



A 25 year strategy for Surrey County Council's Countryside Estate

Engagement

- Meetings with major landowners- importance of collaboration and shared concerns around biodiversity, natural capital, access and education, rural business.
- Meetings with local Community liaison groups and follow up workshops
- Discussion with Surrey Countryside Access Forum, Parks and Countryside Forum and Surrey Countryside and Rural Enterprise Forum
- Caring For the Countryside Survey ran Sept-Dec 2018-key results to follow

Feedback from the Consultation

- 1367 responses, 16% aged 25- 44, 65% aged 45 -74
- 93% said they thought it was either important or very important to protect valuable habitats and landscapes.
- On whether the countryside should generate its own income to protect it from public sector cuts the response split 3 ways, 33% felt it was important or very important, 33% were neutral about the issue and 33% felt it was unimportant or very unimportant.
- most people visited the Countryside Estate at least monthly and travelled for 6-30 minutes.
- Most often visited sites are Newlands Corner, Chobham, Ockham and Wisley, Wotton Estate and Norbury Park
- People generally access the sites by car (74.5%), walk (14%) Cycle (4%)

Feedback from the Consultation-what people do when they get there

- went for a walk (75%), walking with a dog (38%),
- Nature watching (40%)
- running (11%),
- cycling (14%),
- horse riding (4%)
- time spent with children (23.5%)

Feedback from the Consultation

What service would people like to see:

- 28% more walking routes
- 18% more accessible paths
- 10% more cycle paths
- 25% improved information boards
- 21% more waymarkers
- 24% more toilets
- 19% café/refreshment kiosk
- 6% more play areas

Focus Groups and Workshops

More qualitative responses:

From Focus Groups:

Evident that there is a generation split:

- The younger users were prepared to pay to use the countryside and wanted to understand the costs of managing the countryside
- Older users tended to want to see no change and felt they had already paid through their council taxes.

The workshops helped to understand what local users wanted to see and how that might be achieved.

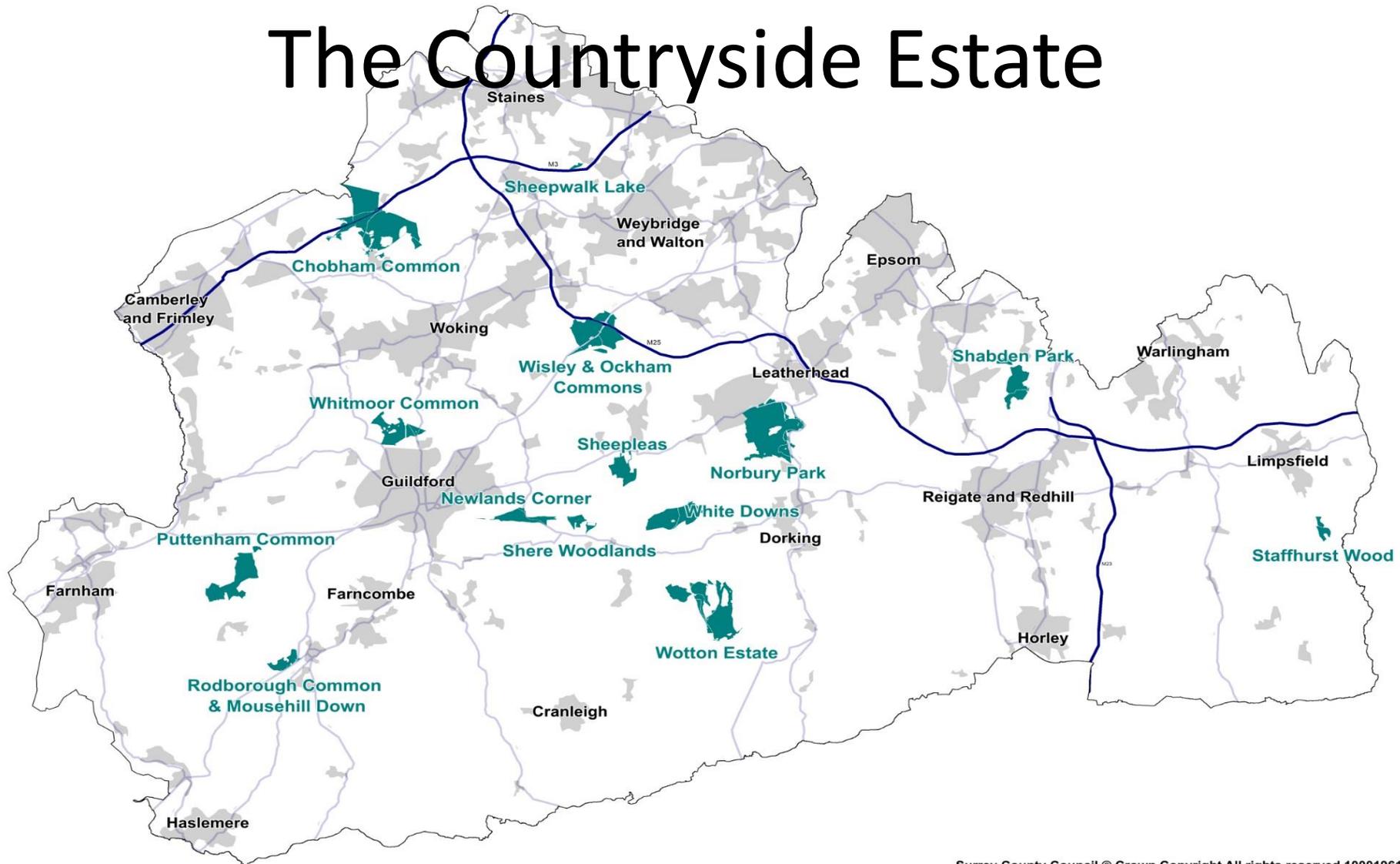
Emerging Themes

- Education and Engagement-learn more about the sites, trails to follow, volunteering opportunities,
- Access For Health and Wellbeing-desire for more access, to know where can go, waymarked trails, guided walks
- Natural Capital-biodiversity, joining sites up, role in reducing flooding, cleaning water, providing sites where wildlife can flourish,
- Supporting our farmers and businesses in the countryside demonstrating by example

The structure of the Strategy

- **Purpose**-under pressure from development and an increasing number of people seeking recreation in Surrey we need to have a strategy in place that ensures these sites continue to provide access and wildlife conservation.
- **Engagement**-to develop the strategy and to take things forward
- **The Challenge**-Development, fragmented habitats, pressure from some recreational uses, lack of understanding of the countryside
- **Principals** for managing the Estate-Criteria for categorising the sites for future management
- **The Mechanism**- propose to categorise the sites, engage the local community more in their local sites and develop detailed plans for those sites, develop landscape scale projects
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The Countryside Estate



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