

GUIDANCE ON HOW SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL ASSESSES PRIORITIES FOR DEALING WITH MAINTENANCE AND ENFORCEMENT PROBLEMS ON THE RIGHTS OF WAY NETWORK

There are over 3500 km of public rights of way in Surrey which we divide into 4 areas, each with a countryside access officer. Due to the number of reports we receive it is essential for operational reasons that that we deal with certain issues first.

All maintenance and enforcement problems reported to Surrey County Council or identified through inspections will be allotted a priority when they enter our on line system. We will consider the following factors when allocating a priority to a report:

- Level of danger to the public.
- Degree of hazard, obstruction, encroachment or inconvenience.
- Level of use, or likely use, of the path and the type of path (eg strategically important, route to schools, stations, town or village centre etc, SCC promoted route or National Trail).
- Inclusion as part of the County Council's promoted route network or National Trail.
- Volume of complaints received from different sources.
- Likely duration of problem.
- Cause of problem and whether it is within the County Council's powers to rectify.

This list is in no order of importance, nor weighting given to any factor. Priorities will be assigned with consideration to the effect upon all public users of the rights of way network. Normally the order of priorities for dealing with problems will be as follows.

Priority 1

- Accident/incident where serious injury has occurred.
- Any matter that poses an immediate, significant danger to the public.
- Matter requiring immediate engineering attention (eg bridge, retaining wall, dam, large void in surface of path etc).

Priority 2

- New permanent obstruction **with no** alternative route.
- Live planning non-compliance that would lead to an irredeemable loss of path.
- Surface damage/disturbance preventing use by public.
- Obstructing/ fallen/ leaning trees or surface vegetation that prevent use on strategic routes (not already included in the annual vegetation cutting list programme).

Problems that would normally be allocated either a priority 3 or 4, if on a strategically important route will move up a priority number.

Priority 3

- Serious fault with non-County Council structure i.e stile or gate.
- Electric fencing without crossing aid.
- Repeated harassment and intimidating behaviour or notices.
- Temporary or significant obstruction **with no** alternative route.
- New permanent significant encroachment..
- Obstructing crops or ploughing which affect the use of the path.
- Surface/side/overhanging vegetation severely limiting path use (not already included in annual vegetation cutting programme).
- Surface conditions making access inconvenient (where previously maintained).
- Wilful removal of signpost in order to mislead the public.
- Replacement of missing roadside signs.
- Failure of adjacent fence/structure compromising public access

Priority 4

- Misleading Notice (other than those in Priority 3 above)
- Non-County Council structure making access inconvenient (eg high or ageing stile)
- Technical (legal) obstruction/encroachment.
- Surface vegetation/conditions spoiling enjoyment of path (not on annual vegetation cutting programme)
- Path maintenance requests not covered by higher priority (eg heavy vegetation)
- Path surfacing where not previously maintained, etc)
- New requests for handrails/steps/boardwalks/etc.
- Misuse of a public right of way by animals or other users so as to affect the use of the path.

Priority 5

- Boundary or private access issues that do not affect the public users of a path
- De minimus obstruction/encroachment

Pro-active and Cyclical Work

Certain matters will be dealt with pro-actively or cyclically outside the above priority Guidelines. These include:

- Roadside sign replacement, waymarking and non roadside signposting (mainly during winter)
- Annual vegetation cutting programme (spring/autumn)