



## OFFICER REPORT TO COUNCIL

### **PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY PRIORITY STATEMENT AND RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR SURREY**

#### **KEY ISSUE/DECISION:**

To adopt the revised Public Rights of Way Priority Statement.

To adopt the revised Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Surrey.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

##### **The Public Rights of Way Priority Statement**

1. The Public Rights of Way Priority Statement sets out how the County Council prioritises and sets targets for undertaking legal orders associated with keeping the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way in Surrey up to date.
2. As surveying authority for public rights of way, the County Council is required under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to keep the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way under continuous review. The Priority Statement has recently been revised to better reflect the Council's statutory duties, address public safety issues and maximise opportunities to improve the rights of way network.
3. There are no direct budgetary implications of the review, although by allowing landowner-led public path diversion orders, where there is a public benefit, improvements to the path network can be undertaken without cost to the Council.
4. The Cabinet considered and approved the revised Priority Statement at its meeting on 21 October 2014, which is annexed at A.

##### **The Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Surrey**

5. The Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) for Surrey was adopted and published by the County Council in 2007.

6. Every highway authority in England has a statutory duty under section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 to prepare a ROWIP. It is intended to be the prime means by which local highway authorities identify the changes to be made in respect of the management and improvements to their local rights of way network, in order to meet the Government's aim of better provision for walkers, cyclists, equestrians and people with mobility difficulties. It is not designed to provide detailed solutions to access problems in every locality, but to take a strategic approach to managing public access. Local rights of way include footpaths, cycle tracks, bridleways, restricted byways and byways open to all traffic.
7. The document has been reviewed in response to changing policies and priorities of the Government and County Council. There is also a statutory duty to review the ROWIP within ten years of publication. The ROWIP considers the contribution an improved rights of way network can make to the objectives of many County Council strategies and priorities. In particular it is part of the Surrey Transport Plan. It considers the contribution to the local economy of visits to the countryside, as well as the necessity to work closely with partners such as the District and Borough Councils and the Surrey Countryside Access Forum.
8. The ROWIP revised edition 2014 is annexed at B.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The County Council is recommended to:

- 1) Adopt the revised Public Rights of Way Priority Statement 7<sup>th</sup> Edition dated October 2014
- 2) Adopt the revised Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Surrey 2014

---

#### **Lead/Contact Officers:**

Steve Mitchell, Countryside Access Team Manager, Tel: 020 8541 7040

#### **Sources/background papers:**

Report to Cabinet 21 October 2014

**Annex A: The revised (October 2014) Public Rights of Way Priority Statement**

**Annex B: The revised (2014) Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Surrey**

---