsofway.surreycc.gov.uk/>

The draft ROWIP is due to be completed later in 2024. All parish and town councils will be invited to comment on the draft.

Yours faithfully

**Claire Saunders**  
**Countryside Access Team Manager**

## Overview

Surrey County Council is responsible for around 2164 miles (3482 km) of public rights of way. These paths are both in the countryside and urban areas. They are important for enjoying and exploring, for travelling to work or school and for health and wellbeing. They are part of what makes Surrey a special place to live, work and enjoy.

A public right of way is a path that anyone, by law, has the right to use. There are four types:

- Footpaths for walking, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs
- Bridleways for walking, horse riding, cycling, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs
- Restricted byways for walking, horse riding, cycling, mobility scooters or powered wheelchairs and horse-drawn carriages  
Byways for all modes including motorised vehicles

Every council that is responsible for public rights of way must have a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP). This sets out how public rights of way meet the needs of the public, now and in the future. Our current Rights of Way Improvement Plan dates from 2014 and needs to be reviewed.

## Why your views matter

Your council's views will help us to make sure that our new Rights of Way Improvement Plan meets the needs of everyone in Surrey.

Your feedback will help to develop the priorities and actions of the new Rights of Way Improvement Plan, which will be produced in 2024. Once the new Rights of Way Improvement Plan has been finalised and approved by the council it will be published on Surrey County Council's website.

Please complete our survey by 10 March 2024.

Please only submit one official response for your council.

If you wish to respond as an individual, please visit <https://www.surreysays.co.uk/environment-and-infrastructure/rowip-public> for our public survey. This also closes on 10 March 2024.

The process of producing the new ROWIP is being supported by an external consultant. If you need to discuss the process of preparing the new ROWIP please contact [sccrowip@blackwoodbayne.co.uk](mailto:sccrowip@blackwoodbayne.co.uk). Alternatively, please contact Surrey County Council at [sccrowip@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:sccrowip@surreycc.gov.uk) or on 0300 200 1003.

This survey is to support the Improvement Plan only. If you want to report an issue on a public right of way please click on this link: Contact us or report an issue on a Right of Way - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk) <https://rightsofway.surreycc.gov.uk/> or call 0300 200 1003.

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## Section 1

**Please enter the name of the town or parish council you are replying on behalf of:**  
(Required)

**Please provide your name**  
(Required)

**Please provide your contact details in case we need to get in touch with you. This could be an email address or a phone number**

**In what capacity are you representing the parish or town council (choose all that apply). Note – this should be the official response of the council**  
(Required)

*Please select only one item*

- Parish or town clerk
- Chair
- Parish or town councillor
- Footpaths / access warden
- Other (please specify)

If other selected, please specify below:

**Does your parish have a public rights of way officer, warden or other representative?**

*(Required)*

*Please select only one item*

- Yes
- No

If yes, please provide further details on the role of your public rights of way officer, warden or other parish council representative.

**Do you pay for any maintenance work on public rights of way in your parish?**

*(Required)*

*Please select only one item*

- Yes
- No

If yes, please provide further details. On average, how much do you pay annually? Do you have an annual budget? What works do you pay for?

**Do you have volunteers who help with the maintenance and improvement of public rights of way in your area?**

*(Required)*

*Please select only one item*

- Yes
- No

If yes, please provide further details on what work your volunteers carry out. Please provide an estimate of how many work days volunteers contribute to works on public rights of way

**Does your council promote any routes?**

*(Required)*

*Please select only one item*

- Yes
- No

If yes, please provide further details or a link to your promoted routes.

## Section 2

**How satisfied are you with the following aspects of public rights of way in your parish?**

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Vegetation clearance (paths are not overgrown) <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reinstatement and clearance of paths through crops <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Waymarking of routes – the directional signing along routes <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fingerposts at the end of public rights of way where the route leaves the road <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The condition of stiles and gates <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Surface condition <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accessibility for less mobile users <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paths being free from obstructions (not including crops) <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**Would your council be interested in exercising your powers as a Parish Council under Section 43 Highways Act 1980 to maintain public rights of way, or to increase your involvement in other ways?**

Please select only one item

- Yes
- No

Please provide reasons for your answer below:

**To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? The public rights of way network in our parish is:**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree or disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
An important asset for residents in our parish <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Important to support the health and well-being of residents in our parish <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Important for travelling to work and school <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Important for enjoying and exploring nature <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Important for tourism and the visitor economy <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Do you feel that over the last 10 years the general condition of public rights of way in your parish has:**

Please select only one item

- Improved
- Stayed the same
- Declined
- Not sure / don't know

Please provide reasons for your answer below.

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### Section 3

Have you reported a public rights of way issue to Surrey County Council in the past 12 months?

*(Required)*

*Please select only one item*

- Yes (go to Section 4)
  - No (go to Section 5)
-



Section 4

**How would you rate the service of Surrey County Council when you reported an issue?**

	Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very good	Not applicable
Ease of reporting the issue <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ease of tracking the progress of your report online <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Overall service you received <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**How could we have improved your experience of reporting a problem on a public right of way?**

Section 5

**We aim to provide a public rights of way network that serves the needs of Surrey County residents. To do this, we may need to prioritise where we spend our available budget while delivering on our responsibilities under (within) the law. In your opinion how important are each of the following:**

	Not at all important	Of little importance	Neither important or unimportant	Important	Very important
Maintaining the current public rights of way network <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Protecting and improving the public rights of way network through changes due to development and major infrastructure projects <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improving access for those living with disabilities <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improving access for people to improve their health and well-being <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improving public rights of way for commuting, to work, school or other facilities <i>Please select only one item</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Are there other areas which you think should be a priority?**

**Do you have any additional comments which will help us to draft the Rights of Way Improvement Plan?**

**Please tell us of any specific public right of way issues or improvements in your parish. Please provide route numbers (if possible) and/or a precise description of the location of the route.**

Continue separately if necessary and email to [sccrowip@blackwoodbayne.co.uk](mailto:sccrowip@blackwoodbayne.co.uk) or [sccrowip@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:sccrowip@surreycc.gov.uk)