

**Highway Hierarchy Definition  
Policy  
Roads, Footways, Cycle Routes  
March 2025 – Version 1**



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### 1. Highway network hierarchy - Introduction

The Surrey County Council (SCC) Highway Hierarchy is well established, the carriageway definition has been in use since around 1989. Hierarchies are in place for Roads, Footways (Pavements) and Cycle Routes.

The hierarchy of a road, footway or cycle route is decided by the Asset Planning Team based on how it scores against stated criteria. Those criteria are defined in this document. Each road, footway or cycle route is scored using the criteria in the definition, and a record kept of why it has been given that hierarchy category. Routine changes are made to the road and footway hierarchy every 3 months as roads are adopted or information about usage is updated. Larger reviews are undertaken as necessary to update traffic and bus route data. A history is maintained when changes are made.

Local officers, inspectors, and members of the public provide feedback challenging the road and footway hierarchy, each of which is reviewed on a case by case basis and updates made where appropriate.

The cycle route hierarchy is based on a dataset managed by the Surrey County Council Transport Policy Team

Where roads cross from Surrey into neighbouring Local Authorities, hierarchies have been compared to identify significant differences between safety inspection regimes or winter treatment routes and adjusted where considered necessary.

The hierarchies are in line with the recommendation for a functional network hierarchy as described in 'Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice' (October 2016).

The hierarchy is based on information about how a road, footway or cycle route is used. This helps indicate how important that part of the network is to Surrey's highway users, such as schools, businesses, residents, vulnerable users, shops, waste centres, bus users and emergency services. Understanding how people use the network helps Surrey to plan work that benefits the most network users and vulnerable users, as well as identify where the greatest risk is likely to occur.

Some examples of how Network Hierarchies are used by SCC in providing a resilient network:

- Highway Safety Inspection (HSI) frequencies are based on the hierarchies, as outlined in the policy found [here](#)
- Surrey's winter salting and ploughing treatment routes are prioritised based on the road hierarchy. Information about them can be found [here](#).
- SCC use the hierarchies to help score and prioritise capital work programmes, information about prioritisation can be found [here](#).
- SCC's Network Resilience Team use the road hierarchy to identify and prioritise roads at risk from flooding
- SCC use the road hierarchy to help decide on Levels of Service for maintenance contracts

## 2. Carriageways

The Surrey County Council road hierarchy is called the Surrey Priority Network, or SPN. The SPN is a risk-based prioritisation of every road that SCC is responsible for. Each hard-surfaced road is assigned one of 5 SPN categories as detailed in the table below— SPN 1, 2, 3, 4a or 4b. The SPN 5 category is used to identify roads that are un-metalled (do not have a maintained hard surface) that vehicles can still use.

The SPN dataset can be viewed in the [Surrey Interactive Map](#) on the SCC website.

Table 1: Carriageway hierarchy

<b>Surrey Priority Network Level</b>	<b>Type of road General description</b>
SPN Level 1	<p>Mainly Principal “A” class roads but including some strategically important Non-Principal roads. Speed limits are usually in excess of 40 mph and there are few junctions. Pedestrian crossings are either segregated or controlled and parked vehicles are generally prohibited.</p> <p>&gt;18,000 AADT (Average Annual Daily Traffic)</p>
SPN Level 2	<p>Remaining Principal “A” class roads, together with other important Non-Principal roads.</p> <p>In street lit urban areas speed limits are usually 40 mph or less and there may be restricted parking at peak times with positive pedestrian safety measures.</p> <p>Population centres typically &gt; 15,000 properties and network based on &gt;12,000 AADT and/or &gt;650 HGV/day on &gt;25% of route.</p> <p>Highways England Agreed Diversion Routes.</p>
SPN Level 3	<p>Mainly “B” class roads, some “C” roads and limited number of unclassified “D” roads carrying local traffic with frontage access.</p> <p>They include access roads to A&amp;E hospitals, large industrial areas, waste disposal and household waste sites.</p> <p>Population centres typically &gt; 5,000 and network based on &gt;8,000 AADT and/or &gt;600 HGV/day on &lt;25% of route</p>

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SPN Level 4a	<p>In rural areas these roads link the smaller and isolated communities to the distributor roads network. Population centres are typically &gt; 200 properties.</p> <p>In urban areas they are residential or industrial interconnecting roads with 30 mph speed limits often with random pedestrian movements and uncontrolled parking. Population centres are typically &gt; 500 properties. They will include major bus routes (50 per day urban and 25 per day rural).</p>
SPN Level 4b	All remaining roads not qualifying for a higher category.
SPN Level 5	Unmetalled roads and Rights of Way

### 3. Footways

The Surrey County Council footway hierarchy is managed by the Asset Planning Team in a similar way to the road hierarchy. The footway hierarchy is a risk based prioritisation of every hard surfaced footway that SCC is responsible for. Each footway is assigned one of 5 categories as detailed in the table below– Footway hierarchy category number 1, 2, 3,4a or 4b

The dataset is maintained and updated by the Highways Asset Planning Team to the same frequency as the SPN – 3 monthly routine updates and reviews of the datasets that support the criteria as necessary. The footway hierarchy dataset was created at a detailed local level - the dataset was built by assessing each footway in Surrey against the listed policy criteria. The dataset was consulted upon with local engineers for each district to validate the decisions. Local officers, inspectors, elected members and members of the public provide feedback challenging the hierarchy, each of which is reviewed on a case by case basis and updates made where appropriate.

As shown in the table below, the Footway Hierarchy categories are based on the key drivers of high footfall and therefore increased risk

- Shops
- Transport Hubs
- Pedestrian Routes
- Schools
- Industrial outlets.
- Community facilities (including but not limited to: hospitals, doctors, dentists pharmacies, community halls, parks, playgrounds, car parks, care homes and other residential homes, bus stops and tourist attractions

Vulnerable users usage of footways is given consideration while assigning hierarchy based on the above criteria. Footway hierarchy was increased where possible in order to link walking routes between the key drivers listed above and community facilities likely to draw footfall of vulnerable users such as doctors surgeries, hospitals and homes for the elderly or visually impaired

The SPN dataset can be viewed in the Surrey Interactive Map on the SCC website.

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Table 2: Surrey Footway Hierarchy

<b>Category number</b>	<b>Brief description</b>
<b>1</b>	Busy urban shopping and business areas and main pedestrian routes - major shopping outlets typically +100 number shops.
<b>2</b>	Secondary Walking - Medium usage routes through local areas feeding into primary routes, local shopping centers typically +20 shops, Town centre links to transport hubs. Large schools 250+ pupils
<b>3</b>	Link Footways – Linking local access footways, small retail shopping outlets typically +5 shops, schools fewer than 250 pupils and Industrial outlets. Linking to local bus stops where appropriate.
<b>4a</b>	Key walking routes through and linking urban areas and community facilities.  Well used walking routes linking rural settlements
<b>4b</b>	All remaining footways not qualifying for a higher category. Rural footways, Town paths, non-link footways in housing estates.

## 4 Cycle Routes

Surrey Highways Cycle Route Hierarchy is aligned with the categories of cycle infrastructure as shown in the dataset owned by the Surrey Transport Policy Team

The categories of facilities can be found on the website [here](#).

An online map of the cycle infrastructure can be found [here](#).

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Table 3: Cycle route hierarchy

<b>Category</b>	<b>Category Description</b>	<b>Surrey Hierarchy Description adopted from CoP</b>
<b>A</b>	Cycle Lanes (Mandatory / Advisory)	Cycle lane forming part of the carriageway, commonly a strip adjacent to the nearside kerb. Cycle gaps at road closure point (no entry to traffic but allowing cycle access).
<b>B</b>	Cycle Tracks	Cycle track - a route for cyclists not contiguous with the public footway or carriageway. Shared cycle/pedestrian paths, either segregated by a white line or other physical segregation, or unsegregated.
<b>C</b>	Greenway	Cycle trails, leisure routes through open spaces. These are not necessarily the responsibility of the highway authority but may be maintained by an authority under other powers or duties.
<b>D</b>	Signed Advisory Route	Cycle provision on carriageway, other than a marked cycle lane or marked cycle provision, where cycle flows are significant.
<b>E</b>	Cycle-friendly traffic management	As identified on traffic regulation order (TRO)