

Meeting of the Plans Committee

Monday 27 January 2025

Agenda Item No. 8.0

TO CONSIDER THE PROCESS FOR RESPONDING TO SURVEY ON EAST SUSSEX RIGHTS OF WAY ACCESS PLAN

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 Work is beginning on a review of East Sussex County Council's Rights of Way Access Plan. East Sussex County Council have approached Parish and Town Councils before drafting the new Rights of Way Access Plan to ensure their refreshed plan reflects local priorities and what we think to be important.
- 1.2 The County Council is responsible for around 2,000 miles (3218 km) of [public rights of way](#). These paths are important for enjoying and exploring, for travelling to work or school and for health and wellbeing. They are part of what makes East Sussex a special place to live, work and enjoy. 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*
- 1.3 The Rights of Way Access Plan is an important policy document which the County Council is required by law to have in place. It sets out how the County Council can make sure public rights of way meet the needs of the public, now and in the future. The Rights of Way Access Plan aims to address the priorities of the County in terms of health and wellbeing, supporting people living with disabilities and mental health issues, regeneration, growth, transport, climate change, tourism and other priorities.
- 1.4 Parish and Town Councils have been sent a survey, and they are seeking one official response on behalf of each council. Members of the public will be consulted separately with a more individual based survey, so please do not share this version wider, as it will cause confusion.
- 1.5 The survey for Parish and Town Councils can be found at the following weblink or a hard copy is available to view in appendix A.
<https://consultation.eastsussex.gov.uk/economy-transport-environment/eb728fd7/>
- 1.6 The survey deadline falls on 14 March 2025.
- ### **2.0 Recommendation**
- 2.1 Members are asked to consider how they wish to compile a response on behalf of Uckfield Town Council before the deadline of 14 March 2025.

Contact Officer: Linda Lewis/Holly Goring

Rights of Way Access Plan - Parish and Town Council Survey

It is preferred that you complete this survey online at:

<https://consultation.eastsussex.gov.uk/economy-transport-environment/eb728fd7/>

If this is not possible, paper copies can be posted to Sharon Bayne, Blackwood Bayne Ltd, at 8 Herts Crescent, Loose, Maidstone, Kent ME15 0AX or emailed to esccrowap@blackwoodbayne.co.uk or ESCCRoWAP@eastsussex.gov.uk

Overview

East Sussex County Council is responsible for around 2,000 miles (3218 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 East Sussex 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 2007 and needs to be reviewed. The new plan will be called the Rights of Way Access Plan (ROWAP).

Why your views matter

Your views will help us to make sure that our new Rights of Way Access Plan meets the needs of everyone in East Sussex.

If you use public rights of way, we'd like to know about your experience and how important they are for you.

If you don't use public rights of way, we'd like to know what prevents you and what, if anything, we can do to support you in using them.

Your feedback will help to develop the priorities and actions of the new Rights of Way Access Plan, which will be produced in 2025. Once the new Rights of Way Access Plan has been finalised and approved by the council it will be published on East Sussex County Council's website.

Please complete our survey by the 14th March 2025.

The process of producing the new Rights of Way Access Plan is being supported by an external consultant. If you need to discuss the process of preparing the new ROWAP please contact escrowap@blackwoodbayne.co.uk. Alternatively, please contact East Sussex County Council at ESCCRoWAP@eastsussex.gov.uk or on 0345 60 80 193.

This survey is to support the Rights of Way Access Plan only. If you want to report an issue on a public right of way please click on this link: [Contact us](#) or report and issue on a Right of Way or call 0345 60 80 193.

We are committed to protecting your privacy when you use any of our services. Our Privacy Notices explains how we use the information about you and how we protect your privacy: [Rights of Way and Countryside Team - Privacy Notice - East Sussex County Council](#)

Rights of Way Action Plan - Parish and Town Council Survey

1. Please enter the name of the town or parish council you are replying on behalf of:

2. Please provide your name.

3. 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.

4. 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.

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

5. Does your parish have a public rights of way officer, warden or other representative? Please select only one item

- Yes. If yes, please provide further details in the text box below.
- No

6. Do you carry out or pay for any maintenance work on public rights of way in your parish? Please select only one item.

- Yes. (If yes, please provide further details below.)
- No

7. Do you have volunteers who help with the maintenance and improvement of public rights of way in your area? Please select only one item.

- Yes. If yes, please provide more detail below.
- 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.

8. **If you do not already have a volunteer group in your area, would you be interested in setting up a group to maintain public rights of way in your Parish?** Please select only one item.

- Yes
 No

9. **Does your council promote any routes?** Please select only one item.

- Yes. If yes, please provide more detail or a link to your promoted routes in the text box below.
 No

Public rights of way in your area

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

	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Vegetation clearance (paths are not overgrown)					
Reinstatement and clearance of paths through crops					
Waymarking of routes – the directional signing along routes					
Fingerposts at the end of public rights of way where the route leaves the road					
The condition of stiles and gates					
The condition of timber bridges					
Surface condition					
Accessibility for less mobile users					
Paths being free from obstructions (not including crops)					

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

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
An important asset for residents in our parish					
Important to support the health and well-being of residents in our parish					
Important for travelling to work and school					
Important for enjoying and exploring nature					
Important for tourism and the visitor economy					

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

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

Please provide reasons for your answer below.

Reporting PROW Issues

13. Have you reported a public rights of way issue to East Sussex County Council in the past 12 months?

- Yes
 No

14. How did you report the problem? Please tick all that apply.

- Through East Sussex County Council's online Rights of Way Map
 Through East Sussex County Council's Highways Contact Centre via phone
 Directly to the Rights of Way & Countryside Team's email address/inbox
 Other: Please specify below

Service When Reporting Issues

15. How would you rate the service of East Sussex County Council when you reported an issue?

	Very poor	Poor	Neutral	Good	Very good	Not applicable
Ease of reporting the issue by phone						
Ease of reporting the issue via email						
Ease of reporting the issue via online map						
Ease of tracking the progress of your report						
Overall service you received						

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

Priorities

17. We aim to provide a public rights of way network that serves the needs of East Sussex 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 nor unimportant	Important	Very important
Maintaining the current public rights of way network					
Protecting and improving the public rights of way network through changes due to development and major infrastructure projects					
Improving access for those living with disabilities					
Improving access for people to improve their health and well-being					
Improving public rights of way for commuting, to work, school or other facilities					

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

18. Do you have any additional comments which will help us to draft the Rights of Way Access Plan?

19. 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 esccrowap@blackwoodbayne.co.uk or ESCCR0WAP@eastsussex.gov.uk