

# **Surrey County Council Public Rights of Way (PROW) Maintenance and Enforcement**

## **Priority Statement – November 2023**

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There are around 2,200 miles of public rights of way in Surrey carried through diverse countryside, as well as urban areas. The county is divided into two management areas, east and west Surrey.

Surrey's Rights of Way Team receive around 3,500 maintenance and enforcement reports each year. To ensure public safety and manage the workload effectively, all reports are carefully prioritised reflecting current applicable legislation. Risk relating to public safety is assessed by combining the severity of a potential hazard/accident and the likelihood that it will occur.

We deal with all reports in the following order of priority, from 1 (high) to 5 (low).

### **Priority 1 – High risk safety issues, including:**

- Accident/incident where death or serious injury has occurred.
- Tree defect, surface defect or large infrastructure failure causing an immediate and high risk to public safety.
- Any other matter that causes an immediate and high risk to public safety.

### **Priority 2 – Medium risk safety issues, full width obstructions, large infrastructure failures, including:**

- Tree defect, surface defect or large infrastructure failure causing a medium risk to public safety.
- Any other matter that causes a medium risk to public safety.
- Full width obstructions, including fallen trees, with no alternative route.

### **Priority 3 – Low risk safety issues, full width obstructions with alternative route, significant statutory duty requirements, including:**

- Tree defect, surface defect or large infrastructure failure causing a low risk to public safety.
- Any other matter that causes a low risk to public safety.
- Full width obstruction, including fallen trees, with alternative route
- Significant fault with non-County Council structure such as: stile, gate or adjoining fence, causing safety issue or obstruction.
- Public nuisance causing safety issue or significant deterrent, such as: aggressive animal behaviour, electric fencing without crossing aid, repeated harassment and intimidating behaviour or notices.
- Replacement of missing roadside signs
- Wilful removal of signpost in order to mislead the public
- Vegetation severely limiting use of path (not already included in annual vegetation cutting programme).
- Crops or ploughed surface preventing use of path.

- New permanent significant encroachment preventing use of path.
- Surface conditions severely limiting use of path.
- Live planning non-compliance that would lead to an irredeemable loss of path.

#### **Priority 4 – Very low risk safety issues, partial width obstructions, statutory powers, including:**

- Tree defect, surface defect or infrastructure failure causing a very low risk to public safety.
- Any other matter that causes a very low risk to public safety.
- Public nuisance, such as: deterrent or surface disturbance by animals, misleading signs/notices
- Non-County Council structure making access inconvenient eg high or ageing stile.
- Vegetation limiting use of path (not on annual vegetation cutting programme), including hedges and fallen trees partially obstructing path width.
- Encroachments not preventing use of path
- Path maintenance requests not covered by higher priority eg heavy/tunnelled vegetation.
- Path surfacing improvements requests where not previously maintained.
- New requests for furniture such as: barriers, handrails, steps, boardwalks etc.
- Maintenance of non-roadside waymarking.

#### **Priority 5 – Non safety issues, no negative effect on public use of path, including:**

- Boundary or private access issues/disputes with no/little negative effect on public use of path.
- Minor or technical (legal) obstruction/encroachment with no/little negative effect on public use of path.
- Unlicensed structures in good condition not affecting the public user.

#### **Issues not dealt with by SCC Rights of Way Team**

- Fly-tipping
- Common land protection/enforcement
- Private access rights
- Litter/dog bins
- Street lighting
- Anti-social behaviour eg. graffiti

Capital improvement works are not covered by this Priority Statement.