

# Rights of Way Improvement Plan



## Evidence Report 1 Surveys and Stakeholders



# Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Public Online Survey Results.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Introduction .....	4
Who Responded to the Survey? .....	7
Use of Public Rights of Way.....	17
Condition, Maintenance and Problems on Public Rights of Way .....	48
Information Provision about Public Rights of Way.....	64
Views on Public Rights of Way, Priorities and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.....	69
Non-Users.....	72
<b>Parish and Town Council Survey Results .....</b>	<b>73</b>
Introduction .....	73
Parish and Town Council Responses .....	73
Public Rights of Way Maintenance and Promotion by Parish and Town Councils .....	75
Views on Public Rights of Way Condition and Importance, Problem Reporting .....	78
Final Comments.....	83
<b>Landowners .....</b>	<b>84</b>
Online Survey .....	84
Surrey County Council Tenant Farmers.....	92
<b>Stakeholder Engagement .....</b>	<b>93</b>
Introduction .....	93
Summary of Workshops.....	94
Summary of Written Responses.....	99
<b>Appendix.....</b>	<b>109</b>

# Introduction

This report sets out the results of the public and stakeholder engagement carried out prior to the drafting of the Surrey Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2025 – 2035 (ROWIP). The results of this engagement have informed the priorities and actions in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and this report forms part of the evidence base supporting the new Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

Several activities were carried out to gather evidence on the views and needs of the public stakeholders. The public online survey in particular generated a high level of interest, with c4500 responses. The consultation with stakeholders also made contact with several new stakeholder organisations and individuals.

**Online Public Survey:** A public survey was posted online on Surrey Says between 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and 10 March 2024. This was supported by a social media campaign on Surrey County Council channels, posters on Surrey County Council Countryside Sites and press coverage.

**Parish and Town Councils:** All parish and town councils received an emailed letter and were invited to complete a survey, between 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023 and 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024. Two workshops were held through the Surrey Association of Local Councils, one with councillors and one with clerks.

**Elected Councillors:** All Surrey County Council elected Councillors were sent a briefing on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan and a link to the online public survey. An online briefing was also held.

**Landowners:** A landowner survey was posted online between 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024 and 14<sup>th</sup> April 2024. The Country Land and Business Association and the National Farmers Union publicised the survey. Some landowners were also contacted by the Countryside Access Service. An additional session of Surrey County Council tenant farmers was also attended.

**Engagement with Stakeholders:** We contacted 158 stakeholder groups and organisations, 26 councils within and neighbouring Surrey and 55 Residents' Associations asking for their views. We held workshops with users and held meetings with stakeholders.

**Local Access Forum:** The Rights of Way Improvement Plan was an agenda item at all Surrey Countryside Access Forum meetings (the Local Access Forum for Surrey) between April 2023 and October 2024. A workshop was held with the LAF in September 2024.

Details of those contacted and a summary of feedback is included in the section of this report '[Stakeholder Engagement](#)' and in the [Appendix](#).

# Public Online Survey Results

## Introduction

There were 4273 total responses to the questionnaire. Not all respondents answered all of the questions.

Where it was useful to provide greater insight, results were analysed by male and female and by age group.

## How People Heard about the Survey

Respondents were asked 'How did you hear about the survey?'. Respondents could give more than one answer.

The highest was 'From social media – not Surrey County Council' with 28% of people giving this as one of their answers. The second highest, indicated by 16% of respondents, was 'from a club or society'.

There were also 1195 comments made under 'other'. Of these the BBC was specifically mentioned. With 15% of people mentioning this, this was the third highest response.



The screenshot shows a BBC News article. The top navigation bar includes the BBC logo, 'For you', and links for Home, News, Sport, Weather, and iPlayer. Below this is a red 'NEWS' banner with a secondary navigation bar containing links for Home, Election 2024, InDepth, Israel-Gaza war, Cost of Living, War in Ukraine, Climate, UK, World, and Business. The article's breadcrumb trail is 'England | Local News | Surrey'. The main headline is 'Residents asked for opinions on public footpaths'. The featured image shows a wooden signpost with three directional arrows pointing to 'Newlands Corner', 'The Old Mill', and 'The Old Farm' in a rural landscape. Below the image is a caption: 'SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL. | Newlands Corner near Guildford is a popular walking spot.' The author is 'Rosie Blunt', BBC News, South East, and the article is dated '14 January 2024'. A short introductory text at the bottom reads: 'Surrey residents are being asked to share their views on footpaths to help drive improvements.'

Surrey County Council social media was fourth (when the BBC was included), with 8% of people mentioning this.

Surrey County Council newsletters, websites and mailings also generated several hundred responses – but appears to be less significant due to the volume through other routes. Surrey County Council newsletter – Surrey Matters generated 214 responses (5% overall), Surrey County Council website – Surrey Says generated 181 responses (4% overall) and Surrey County Council newsletter - Countryside Newsletter generated 105 responses (2%).

Overall Surrey County Council promotion accounted for 19% of responses, which would place Surrey County Council second highest overall.

Table 1: How did you hear about the survey?

How did you hear about the survey? n.4273	Number	% giving this as an answer (n. 4273)
From social media – not Surrey County Council	1193	28%
From a club or society	672	16%
Surrey County Council social media e.g. Facebook, X (Twitter), Instagram or Next Door	348	8%
From my parish or town council	280	7%
An email inviting me to respond	265	6%
Surrey County Council newsletter – Surrey Matters	214	5%
Surrey County Council website – Surrey Says	181	4%
Surrey County Council newsletter - Countryside Newsletter	105	2%
Other	1195	28%
Total	4462	

Table 2: How did you hear about the survey? Other Comments.

Categories n.1195	Number	% of all responses n.4273	% of 'other' responses n.1195
BBC / online news	646	15%	54%
From a friend / family / neighbour / word of mouth	185	4%	15%
News or local newsletters (specified)	62	1%	5%
Residents' Association	40	1%	3%
News outlet (not BBC, not specified)	36	1%	3%
On-site poster or notice board	25	1%	2%
From a councillor (county or borough)	24	1%	2%
Local community group / forum / village social media	22	1%	2%
Ramblers Association	21	0%	2%
Facebook / social media (not specified)	19	0%	2%
British Horse Society / Riding Club / Equestrian social media	18	0%	2%
Political group / newsletter	13	0%	1%
WhatsApp Group / Nextdoor	13	0%	1%
Internet search	11	0%	1%
Trail Riders Fellowship / GLASS / motorised vehicle users club	9	0%	1%
Cycling Group / social media	7	0%	1%
Surrey Countryside Access Forum member	6	0%	1%
Email approach	6	0%	1%
Internal Surrey County Council	6	0%	1%
Countryside Partnership	4	0%	0%
Other	28	1%	2%

## Points to Note

Participation in the survey was self-selecting and is not an indicative sample of the entire Surrey population. Participation is reliant on awareness of the survey and the propensity to take part based on the topic and level of interest. Those who take part are likely to be more interested in public rights of way, access and the countryside than the overall population of Surrey. This needs to be considered when interpreting results. However, it does provide a large sample of people who have an interest in the subject and who use public rights of way.

Consultees did not have to answer all the questions and therefore some questions had a higher number of responses than others. The sample size is indicated in the data tables.

Percentages have been rounded to whole numbers and therefore may not add up to 100%.

# Who Responded to the Survey?

## Reasons for Responding to the Survey

Respondents were asked 'What is your main reason or reasons for responding to the survey?'. Respondents could give more than one answer.

Most respondents, 90%, indicated they were Surrey residents. 7% indicated they visited Surrey and 1% worked in Surrey but lived elsewhere. The geographic location of respondents is explored more fully in section '[Location of Respondents](#)'.

Table 3: What is your main reason or reasons for responding to the survey?

What is your main reason or reasons for responding to the survey? n.4273	Number	% giving this as an answer (n. 4273)
I am a Surrey resident	3859	90%
I visit Surrey	290	7%
I work in Surrey but live elsewhere	53	1%
I am providing a response on behalf of an organisation	53	1%
I am a parish or town councillor	34	1%
I am responding on behalf of a business	18	0%
I am a district councillor	15	0%
I am a Surrey County Council councillor	7	0%
I study in Surrey but live elsewhere	1	0%
Other	104	2%
Total	4434	

129 people gave further information and background on their reasons for responding. Highest, with 40% of people giving this as part of their response, was that they kept a horse in Surrey and rode in Surrey. Some of these indicated they lived elsewhere but had their horse on livery in Surrey. Second highest was that public rights of way were important to them or that they used them.

Table 4: What is your main reason or reasons for responding to this survey? Additional information

Additional information given	Number n.129	% giving this as part of their answer
Horse rider or horse kept in Surrey and live elsewhere	51	40%
Use public rights of way / care about public rights of way / important to me	30	23%
Member of an organised group or responding in official capacity	20	16%
Live outside of Surrey but use public rights of way in Surrey	15	12%
Raising specific issues	6	5%
Other	5	4%
Landowner	3	2%

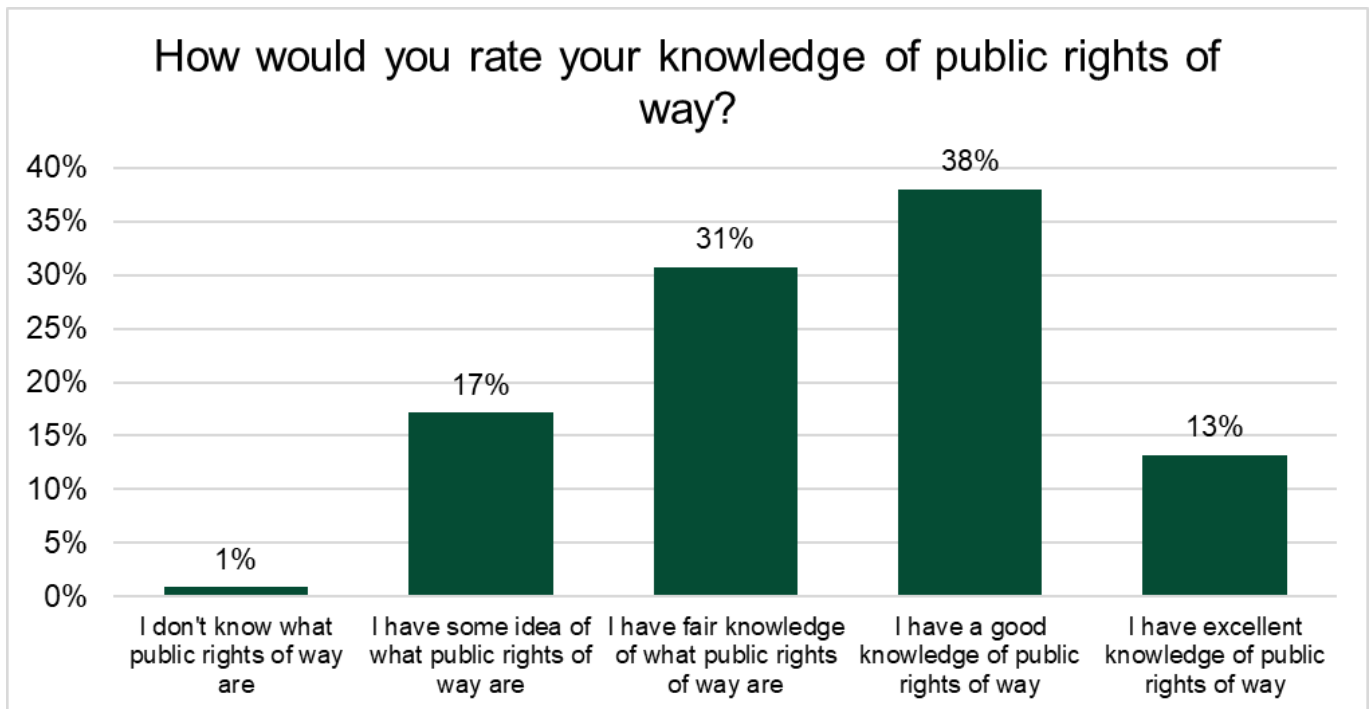
## Knowledge of Public Rights of Way

Respondents were asked 'How would you rate your knowledge of public rights of way?'. Most respondents (69%) thought they had a fair or good knowledge of what public rights of way are. 13% thought they had excellent knowledge.

Table 5: How would you rate your knowledge of public rights of way?

Answer n.4273	Number	%
I don't know what public rights of way are	37	1%
I have some idea of what public rights of way are	732	17%
I have fair knowledge of what public rights of way are	1314	31%
I have a good knowledge of public rights of way	1624	38%
I have excellent knowledge of public rights of way	566	13%
Total	4273	

Chart 1: How would you rate your knowledge of public rights of way?



## Do you use Surrey County's public rights of way?

98% of respondents to the survey answered that they do use public rights of way. Those answering 'no' were directed to a set of questions asking for more information on the reasons for this, detailed in section '[Non-users](#)'.



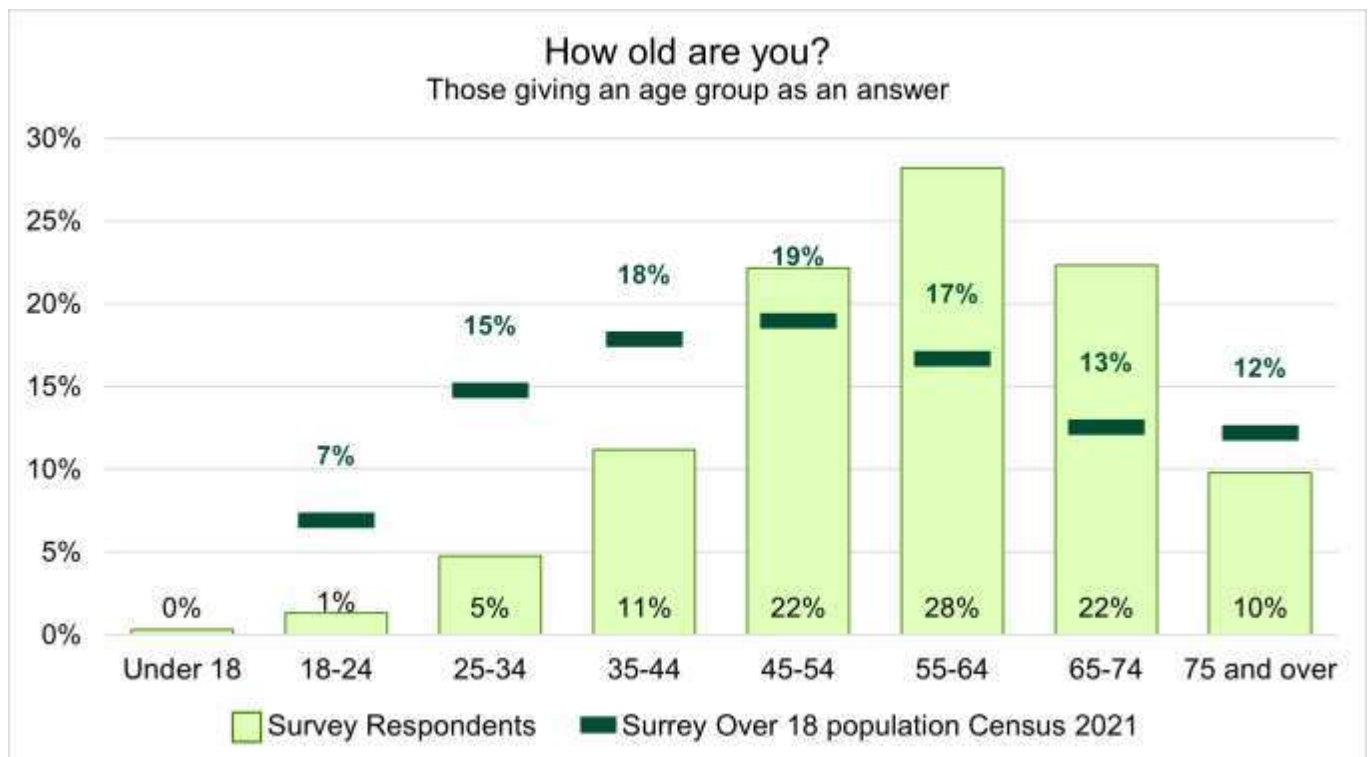
## Age Profile

There was a higher proportion of older respondents to the survey than in the Surrey population as a whole. Overall, 82% of respondents were over the age of 45, compared to 46% for the overall Surrey population. The age group with the highest number of responses was 55 to 64 years old. There were 13 respondents aged under 18, and 54 aged between 18 and 24.

Table 6: How old are you?

	Number	% n.4273	% of those giving an age category n.4110	Surrey over 18 population Census 2021 %
Under 18	13	0%	0%	
18-24	54	1%	1%	7%
25-34	196	5%	5%	15%
35-44	459	11%	11%	18%
45-54	910	21%	22%	19%
55-64	1159	27%	28%	17%
65-74	917	21%	22%	13%
75 and over	402	9%	10%	12%
Prefer not to say	147	3%		
Not answered	16	0%		
Total	4273	100%	100%	100%

Chart 2: How old are you?



## Ethnic Group

Respondents were asked 'What is your ethnic group?'. Of those giving an ethnic group as an answer, 97% identified as white. This compares with 86% of the population of Surrey (Census 2021). 3% of respondents were of another ethnic group, compared to 15% of the population of Surrey.

Table 7: What is your ethnic group?

Ethnic group	Number	% n.4273	% of those giving an ethnicity category n.3912	Surrey Population % Census 2021
White	3790	89%	97%	86%
Black, Black British, Caribbean or African	8	0%	0%	2%
Asian or Asian British	46	1%	1%	8%
Mixed or multiple ethnic groups	45	1%	1%	3%
Other ethnic group	23	1%	1%	2%
Prefer not to say	320	7%		
Not answered	41	1%		
Total	4273			

Some people gave other answers or additional information. These were grouped according to common sentiments:

- 13 people commented that they were English
- 12 people commented that they were British
- 11 people commented that the question was not relevant or they objected to inclusion of the question
- 18 people gave comments which could not be categorised. These were specific details of their precise ethnicity.

## Gender

Respondents were asked 'What is your gender'. Of those which gave a category as an answer, 45% were male and 54% were female. The remainder identified as non-binary / a gender / gender fluid or other.

Table 8: What is your gender?

Gender	Number	% n.4273	% of those giving an answer n.4113
Male	1866	44%	45%
Female	2231	52%	54%
Non-binary / a gender / gender fluid or other	16	0%	0.4%
Prefer not to say	132	3%	
Not answered	28	1%	
Total	4273	100%	100%

## Long-standing Illness or Disability

Respondents were asked if they had a long-standing illness or disability (a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on your ability to do normal daily activities)? 8% of respondents giving a 'yes' or 'no' answer said they had a condition which met this criteria; 92% did not. There is not an identically worded question in the Census 2021 to enable direct and accurate comparison, but the number of people classed as disabled under the Equality Act, whose day-to-day activities are limited a little or a lot is 13.7% in Surrey.

Table 9: Do you have a long-standing illness or disability?

	Number	% n.4273	% of those giving an answer n.3983
Yes	333	8%	8%
No	3650	85%	92%
Prefer not to say	253	6%	
Not answered	37	1%	
Total	4273	100%	100%

## Location of Respondents

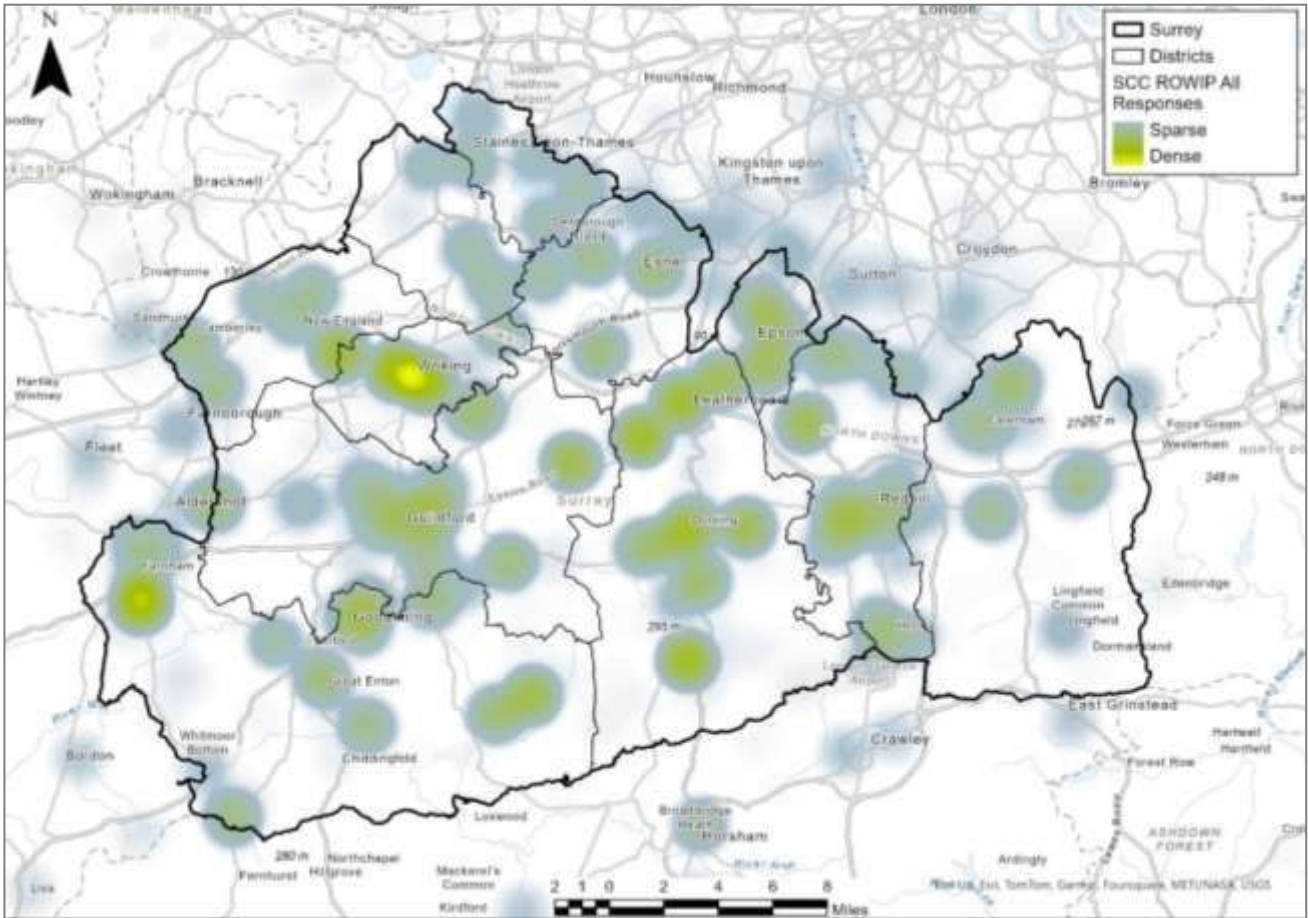
Respondents were asked where they lived and to provide the first four characters of their postcode. This information was then geocoded to understand where respondents lived. The first four characters of a postcode can only provide an approximation of the area and will cover several streets.

There was a high level of variation in the data provided; some respondents only provided three characters, whereas some provide full postcodes. Some only provided a text answer of the town or village where they live. These were geocoded taking a point near the centre of the town or village. Nonetheless, the data does provide useful insight into the spread of respondents across the county.

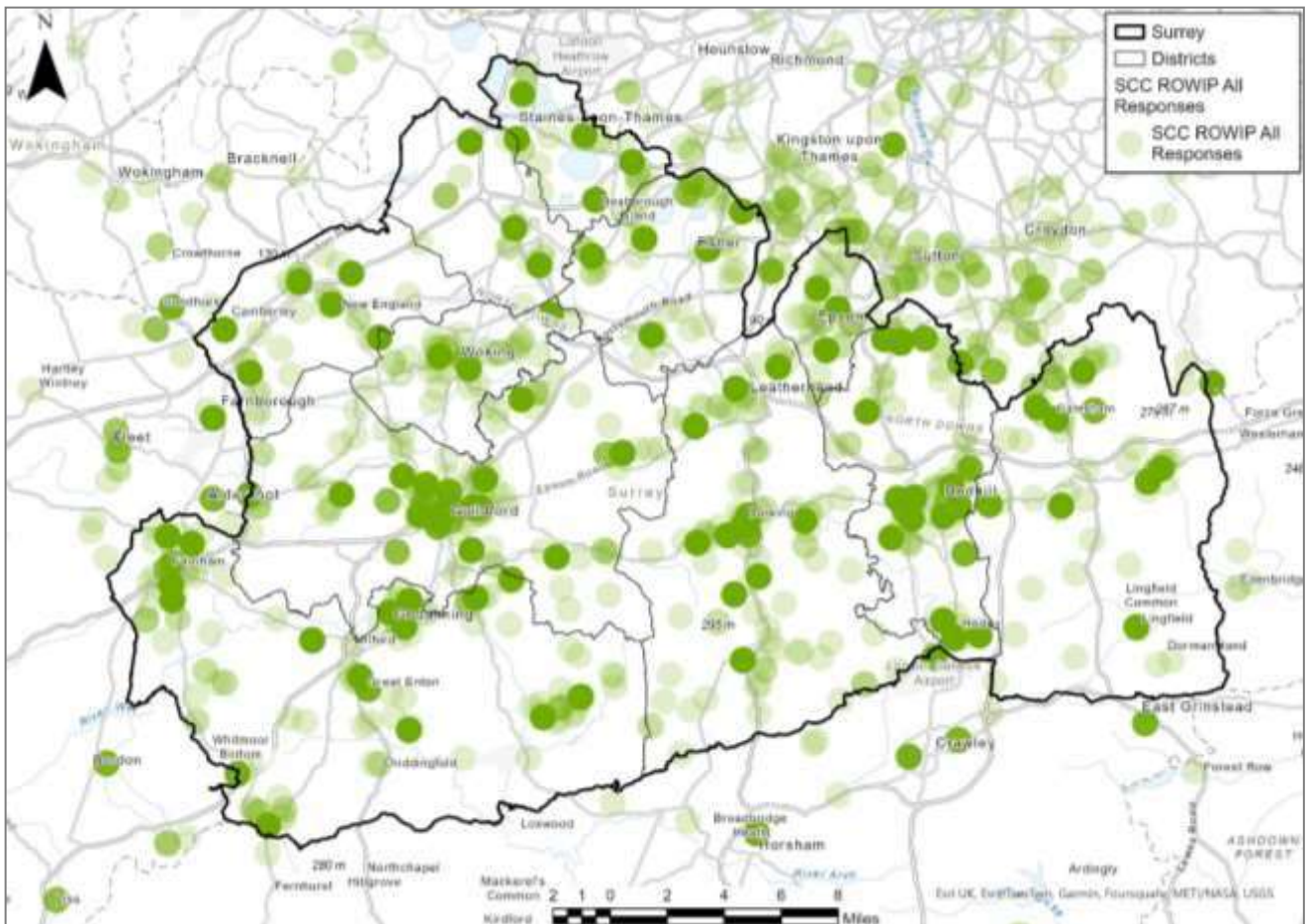
- 106 respondents provided only the name of a town or village
- 19 postcodes could not be geocoded

The location of respondents is shown in Plans 1 and 3. Plan 3 also includes responses from wider South East England. In some locations there were multiple respondents geocoded to the same location as these had the same first four characters of postcode. The density of shading therefore gives an impression of the number of responses.

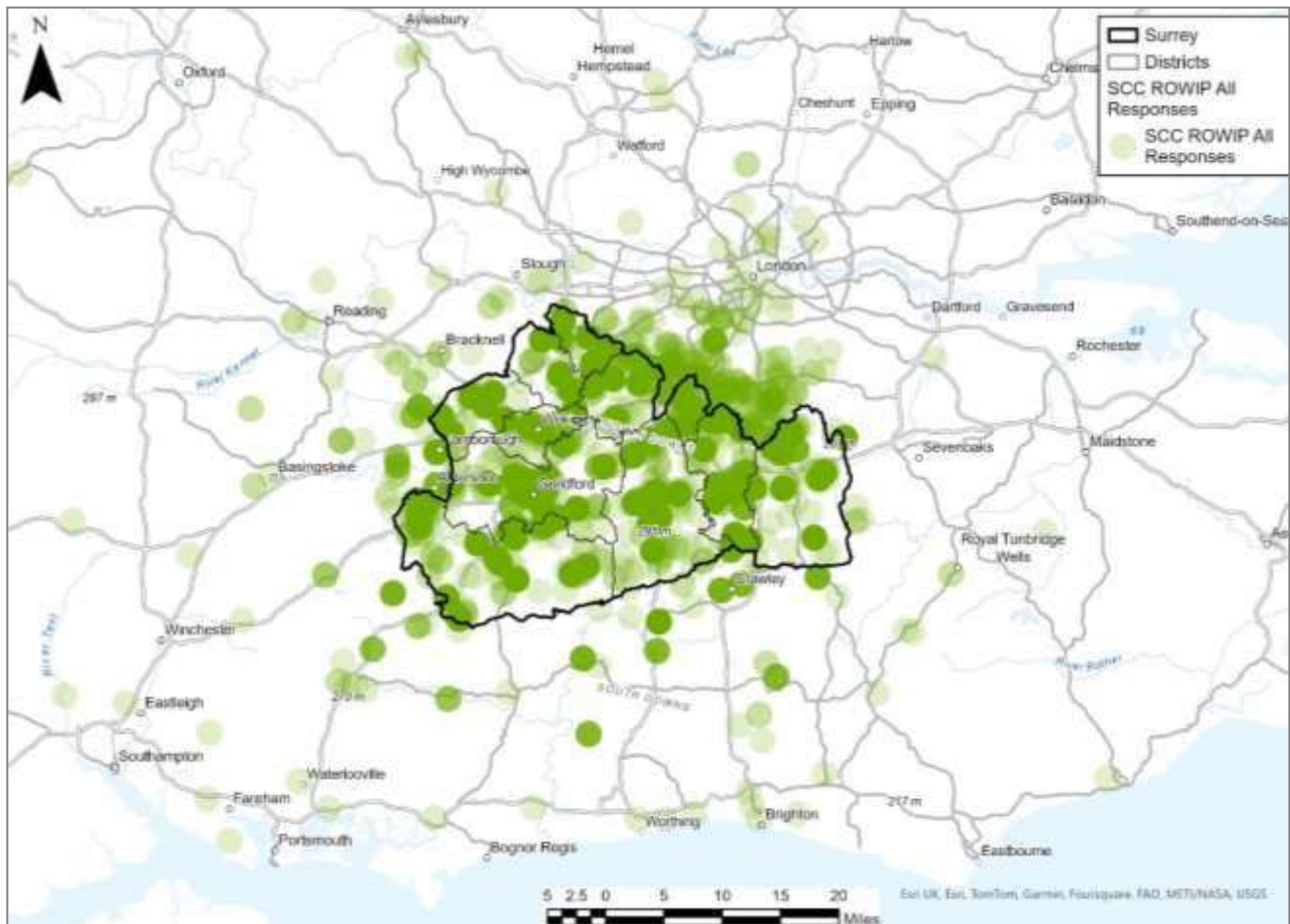
Plan 1: Location of Respondents – Surrey (Heat Map)



Plan 2: Location of Respondents – Surrey



### Plan 3: Location of Respondents - Wider South East England



The number of responses by district was totalled. This will not be completely accurate due to the lack of precision in the data, as previously outlined, but it is helpful in providing more detail on the overall geographic spread of respondents.

- The district with the highest number of responses was Waverley, with 694 responses and 19% of the responses from Surrey
- The district with the second highest number of responses was Mole Valley, with 674 responses and also 19% of the responses from Surrey

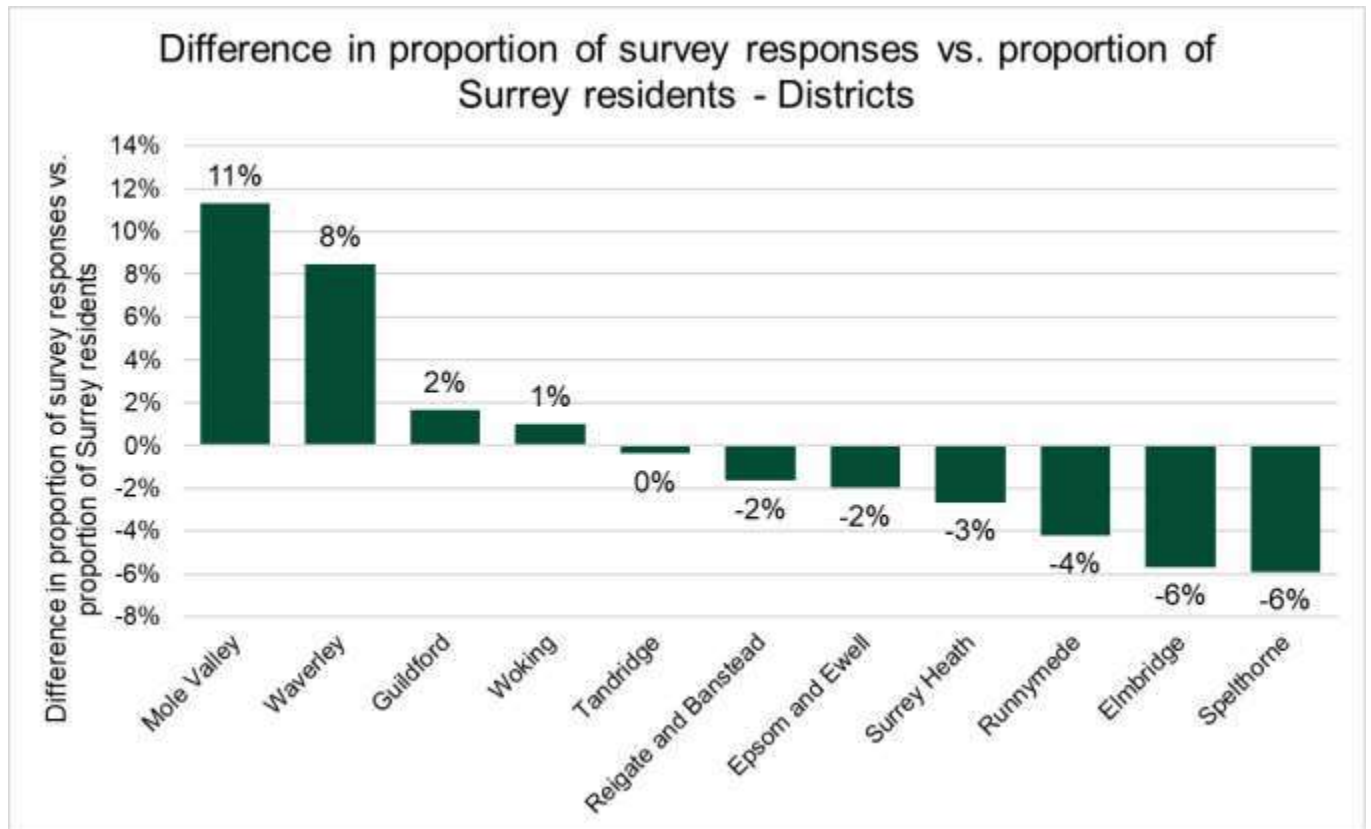
As the population size between districts differs, for each district, the proportion of responses from Surrey from that district was compared with the proportion of Surrey's population living in that district. This provides information on responses per capita and aids comparison across the districts.

- Mole Valley had the highest number of responses per capita – with 19% of responses from Surrey residents and 7% of Surrey's population
- Waverley had the second highest number of responses per capita – with 19% of responses from Surrey residents and 11% of Surrey's population
- Lowest were Elmbridge and Spelthorne – Elmbridge with 6% of responses from Surrey's residents and 12% of Surrey's population and Spelthorne with 3% of responses from Surrey residents and 9% of Surrey's population

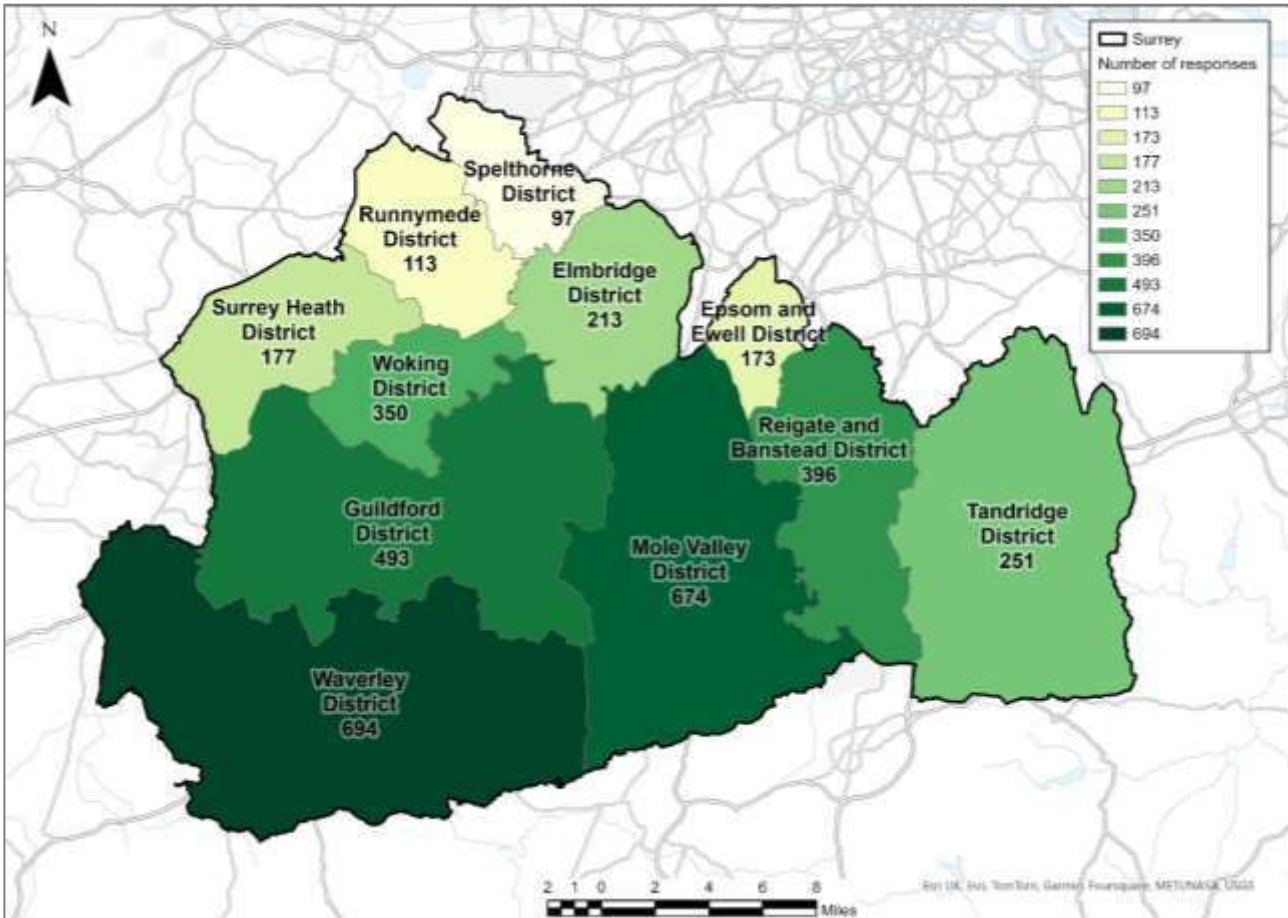
Table 10: Responses by Surrey Districts

District	Number	Population Census 2021	% of Surrey Population	% of Surrey Responses	Difference
Mole Valley	674	87386	7%	19%	11%
Waverley	694	128229	11%	19%	8%
Guildford	493	143649	12%	14%	2%
Woking	350	103943	9%	10%	1%
Tandridge	251	87874	7%	7%	0%
Reigate and Banstead	396	150846	13%	11%	-2%
Epsom and Ewell	173	80938	7%	5%	-2%
Surrey Heath	177	90453	8%	5%	-3%
Runnymede	113	88079	7%	3%	-4%
Elmbridge	213	138754	12%	6%	-6%
Spelthorne	97	102956	9%	3%	-6%

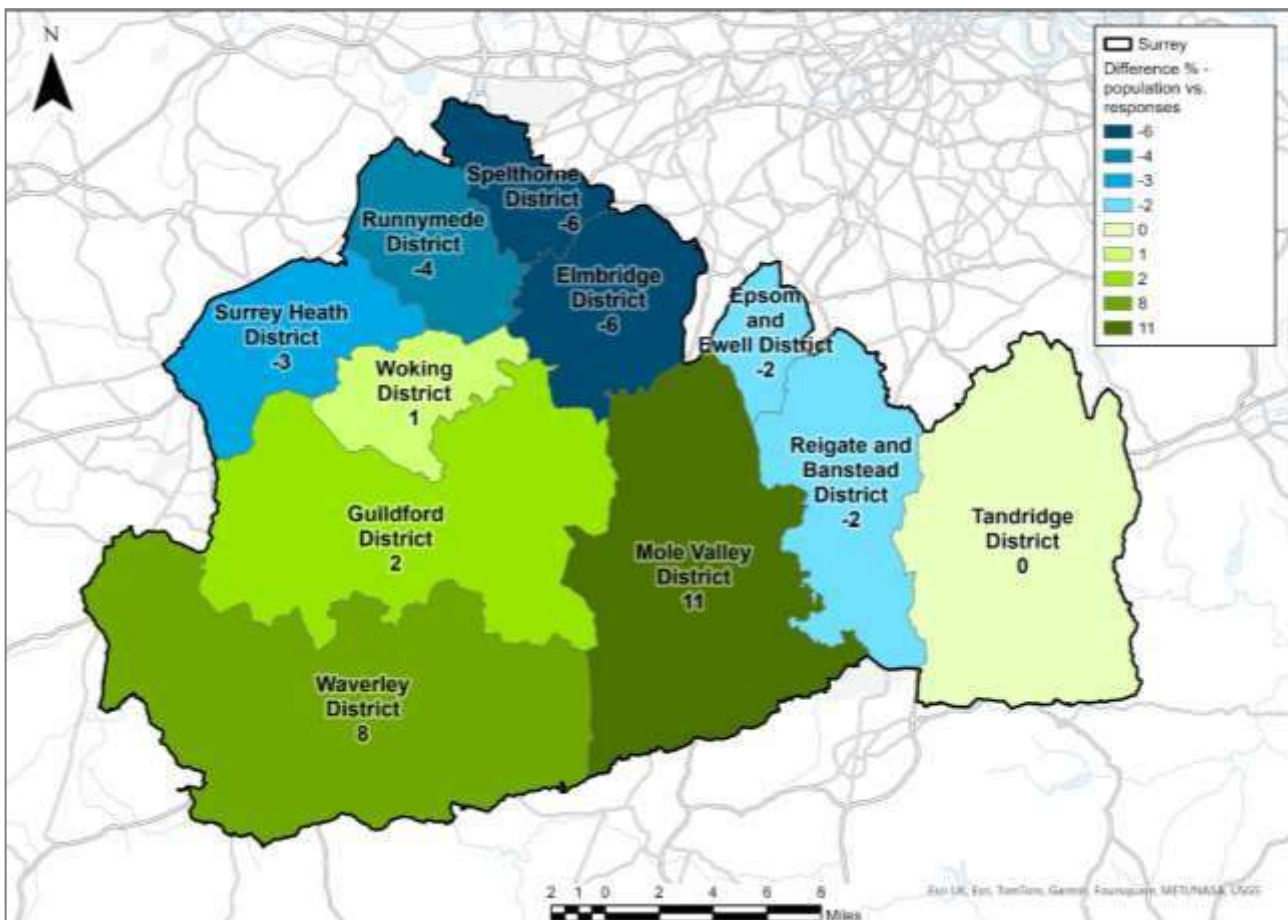
Chart 3: Responses by Surrey Districts – Difference in Proportion of Responses vs. Population



Plan 4: Responses by Surrey District (Number)



Plan 5: Responses by Surrey Districts – Difference in Proportion of Responses vs. Population



There were also 231 responses from London Boroughs. The borough with the highest number of responses was Croydon, with 74 responses, followed by Sutton, with 50 responses.

Table 11: Responses by London Borough

London Borough	Number	London Borough	Number
Croydon	74	Enfield	2
Sutton	50	Southwark	2
Kingston upon Thames	44	Ealing	1
Merton	18	Haringey	1
Wandsworth	13	Harrow	1
Richmond upon Thames	11	Hillingdon	1
Hounslow	5	Kensington and Chelsea	1
Islington	3	Walthamstow	1
Lambeth	3		

Responses from nearby districts in South East England were also totalled. There were 350 responses from these districts. The highest of these was Rushmoor, with 73 responses, followed by Horsham with 54 responses and Crawley with 34 responses.

Table 12: Responses by district – wider South East England

District	Number	District	Number
Rushmoor	73	Wealden	4
Horsham	54	Tunbridge Wells	3
Crawley	34	Winchester	3
East Hampshire	31	Adur	2
Hart	29	Havant	2
Mid Sussex	25	Slough	2
Bromley	22	Test Valley	2
Chichester	18	Arun	1
Wokingham	9	Eastleigh	1
Windsor and Maidenhead	6	Fareham	1
Basingstoke and Deane	5	Gosport	1
Bracknell Forest	5	Lewes	1
Sevenoaks	5	Newham	1
Brighton and Hove	4	Reading	1
Buckinghamshire	4	Worthing	1



# Use of Public Rights of Way

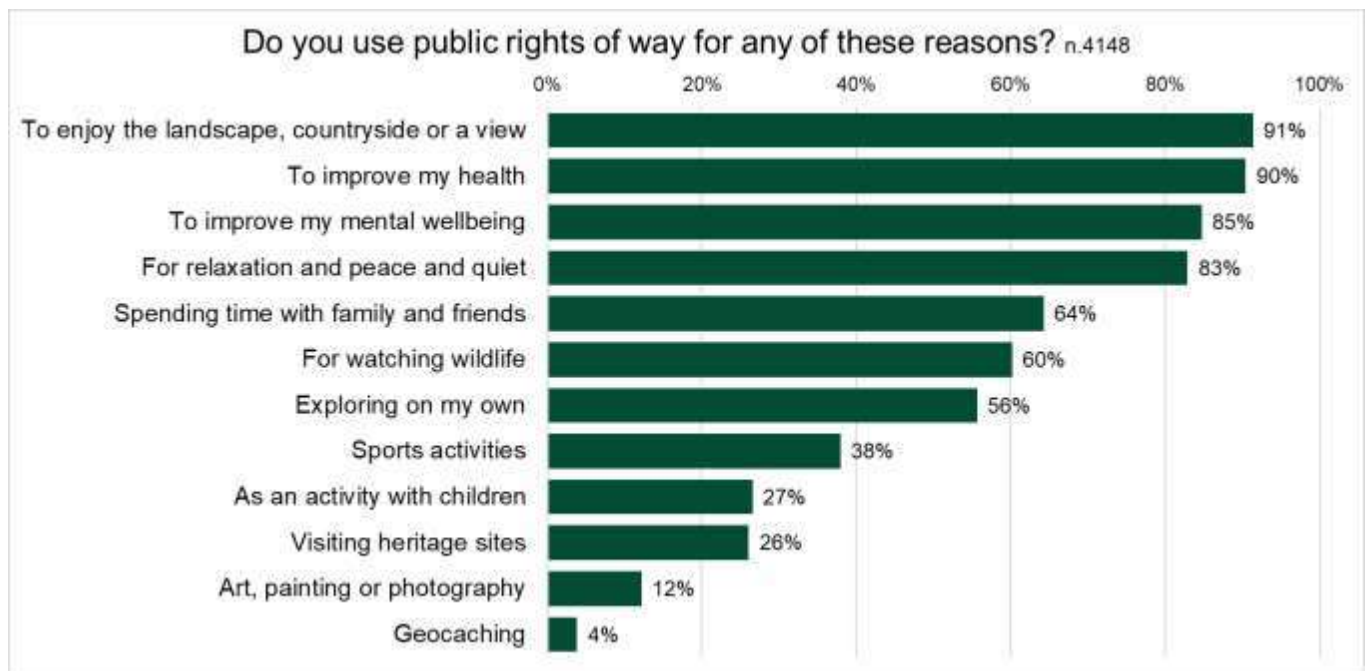
## Reasons for Using Public Rights of Way

Respondents were asked 'Do you use public rights of way for any of these reasons?'. The highest scoring reasons were quality of life reasons – to enjoy the landscape, countryside or a view (91%), to improve my health (90%), to improve my mental wellbeing (85%) and for relaxation and peace and quiet (83%). Respondents could choose more than one option.

Table 13: Do you use public rights of way for any of these reasons?

Answer Choices n.4148	Number	% giving this as one of their answers n. 4148
To enjoy the landscape, countryside or a view	3791	91%
To improve my health	3753	90%
To improve my mental wellbeing	3516	85%
For relaxation and peace and quiet	3441	83%
Spending time with family and friends	2668	64%
For watching wildlife	2498	60%
Exploring on my own	2311	56%
Sports activities	1574	38%
As an activity with children	1101	27%
Visiting heritage sites	1082	26%
Art, painting or photography	504	12%
Geocaching	159	4%
None of the above	26	1%
Other (please specify)	210	5%

Chart 4: Do you use public rights of way for any of these reasons?



278 people gave further details or comments. These were categorised. The highest reason, given by 29% of people was that they used public rights of way for exercising their dog(s). Second, given by 21% of people was to ride or exercise horses. Third, given by 17% of people, was using public rights of way for daily journeys to amenities or commuting.

Table 14: Do you use public rights of way for any of these reasons? Additional Comments

Categories of Reasons n.278	Number	% giving this as one of their answers
Dog walking / exercising dogs	81	29%
Horse riding / exercising horses / safe routes off the road	59	21%
To get to work, shops, church and other amenities / everyday journeys	48	17%
Walking with Ramblers or other group	16	6%
As a volunteer	16	6%
4x4 or trail bikes	13	5%
Avoiding busy roads	12	4%
Fresh air, exercise, health, to get out, general leisure	12	4%
For a sports activity or pastime	12	4%
To enjoy nature / landscape / outdoors	9	3%
Other	8	3%
To socialise with friends or family	7	3%
For exercise	6	2%
To avoid using the car	6	2%
Disabled user	5	2%
For my business	4	1%
As a short cut or getting somewhere more quickly	3	1%

## Use by Type of Activity

### Numbers Taking Part in Activities

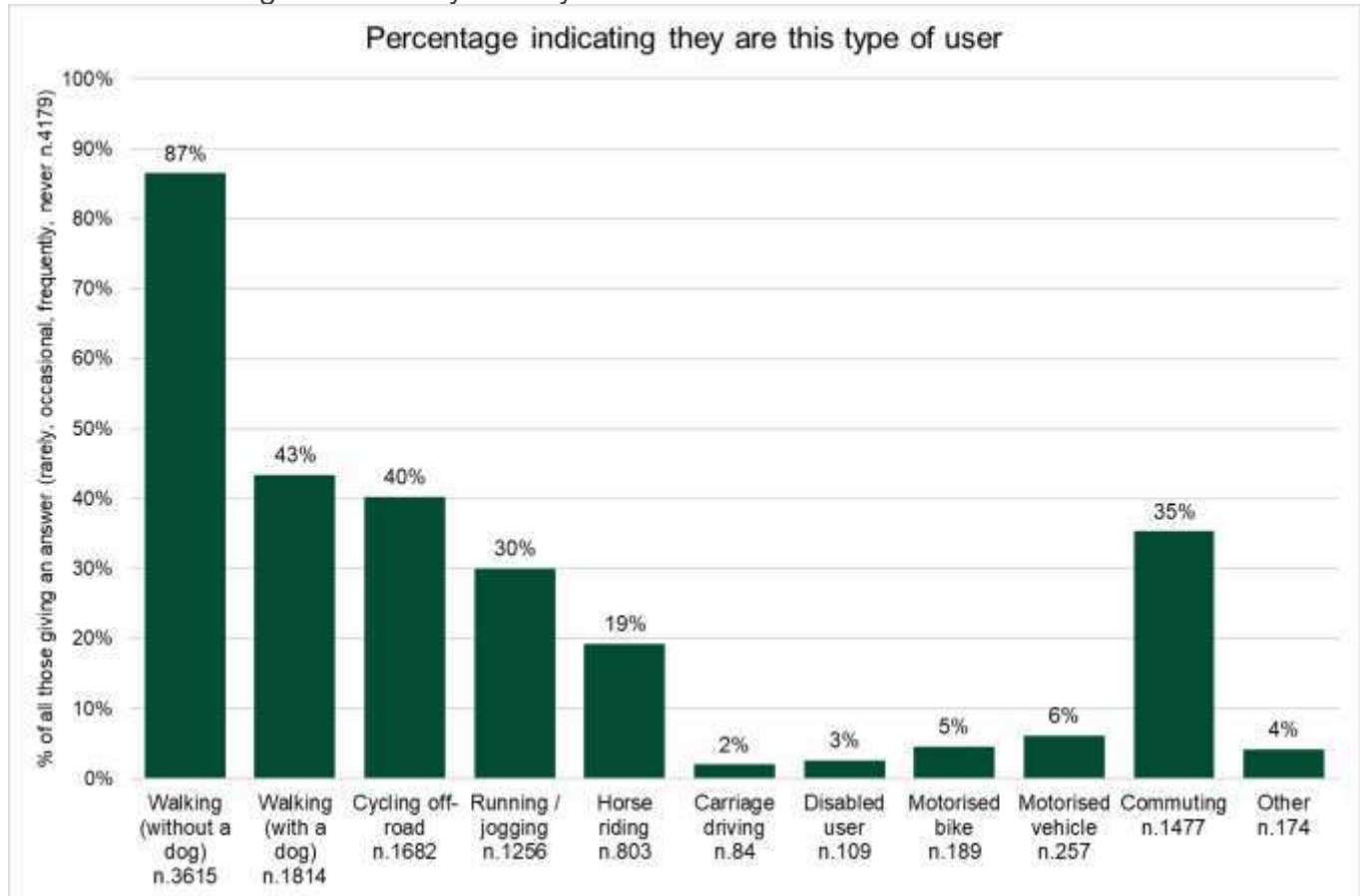
Respondents were asked 'On average, how often do you use Surrey County's public rights of way for the following types of activity?'. They could choose from four frequency categories and ten types of activity.

The highest two activities were 'walking (without a dog) (87% of respondents giving this as one of their answers) and 'walking (with a dog)' (43% of respondents giving this as one of their answers). Third highest was cycling off-road (40% of respondents giving this as one of their answers) and fourth was commuting (35% of respondents giving this as one of their answers).

Table 15: Percentage of Users by Activity

Type of Activity n.4179	Number indicating they are this type of user (rarely, occasionally or frequently)	Percentage of all users (n.4179 giving answers)
Walking (without a dog)	3615	87%
Walking (with a dog)	1814	43%
Cycling off-road, e.g. mountain biking	1682	40%
Running / jogging	1256	30%
Horse riding	803	19%
Carriage driving	84	2%
Disabled user with a disability vehicle or wheelchair	109	3%
Motorised bike, e.g. trail bike, quad bike	189	5%
Motorised vehicle, e.g. 4x4	257	6%
Commuting - to work, school, to the shops or to other facilities, e.g. station	1477	35%

Chart 5: Percentage of Users by Activity



## Frequency of Participation

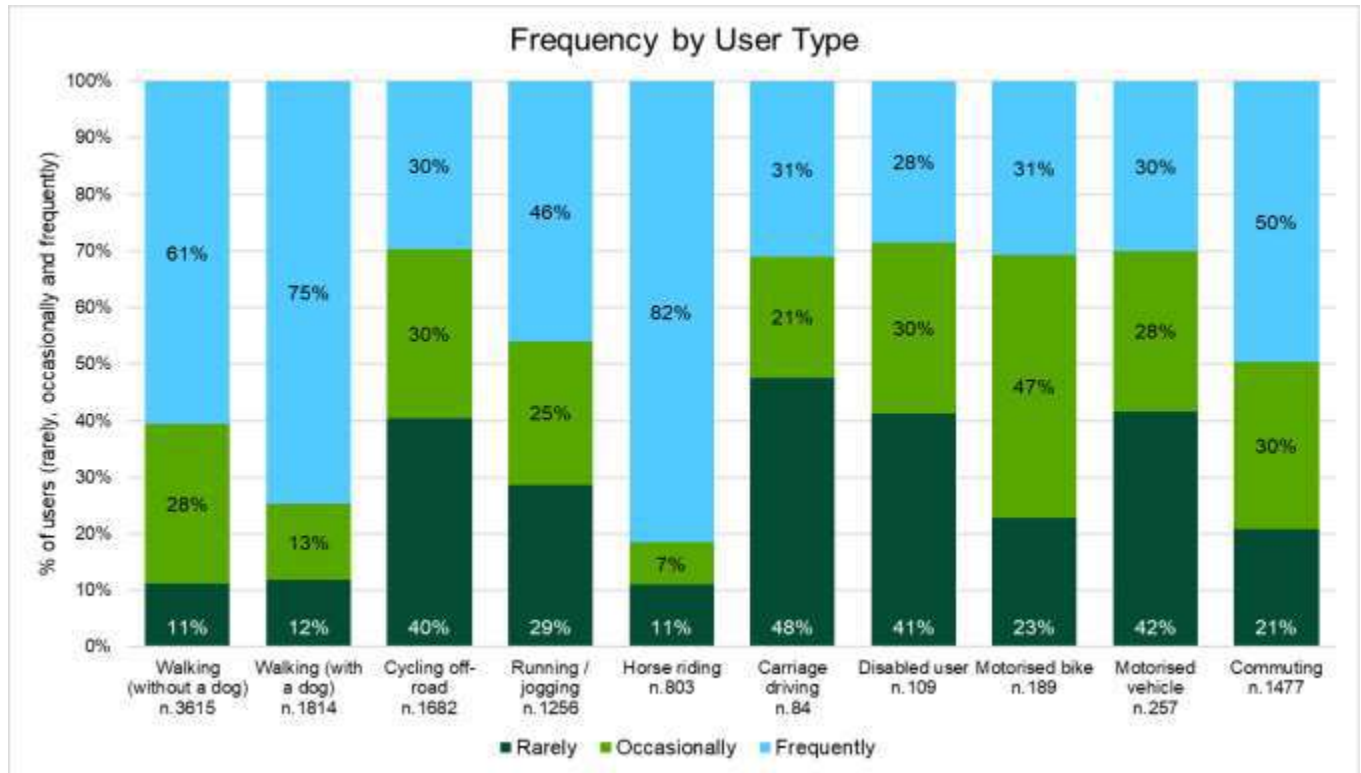
Respondents were also asked how frequently they took part in the activity. The table below excludes those who did not answer or who answered 'never' to taking part in that activity.

- The category with the highest percentage of frequent users was horse riders, with 82% saying they carried out the activity once a week or more frequently
- Second highest was walking with a dog with 75% saying they carried out the activity once a week or more frequently and third was walking without a dog with 61% saying they carried out the activity once a week or more frequently
- Disabled users were the group who had the lowest level of frequent use (28%) and also a high proportion who only used public rights of way rarely (41%)
- Carriage drivers also had a low level of frequent use (31%) and also a high proportion who only used public rights of way rarely (48%)

Table 16: On average, how often do you use Surrey County's public rights of way for the following types of activity?

Type of Activity n.4179	Rarely – less than once a month	% of this user type	Occasionally – 1 to 3 times a month	% of this user type	Frequently – once a week or more	% of this user type
Walking (without a dog)	408	11%	1018	28%	2189	61%
Walking (with a dog)	216	12%	242	13%	1356	75%
Cycling off-road, e.g. mountain biking	680	40%	503	30%	499	30%
Running / jogging	360	29%	319	25%	577	46%
Horse riding	88	11%	60	7%	655	82%
Carriage driving	40	48%	18	21%	26	31%
Disabled user with a disability vehicle or wheelchair	45	41%	33	30%	31	28%
Motorised bike, e.g. trail bike, quad bike	43	23%	88	47%	58	31%
Motorised vehicle, e.g. 4x4	107	42%	73	28%	77	30%
Commuting - to work, school, to the shops or to other facilities, e.g. station	308	21%	436	30%	733	50%

Chart 6: On average, how often do you use Surrey County's public rights of way for the following types of activity?



134 people gave further details or comments. These were categorised into similar sentiments. The highest of these was using public rights of way for accessing shops and other amenities / day to day journeys given by 13% of respondents. Second was walking for recreation / enjoyment given by 11% of respondents.

Table 17: On average, how often do you use Surrey County's public rights of way for the following types of activity? Additional Comments

Categories of Reasons n.134	Number	% giving this as one of their answers
Accessing shops and other amenities / day to day journeys	18	13%
Walking for recreation / enjoyment	15	11%
For a sport, hobby or pastime	14	10%
Pram or pushchair	11	8%
Accessing a property	11	8%
As a volunteer	11	8%
For health / wellbeing / exercise	9	7%
Cycling	8	6%
With children	8	6%
With a walking group	7	5%
Disabled user	6	4%
With friends and family	6	4%
Horse riding / with a horse	5	4%
Other	10	7%

## Breakdown by Male / Female and Age Group

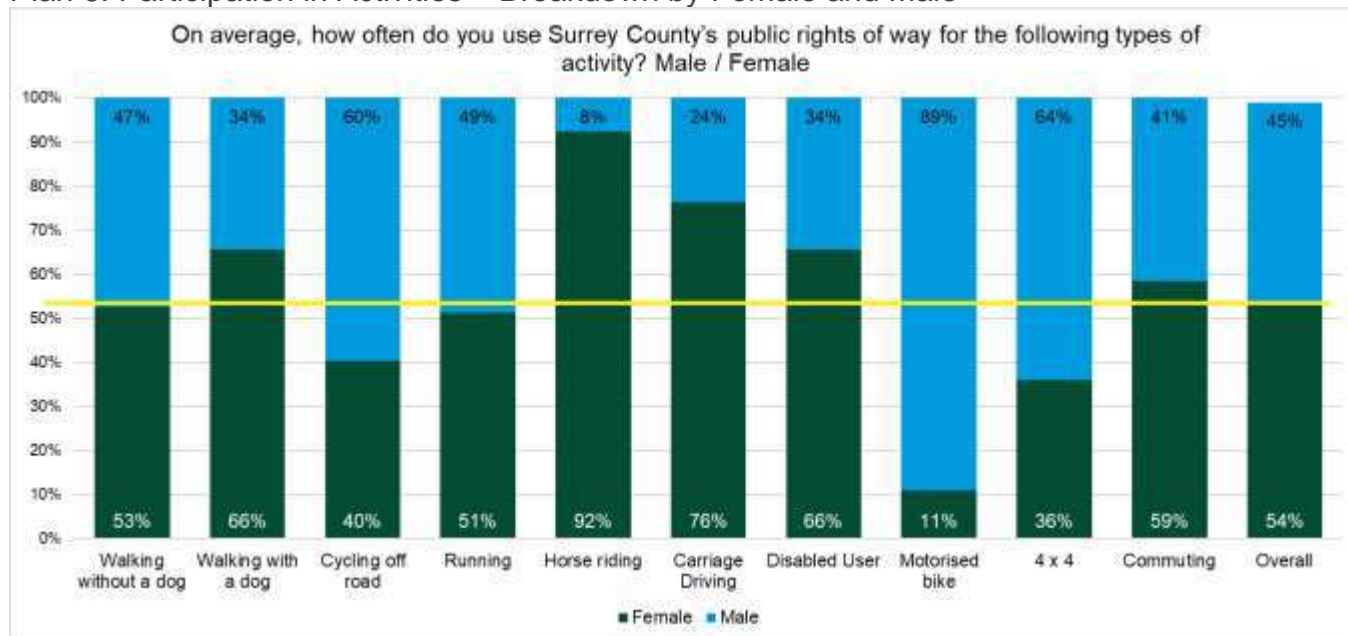
The number of males and females taking in part in the activities was analysed which revealed differences in participation. The split of male / female overall was 54% female and 45% male.

- Significantly more females took part in horse riding (92% female) and carriage driving (76% female)
- Significantly more males took part in motorised trail bike riding (89% male) and off-road 4x4 activity (64% male)
- More females than the overall split walked with a dog (66%) or were a disabled user (66%)
- More males than females took part in cycling off-road (60%)

Table 18: Participation in Activities – Breakdown by Female and Male

	Female	Male
Walking without a dog	53%	47%
Walking with a dog	66%	34%
Cycling off road	40%	60%
Running	51%	49%
Horse riding	92%	8%
Carriage Driving	76%	24%
Disabled User	66%	34%
Motorised bike	11%	89%
4x4	36%	64%
Commuting	59%	41%
Overall	54%	45%

Plan 6: Participation in Activities – Breakdown by Female and Male

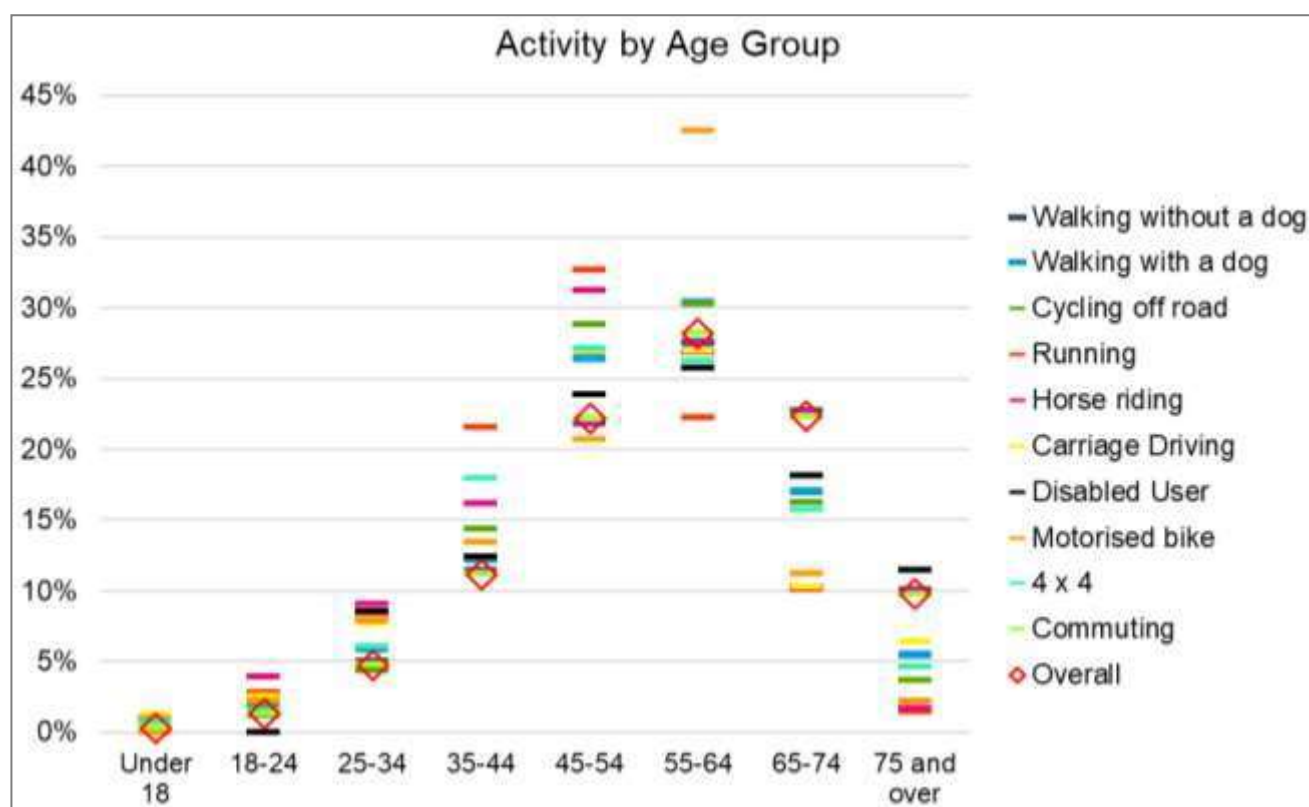


The data were also analysed by age group. There were no significant differences in the age profile but there were more motorised trail bike users in the 55-64 age group than overall. There were more younger people using public rights of way for running (65% under 55 years compared with 39% under 45 overall) and 4x4 off-roading (57% under 55 years compared with 39% under 55 overall).

Table 19: Activity by Age Group

Activity	Under 18	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75 and over
Walking without a dog	0%	1%	5%	11%	22%	28%	23%	10%
Walking with a dog	0%	2%	6%	12%	26%	30%	17%	5%
Cycling off road	1%	2%	4%	14%	29%	30%	16%	4%
Running	1%	3%	8%	22%	33%	22%	10%	1%
Horse riding	1%	4%	9%	16%	31%	27%	10%	2%
Carriage Driving	1%	3%	8%	18%	27%	27%	10%	6%
Disabled User	0%	0%	9%	12%	24%	26%	18%	11%
Motorised bike	0%	2%	8%	13%	21%	42%	11%	2%
4x4	0%	6%	12%	13%	26%	29%	9%	5%
Commuting	1%	2%	6%	18%	27%	26%	16%	5%
Overall	0%	1%	5%	11%	22%	28%	22%	10%

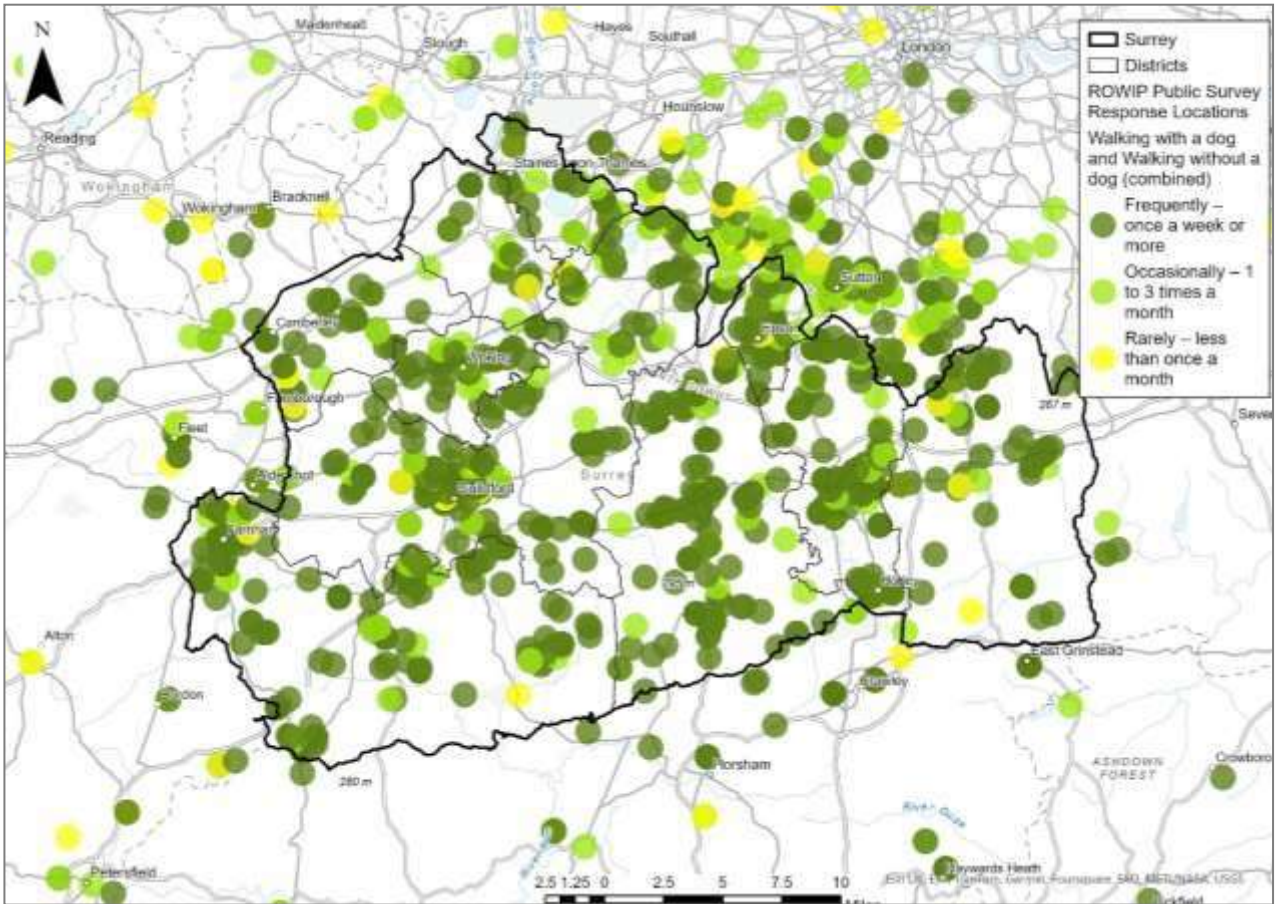
Chart 7: Activity by Age Group



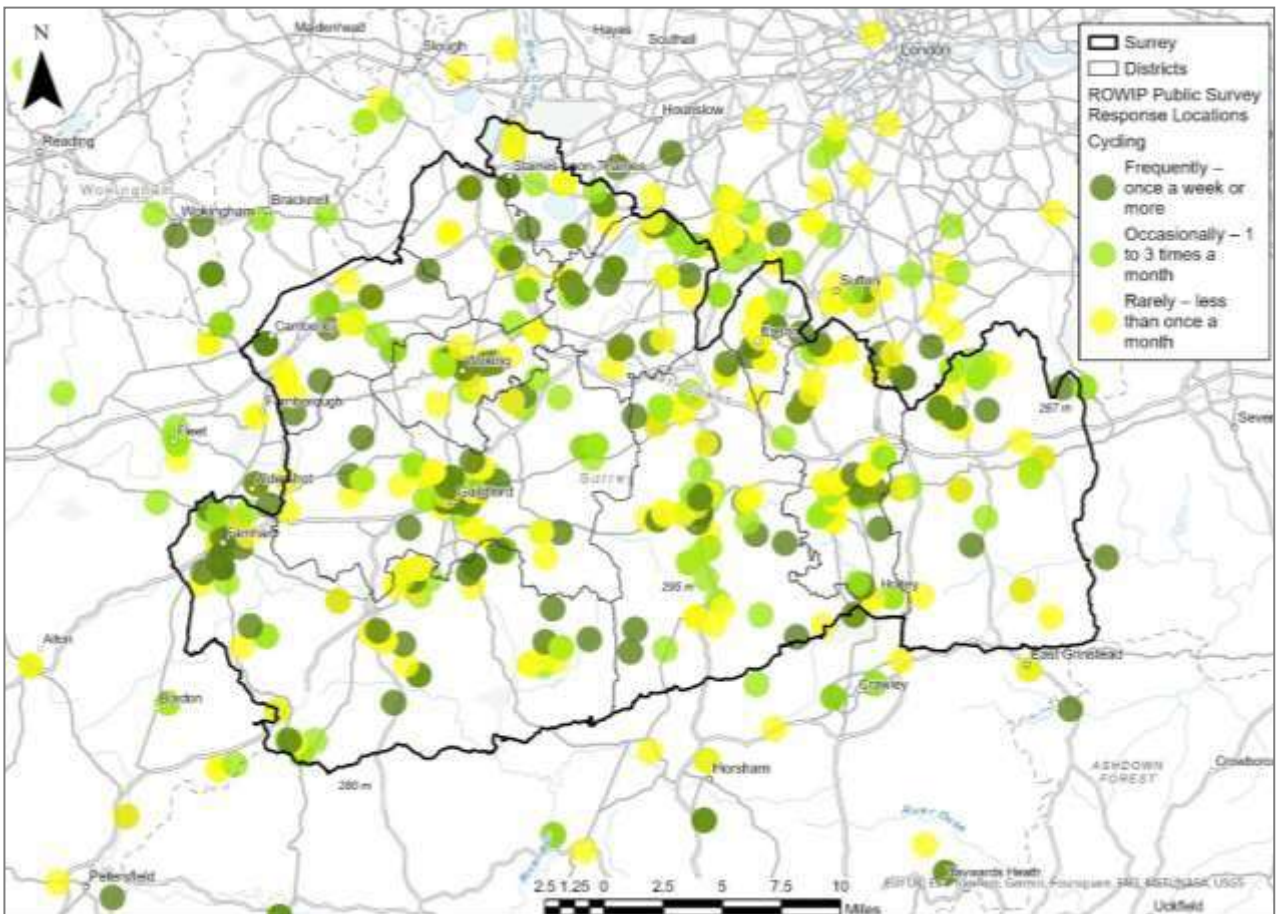
## Home Location of People Participating in Activities

The home location of people taking part in different activities was mapped, shown in the following plans.

Plan 7: Location of Walkers (combined - with dog and without a dog)

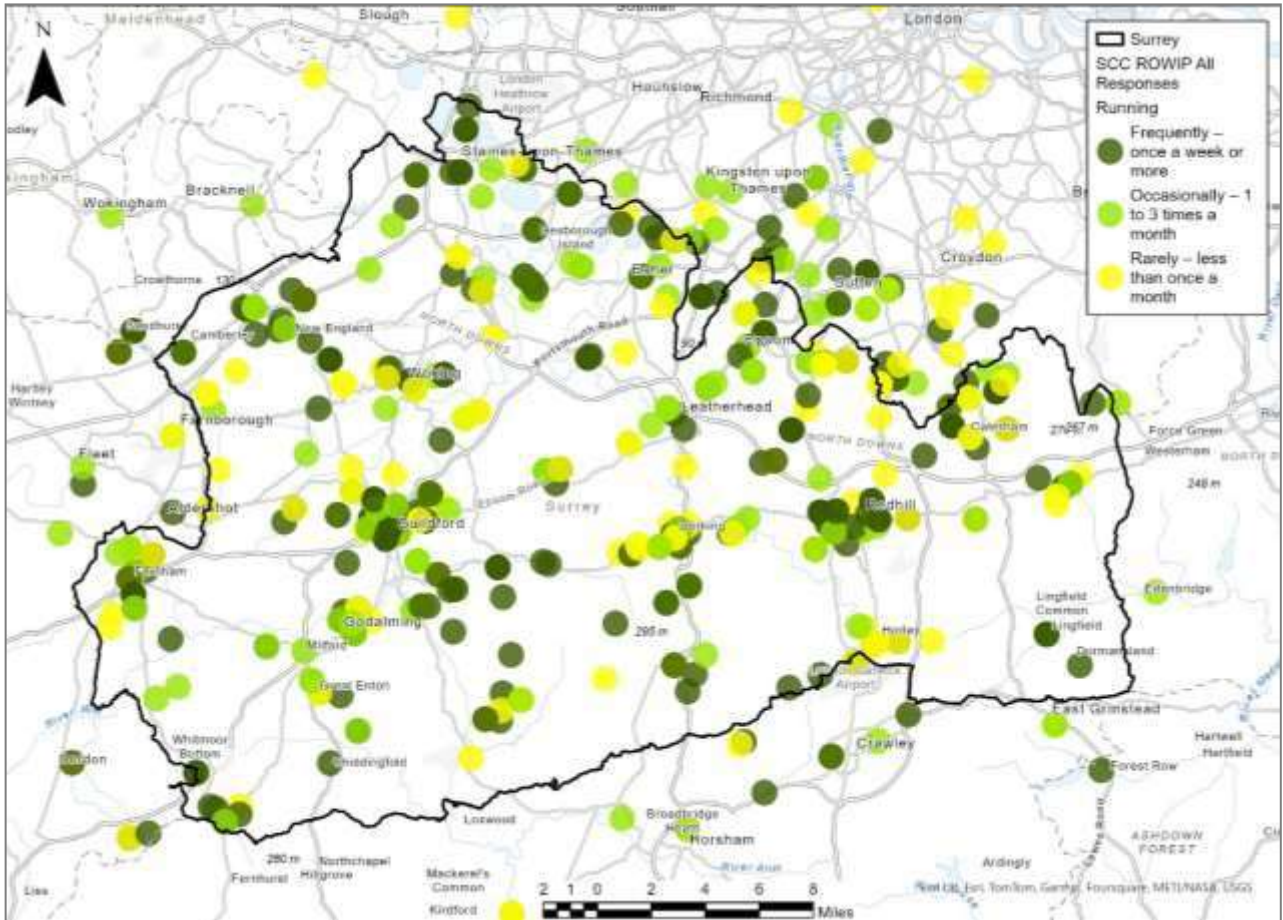


Plan 8: Location of those Cycling Off-road

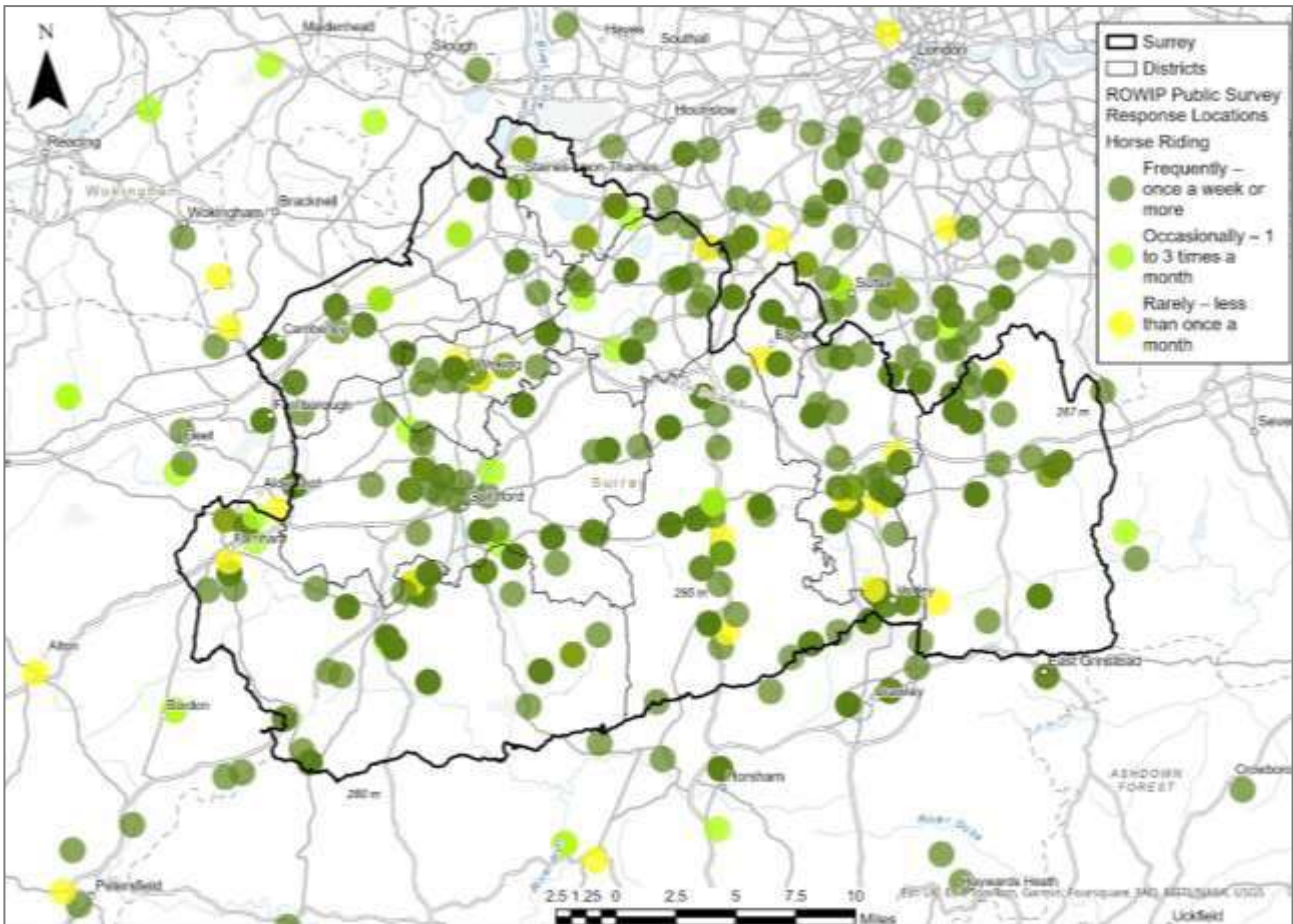




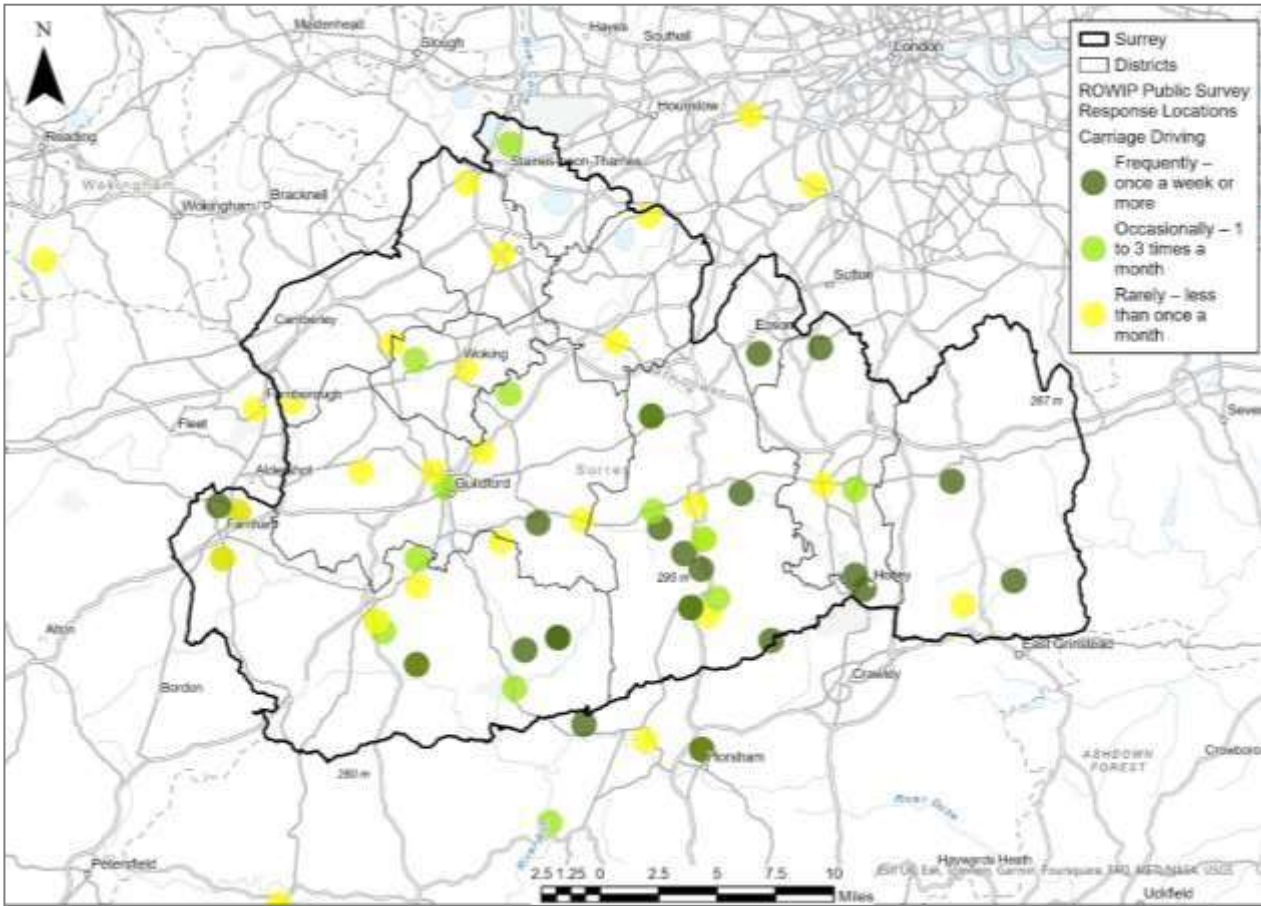
Plan 9: Location of those Running



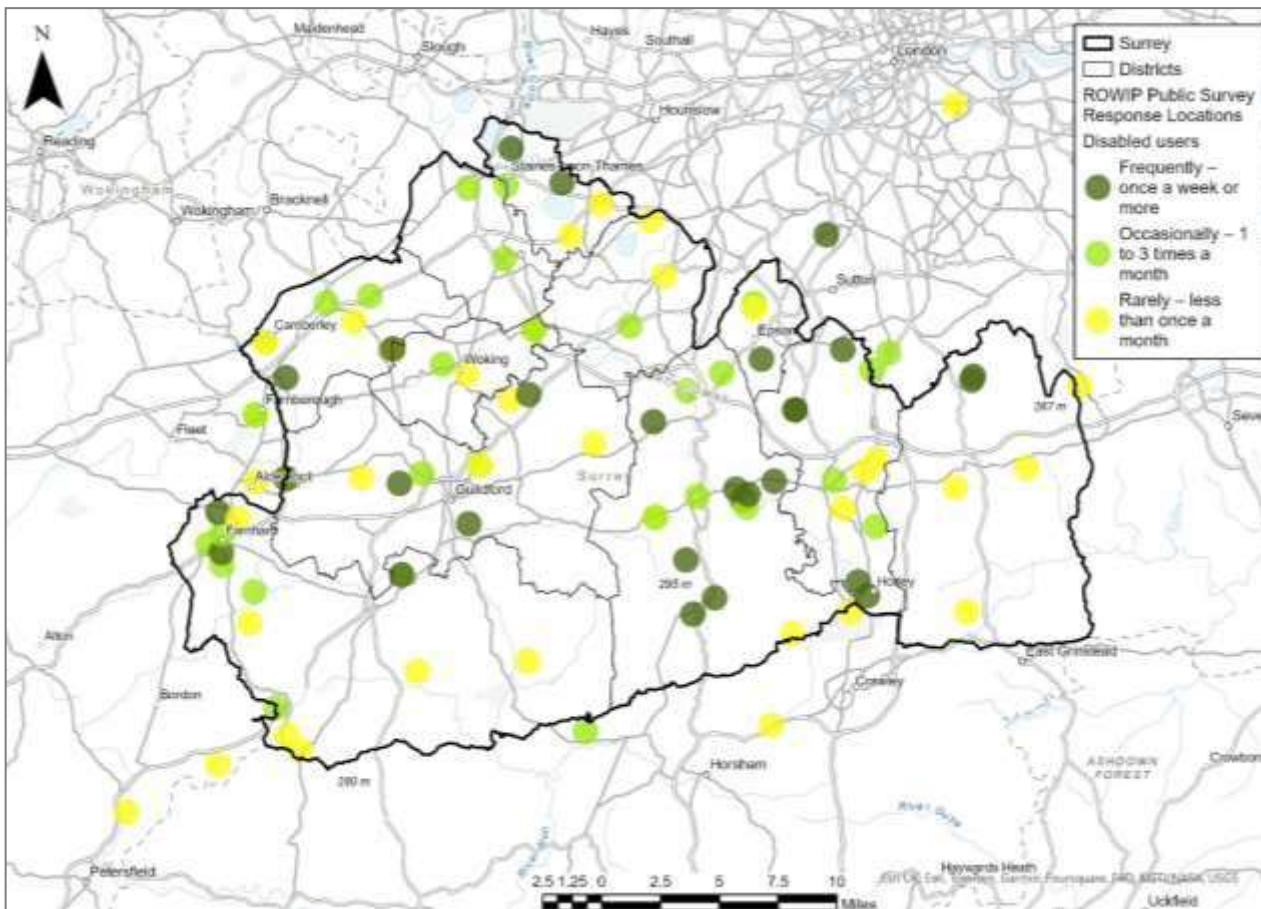
Plan 10: Location of those Horse Riding



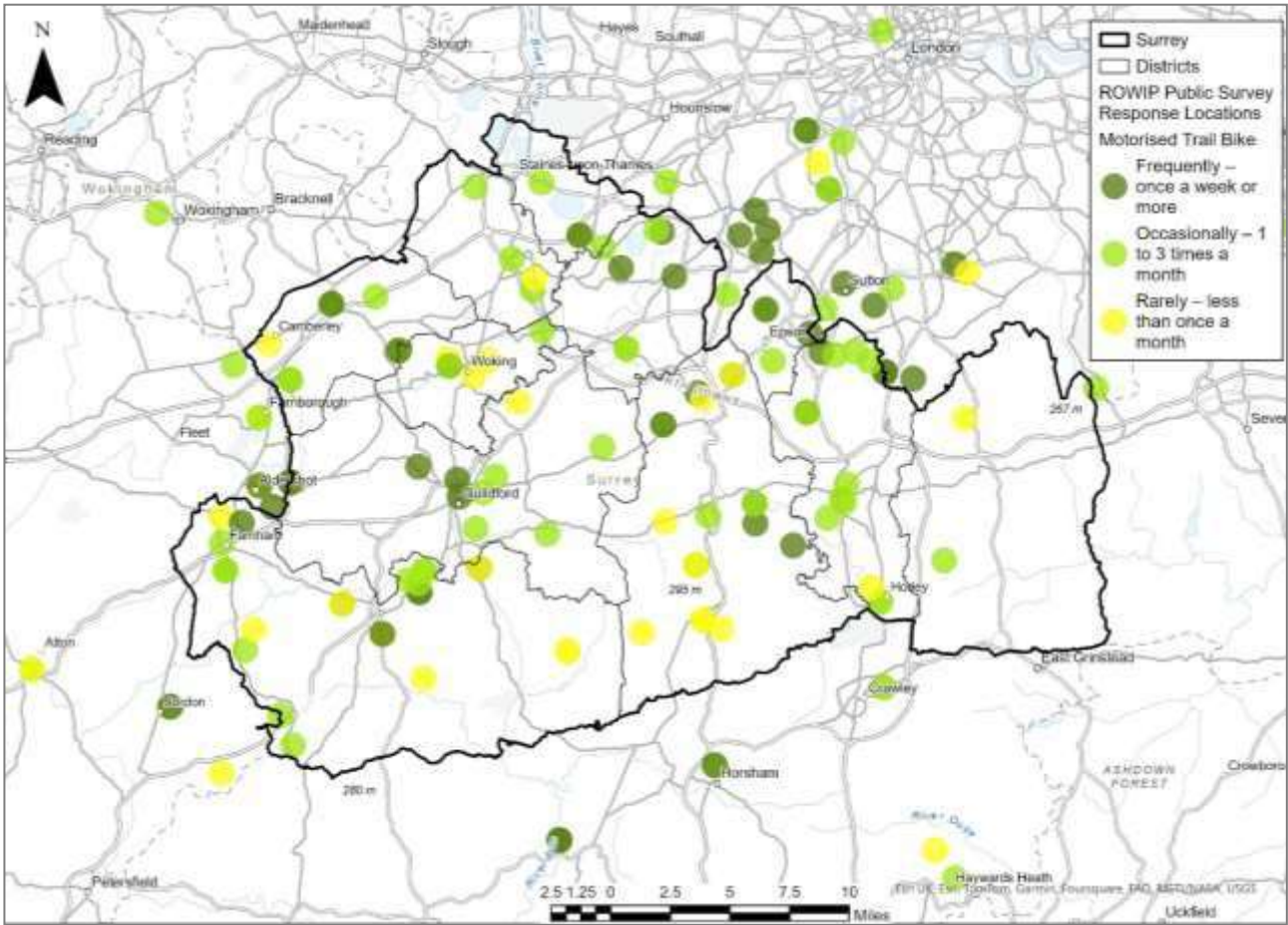
Plan 11: Location of those Carriage Driving



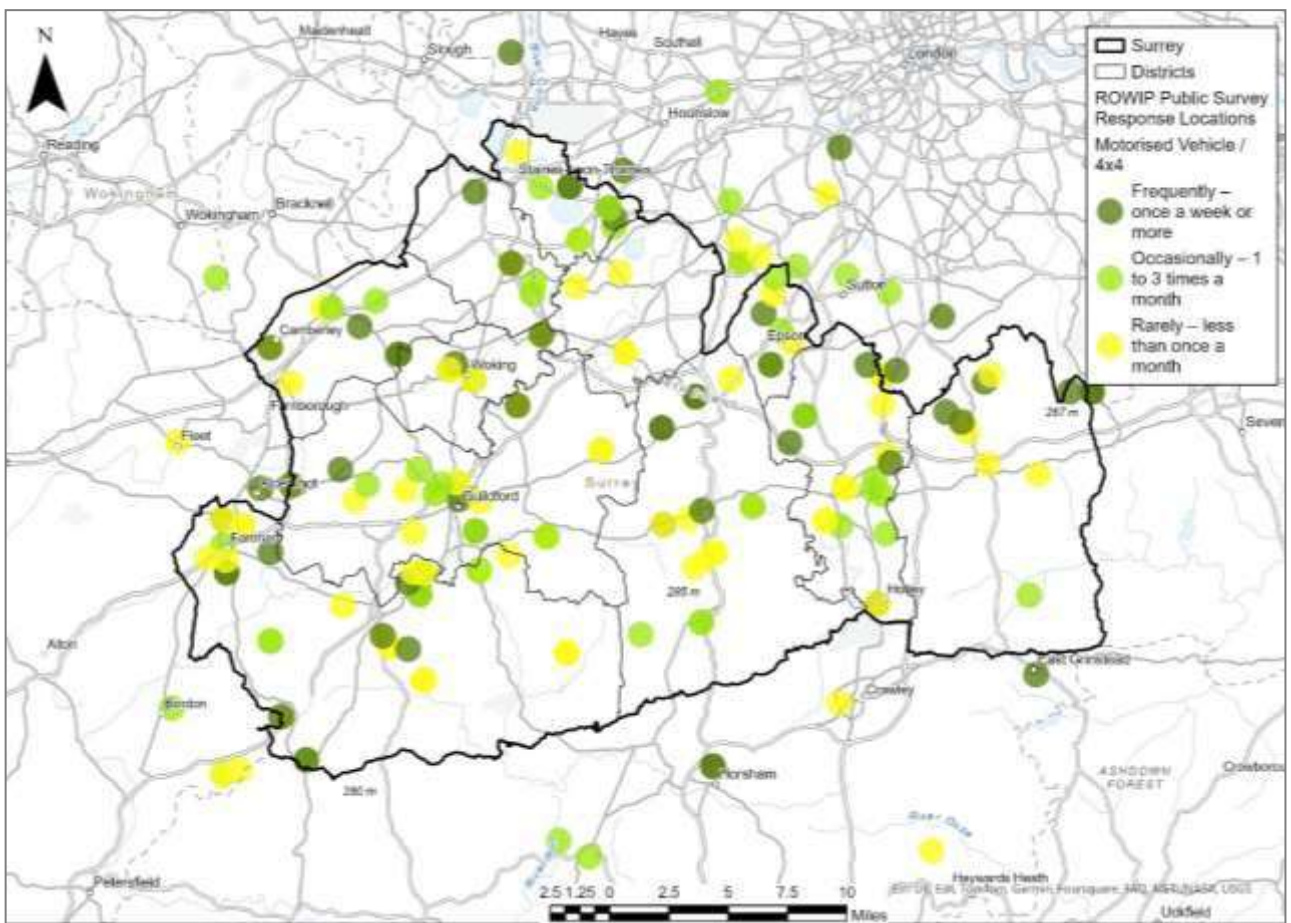
Plan 12: Location of Disabled Users



Plan 13: Location of those using Motorised Trail Bike



Plan 14: Location of those using 4x4 Off-road Vehicles

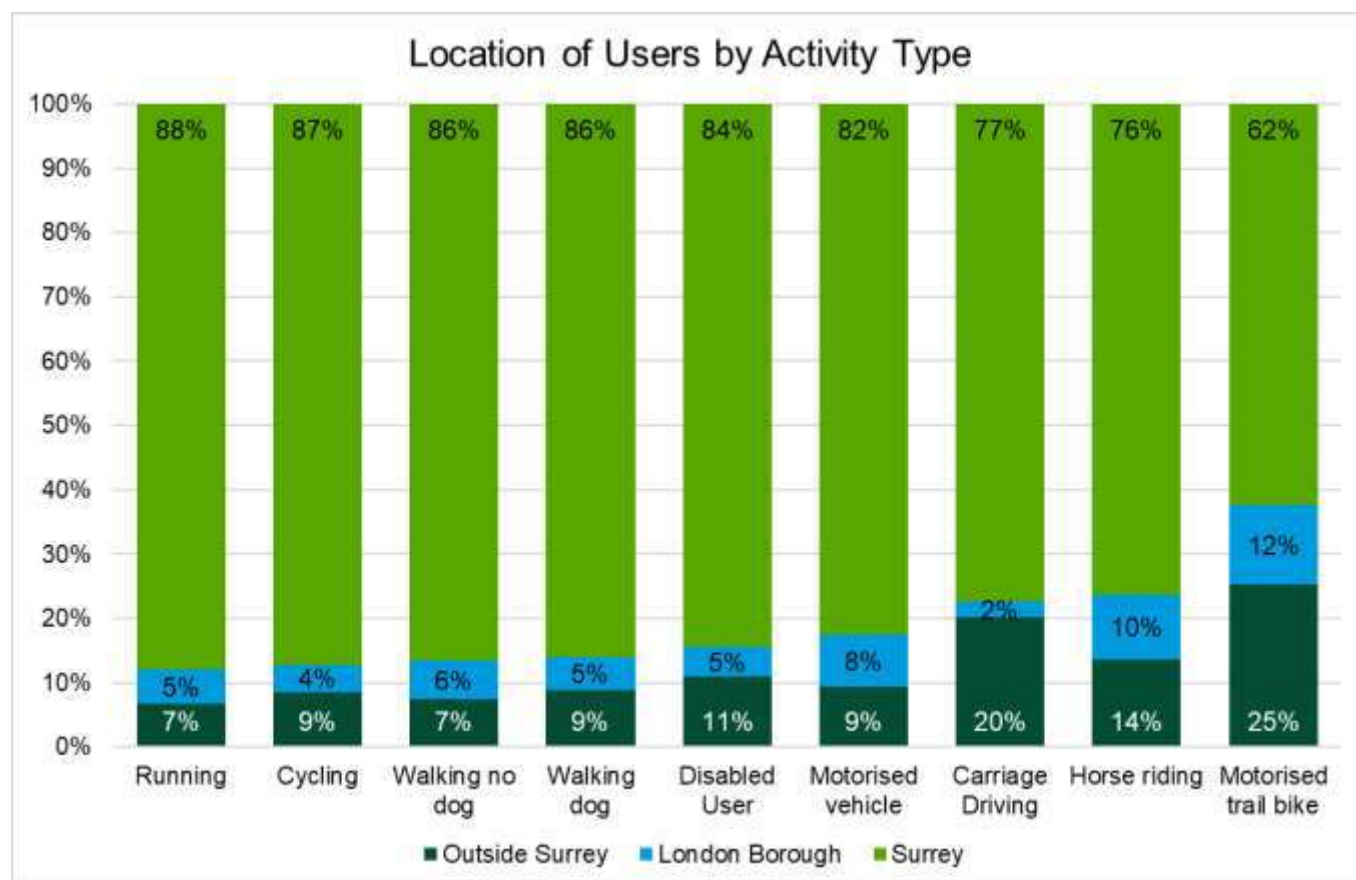


The location of respondents was also classified into within Surrey, within a London Borough and outside of Surrey. The activities with the highest proportion of users originating from within Surrey were running (88%), off-road cycling (87%), and walking (86%). The lowest proportion of users originating from within Surrey was motorised trail bikes, with 62% originating from within Surrey, 12% from a London Borough and 25% from elsewhere outside of Surrey. Horse riding and carriage driving users also had a higher proportion originating from outside of Surrey. For horse riding, 10% came from a London Borough and 14% from elsewhere outside of Surrey. For carriage driving 2% came from a London Borough and 20% from elsewhere outside of Surrey.

Table 20: Location of Respondent by Area

Activity	Outside Surrey	London Borough	Surrey
Running (n.1253)	7%	5%	88%
Cycling (n.1676)	9%	4%	87%
Walking no dog (n.3604)	7%	6%	86%
Walking dog (n.1804)	9%	5%	86%
Disabled User (n.109)	11%	5%	84%
Motorised vehicle (n.256)	9%	8%	82%
Carriage Driving (n.84)	20%	2%	77%
Horse riding (n.799)	14%	10%	76%
Motorised trail bike (n.186)	25%	12%	62%

Chart 8: Location of Respondent by Area



## Getting to Public Rights of Way

Respondents were asked 'How do you get to public rights of way for your visits?'. There were also asked how frequently they used this mode.

The mode with the highest number of responses was 'on foot' given by 87% of people. Second highest was 'by car / van / motorbike' given by 80% of people. Sustainable travel methods were the lowest scoring methods, with 20% of people using the train to access public rights of way and 11% using the bus.

The mode which people used most frequently was also 'on foot', indicated by 63% of people. Second highest was 'by car / van / motorbike' given by 32% of people.

Table 21: How do you get to public rights of way for your visits?

Frequency n.4172	On foot	By car / van / motorbike	By bicycle	By bus	By train	Other
<b>Never</b>	153	269	1368	2173	1865	1423
% of this mode of accessing PROW (excluding not answered)	4%	7%	47%	82%	69%	83%
<b>Rarely</b> – less than once a month	278	578	512	308	613	17
% of this mode of accessing PROW (excluding not answered)	7%	16%	18%	12%	23%	1%
<b>Occasionally</b> – 1 to 3 times a month	717	1447	504	132	184	34
% of this mode of accessing PROW (excluding not answered)	19%	40%	17%	5%	7%	2%
<b>Frequently</b> – once a week or more	2623	1316	513	29	45	238
% of this mode of accessing PROW (excluding not answered)	70%	36%	18%	1%	2%	14%
Total answering this question (excluding not answered)	3771	3610	2897	2642	2707	1712
Number of people using this mode to access PROW (rarely, occasionally, frequently – excluding never)	3618	3341	1529	469	842	289
% of people using this mode to access PROW (rarely, occasionally, frequently excluding never)	87%	80%	37%	11%	20%	7%

Chart 9: How do you get to public rights of way for your visits? Use of mode - overall.

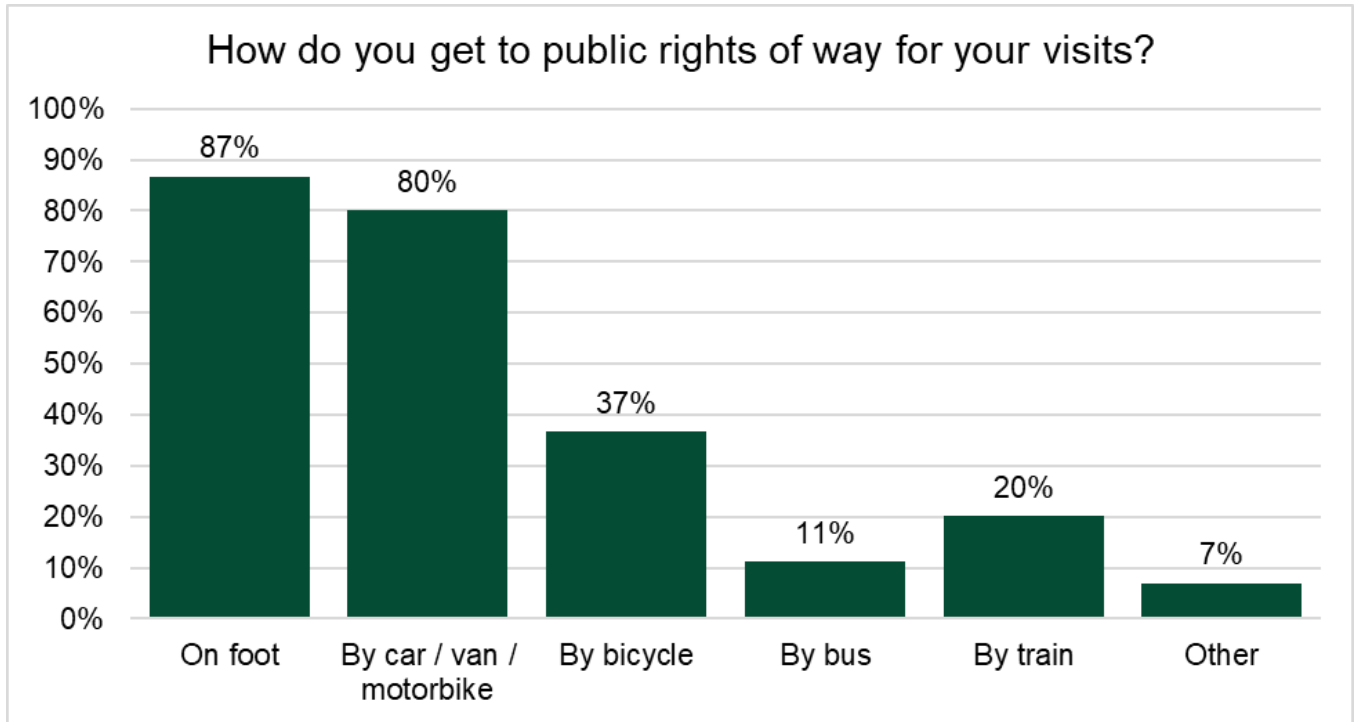
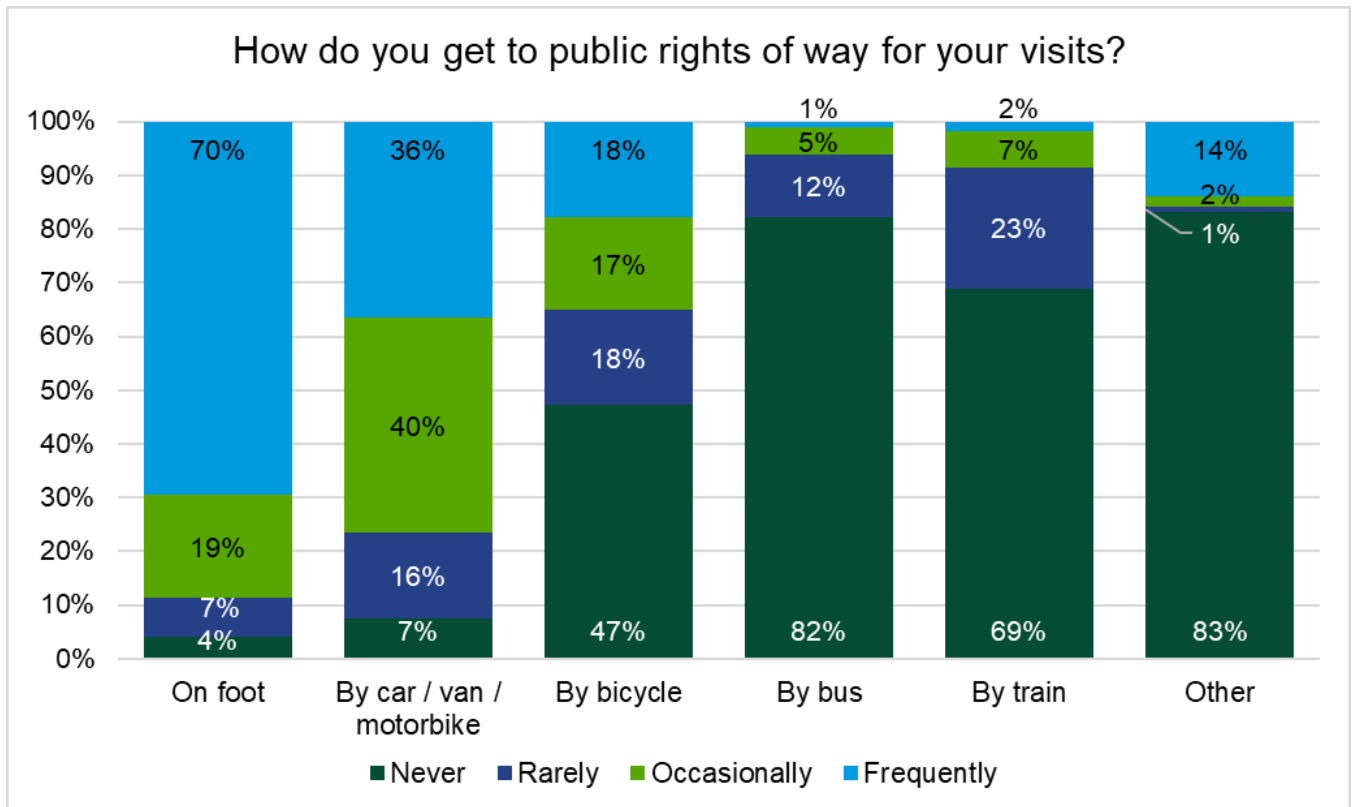


Chart 10: How do you get to public rights of way for your visits? Frequency by mode.



55 people gave additional information or comments this was categorised into similar sentiments. Most of these comments, 65%, stated the public rights of way were accessed through horse riding. 11% stated they used a horse box / lorry.

Table 22: How do you get to public rights of way for your visits? Additional Comments.

Categories of Responses n.55	Number	% giving this as one of their answers
On a horse	36	65%
In a horse box / lorry	6	11%
Home is on a public right of way	4	7%
Horse and carriage	2	4%
Mobility scooter	4	7%
Other	3	5%

### Breakdown by Male / Female and Age Group

Although there was some variation, there were no significant differences in duration in use of public rights of way between males and females and between the age groups.

### Duration of Use of Public Rights of Way

Respondents were asked 'On average how long do you use public rights of way in Surrey on each occasion?'. There were four duration options: Less than an hour; 1 – 2 hours; 3 – 4 hours and over 4 hours. Respondents were also asked how frequently they used public rights of way.

The duration which the highest number of people (82%) said they used public rights of way for either rarely, occasionally or frequently was 1 – 2 hours. Second was 3 – 4 hours (64%) closely followed by less than an hour (62%).

The duration for which people used public rights of way most frequently was less than an hour, with 66% of respondents. The frequency of use declined with increased duration. 22% of people said they never used public rights of way for over 4 hours.

Table 23: On average how long do you use public rights of way in Surrey on each occasion?

Frequency n.4173	Less than an hour	1 – 2 hours	3 – 4 hours	Over 4 hours
<b>Never</b>	131	49	234	594
% of this user duration (excluding not answered)	5%	1%	8%	22%
<b>Rarely</b> – less than once a month	269	275	864	1142
% of this user duration (excluding not answered)	10%	8%	30%	42%
<b>Occasionally</b> – 1 to 3 times a month	530	979	1174	650
% of this user duration (excluding not answered)	19%	28%	40%	24%
<b>Frequently</b> – once a week or more	1802	2168	632	306
% of this user duration (excluding not answered)	66%	62%	22%	11%
Total answering this question (excluding not answered)	2732	3471	2904	2692
Number of people who use PROW for this duration (rarely, occasionally, frequently)	2601	3422	2670	2098
% of people who use PROW do so for this duration (rarely, occasionally, frequently)	62%	82%	64%	50%

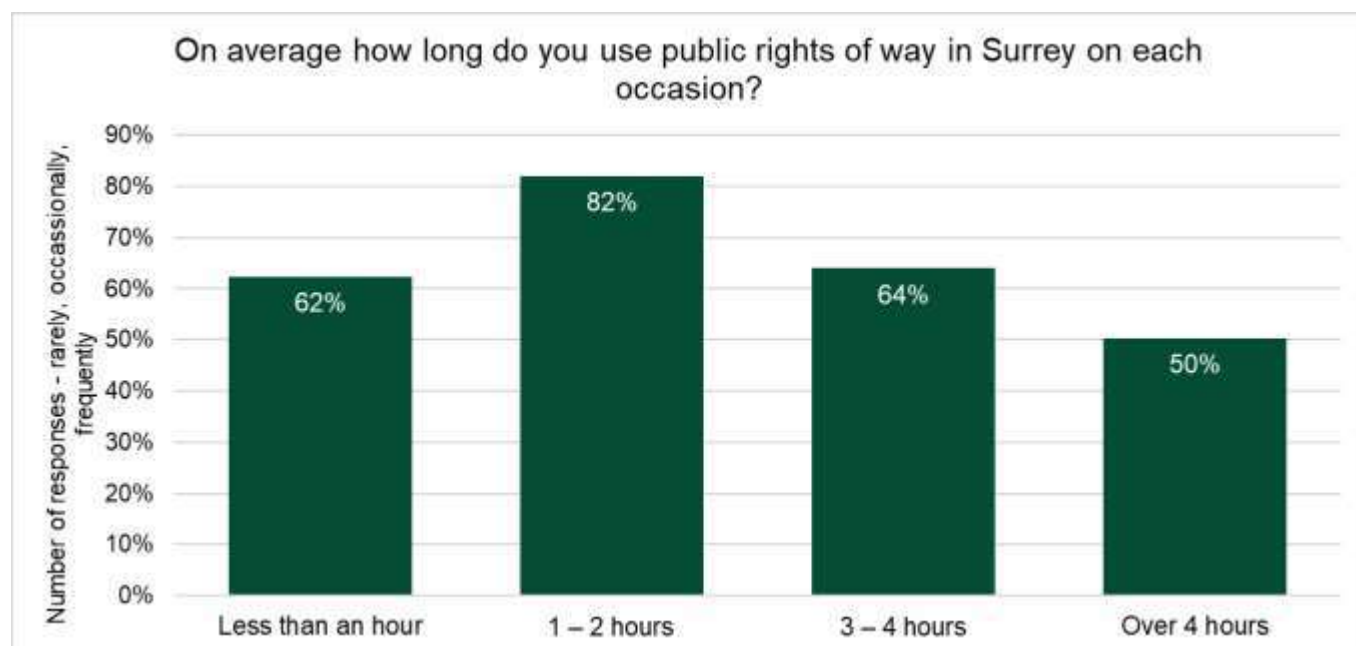
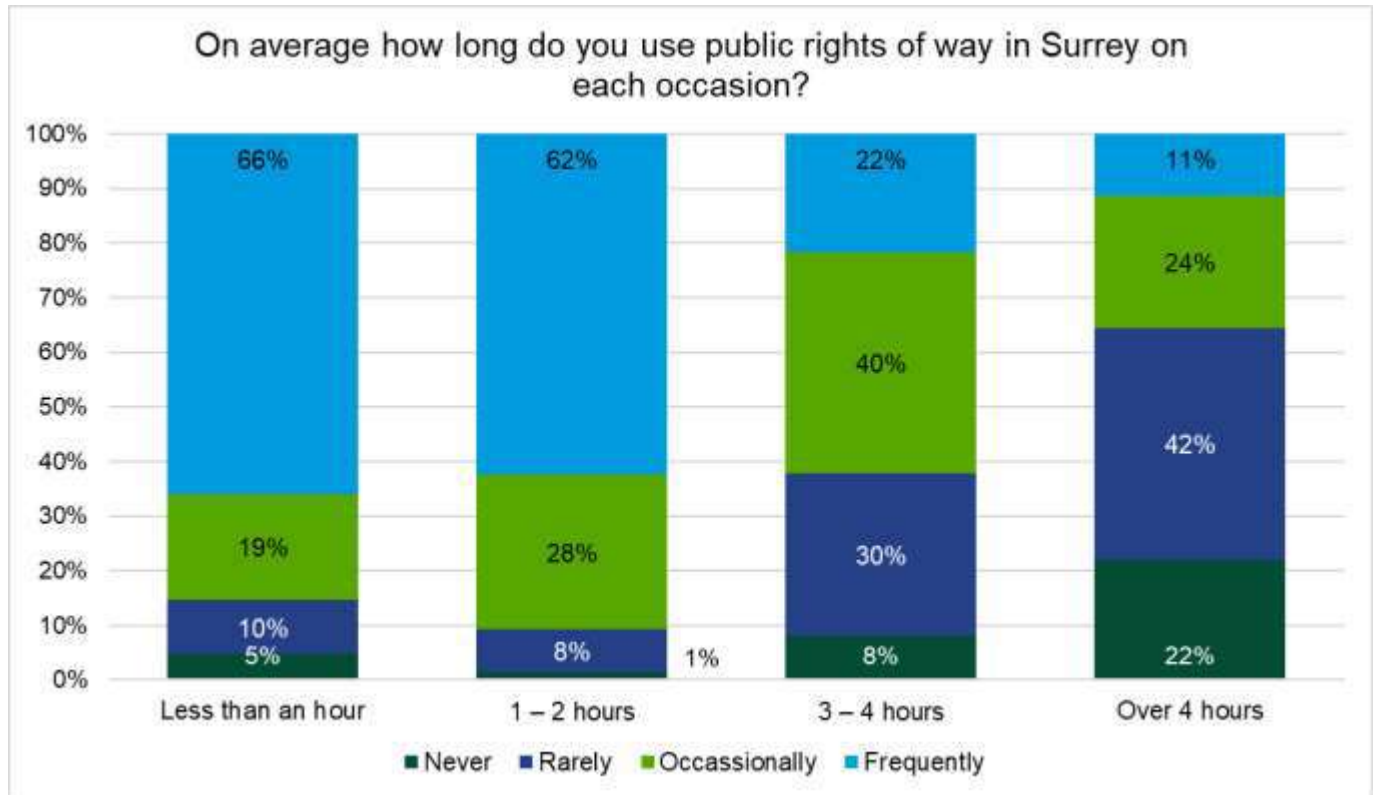
Chart 11: On average how long do you use public rights of way in Surrey on each occasion?  
Total Percentage for each Duration Choice



Chart 12: On average how long do you use public rights of way in Surrey on each occasion?  
Breakdown of Frequency for each Duration Choice



### Breakdown by Male / Female and Age Group

Although there was some variation, there were no significant differences in duration in use of public rights of way between males and females and between the age groups.

### How Far People Go When Using Public Rights of Way

Respondents were asked 'On average how far do you go when use Surrey County's public rights of way?'. There were four options - a very short distance (less than 1 mile or 1.5km), a short distance (1 mile to 3 miles or 1.5km to 5km), a moderate distance (3 to 8 miles or 5km to 13km) and a longer distance (over 8 miles or 13km). They were asked how frequently they went for the four distances.

The highest number of people overall, 85%, went for 'a moderate distance (3 to 8 miles or 5km to 13km) either rarely, occasionally or frequently. The most frequent distance was 'A short distance (1 mile to 3 miles or 1.5km to 5km)' with 57% of people going for this distance frequently.

Table 24: On average how far do you go when use Surrey County's public rights of way?

Frequency n.4165	A very short distance (less than 1 mile or 1.5km)	A short distance (1 mile to 3 miles or 1.5km to 5km)	A moderate distance (3 to 8 miles or 5km to 13km)	A longer distance (over 8 miles or 13km)
<b>Never</b>	312	116	145	667
% going for this length (excluding not answered)	10%	3%	4%	20%
<b>Rarely</b>	606	324	635	1235
% going for this length (excluding not answered)	20%	9%	17%	37%
<b>Occasionally</b>	680	1018	1365	915
% going for this length (excluding not answered)	23%	30%	37%	28%
<b>Frequently</b>	1381	1966	1537	499
% going for this length (excluding not answered)	46%	57%	42%	15%
Total answering this question(excluding not answered)	2979	3424	3682	3316
Number of people going for this duration (rarely, occasionally, frequently)	2667	3308	3537	2649
% of people going for this duration (rarely, occasionally, frequently)	64%	79%	85%	64%

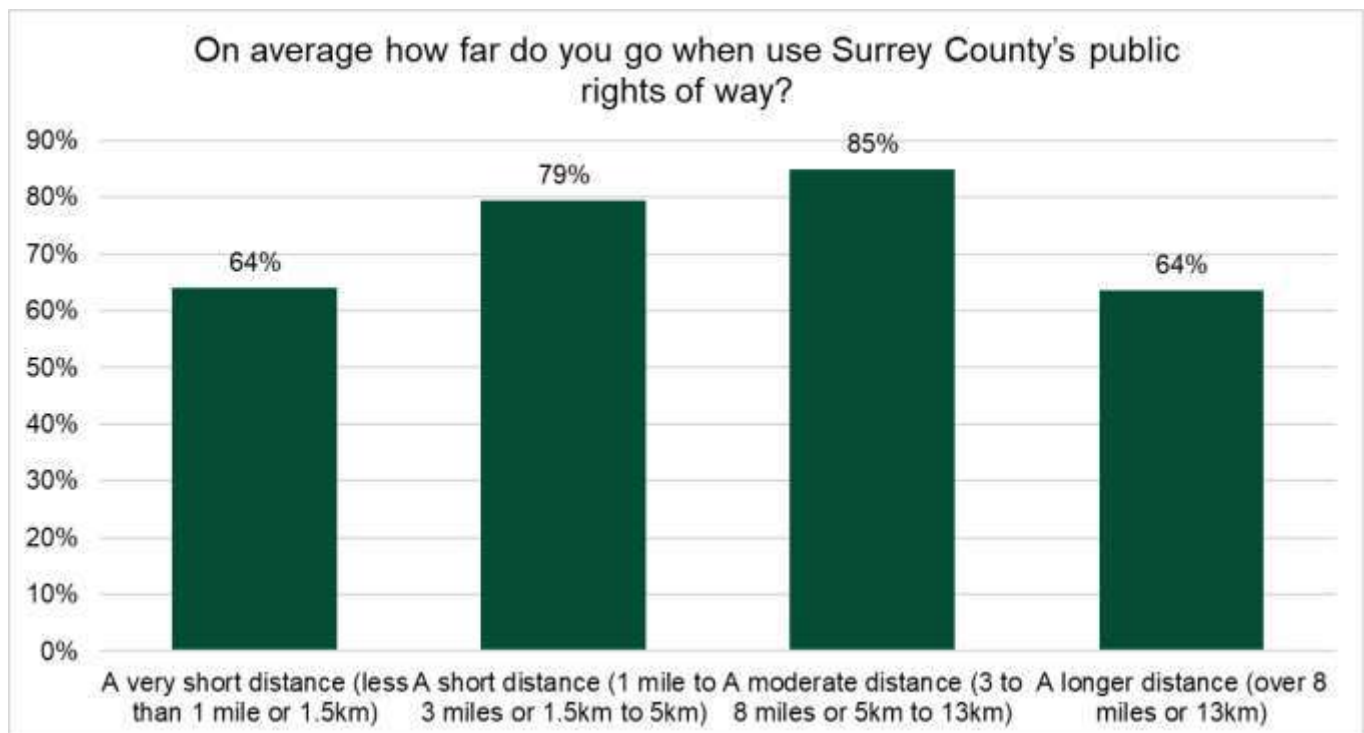
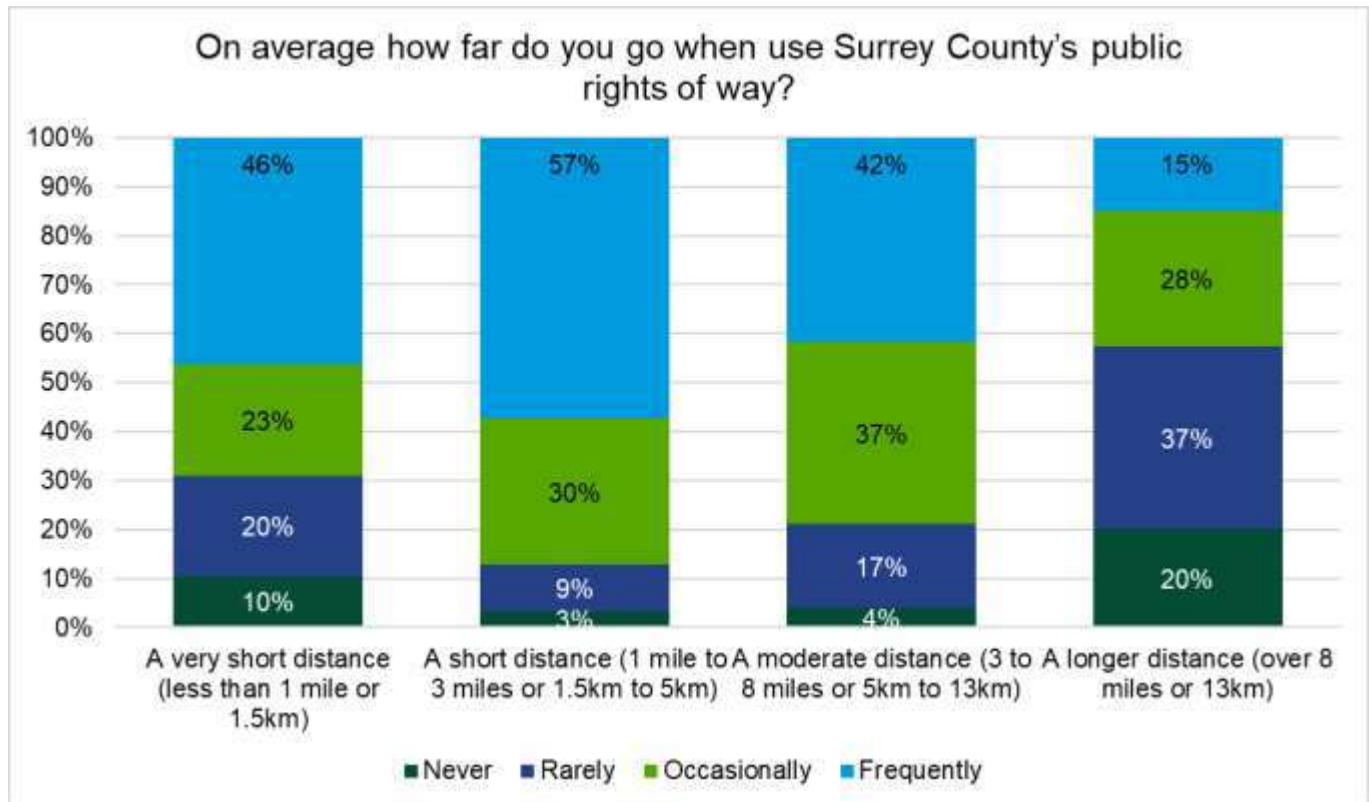
Chart 13: On average how far do you go when use Surrey County's public rights of way?  
Percentage going for this distance rarely, occasionally or frequently.

Chart 14: On average how far do you go when use Surrey County's public rights of way?

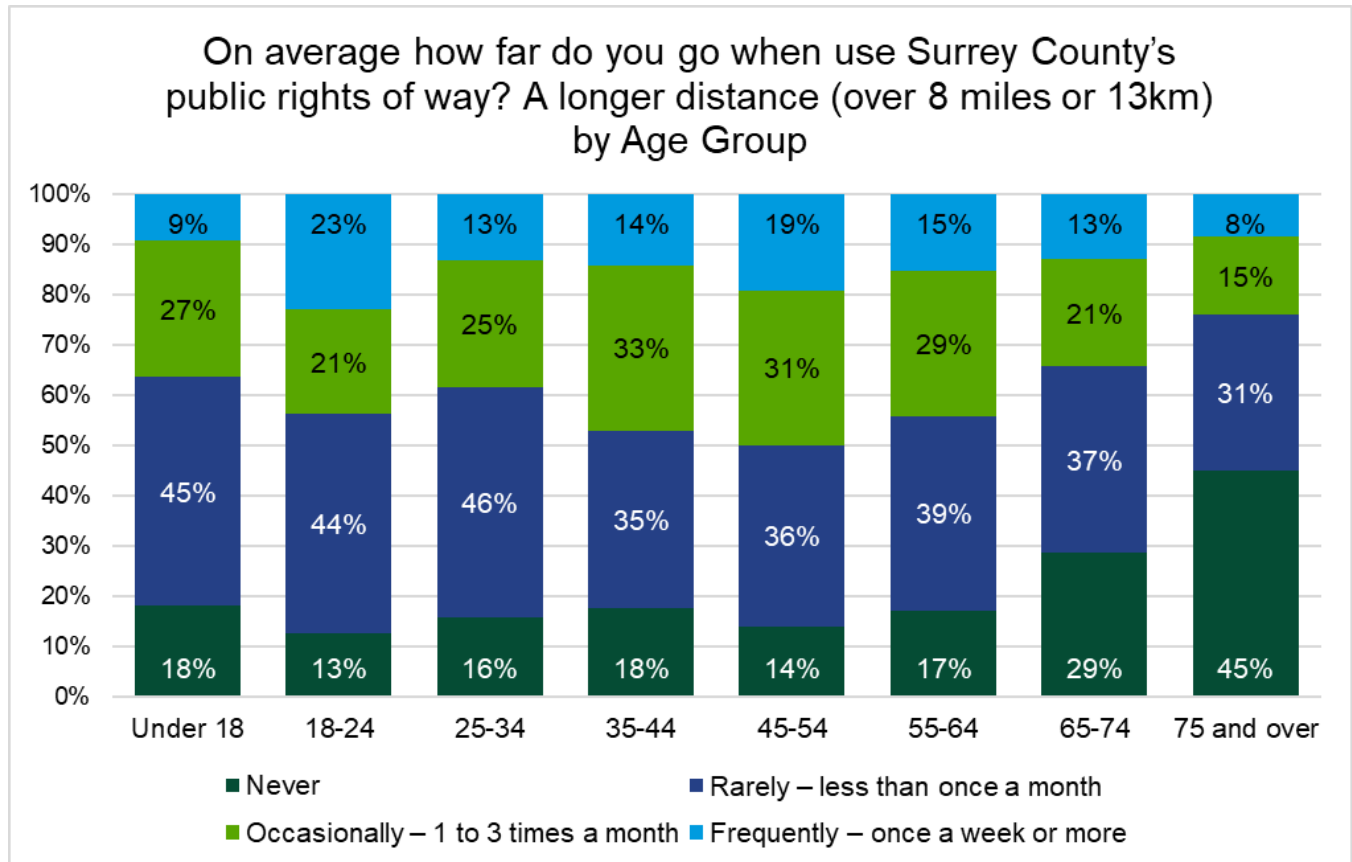


### Breakdown by Male / Female and Age Group

Although there was some variation, there were no significant differences in duration in use of public rights of way between males and females. There was a small difference between males and females in two categories – females were less likely than males to frequently go for a moderate distance (60% female vs. 40% male) and more likely than males to never go for a longer distance (63% female vs 37% male).

Although there was some variation, there were no significant differences in duration in use of public rights of way between the age groups. However, there was a higher proportion of older people who 'rarely' or 'never' used public rights of way for a longer distance (over 8 miles or 13km), with 76% of those over 75 years using them rarely or never for this distance, compared with 58% overall.

Chart 15: On average how far do you go when use Surrey County's public rights of way? A longer distance (over 8 miles or 13km). Breakdown by Age Group.



## Areas Where People Use Public Rights of Way

Respondents were asked 'How frequently do you follow the type of routes described below?' The options described various types of location and landscapes.

The type of route which the highest number of people used were routes close to home, used by 94% of people. Second were routes in rural areas / in the countryside, used by 93% of people. Third were routes through woodland, used by 92% of people.

Routes starting from a bus routes were the least used, only used by 19% of people.

Table 25: How frequently do you follow the type of routes described below?

Type of Route n.4168	Never	%	Rarely	%	Occasionally	%	Frequently	%	Total answering this question (excluding not answered)	% of people following these types of route (rarely, occasionally, frequently)
Routes close to my home	88	2%	208	5%	635	16%	3083	77%	4014	94%
Routes close to towns or villages	86	2%	503	14%	1390	40%	1536	44%	3515	82%
Routes in rural areas / in the countryside	39	1%	483	12%	1490	38%	1917	49%	3929	93%
Routes starting from country parks	478	15%	1387	42%	1063	32%	364	11%	3292	68%
Routes starting from bus routes	2216	74%	546	18%	180	6%	49	2%	2991	19%
Routes starting from train stations	1776	58%	867	28%	315	10%	98	3%	3056	31%
Routes across farmland	231	6%	744	20%	1354	37%	1320	36%	3649	82%
Routes across common land	80	2%	485	13%	1239	33%	1966	52%	3770	89%
Routes along rivers	207	6%	989	28%	1462	41%	922	26%	3580	81%
Routes through woodland	32	1%	296	8%	1175	30%	2381	61%	3884	92%

Chart 16: How frequently do you follow the type of routes described below? Percentage who follow these types of routes.

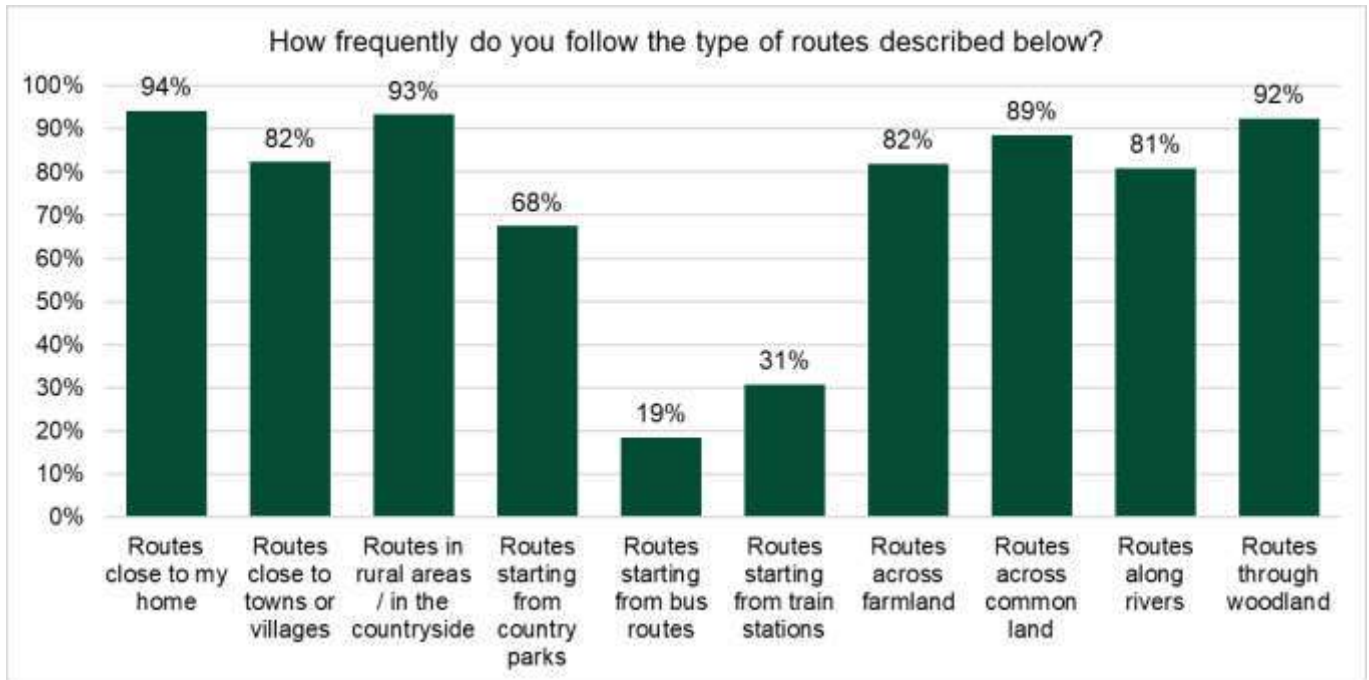
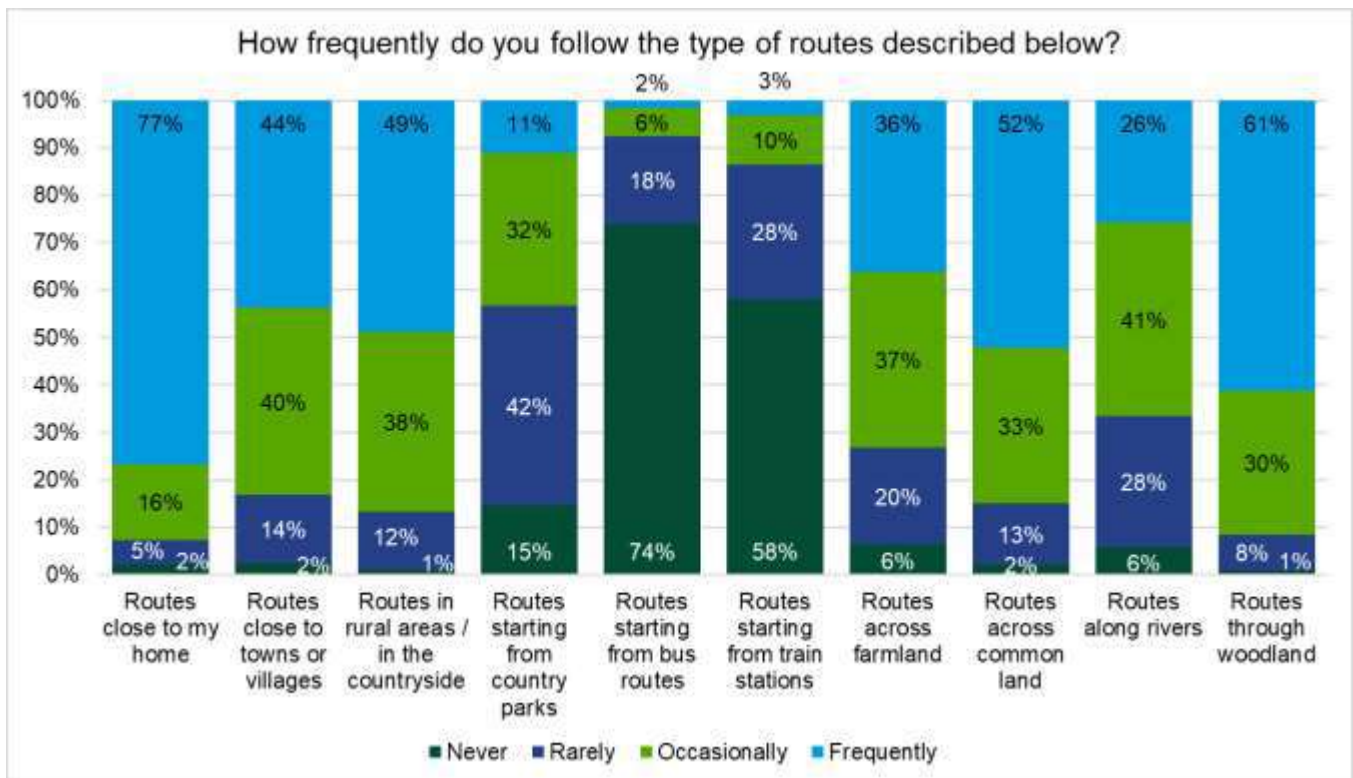


Chart 17: How frequently do you follow the type of routes described below? Frequency of use.



### Breakdown by Male / Female and Age Group

Although there was some variation, there were no significant differences in duration in use of public rights of way between males and females and between the age groups.

## Reasons Preventing People Using Public Rights of Way as much as they Would Like

People were asked if any from a list of reasons prevented them from using public rights of way as much as they would like. More than one answer could be chosen. This question covered personal reasons which might prevent people from using public rights of way.

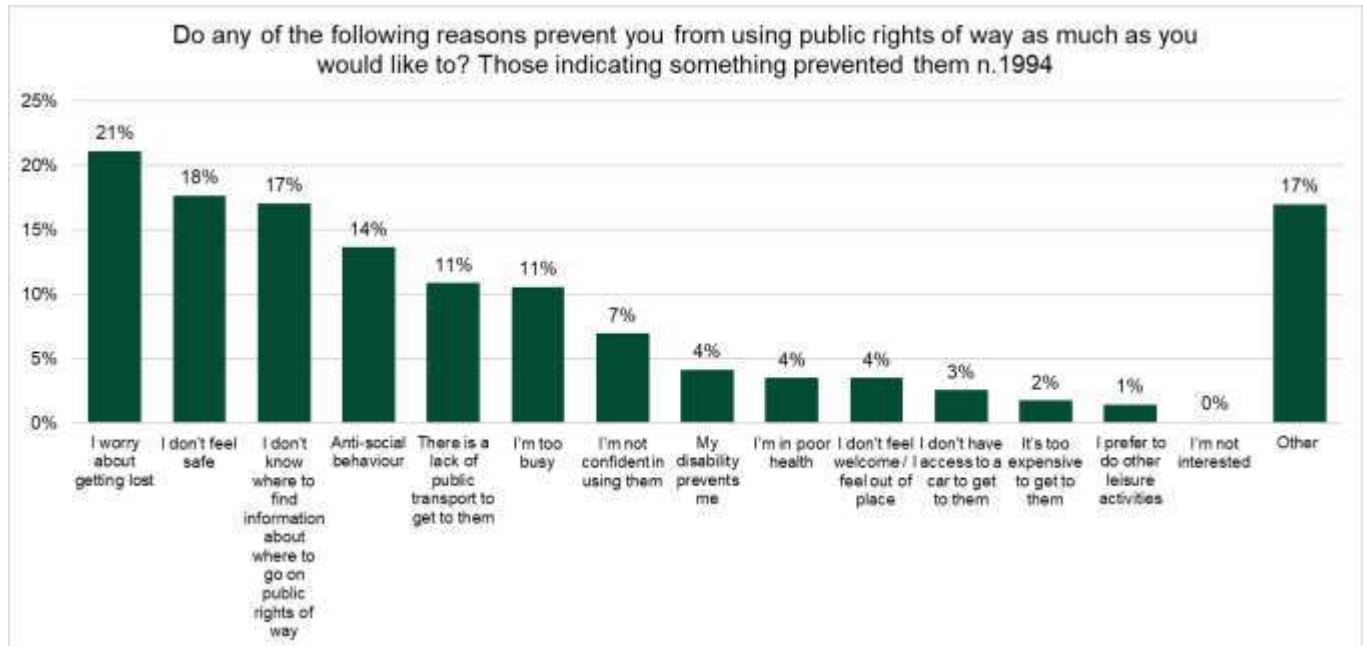
Most people, 53%, indicated that nothing stopped them from using public rights of way as much as they would like.

Of those who did indicate that something prevented them (1994 respondents), the highest reason was 'I worry about getting lost', given by 21% of those saying something prevented them. Second highest, given by 18% of those saying something prevented them was 'I don't feel safe', and third, given by 17% of those saying something prevented them was 'I don't know where to find information about where to go on public rights of way'.

Table 26: Do any of the following reasons prevent you from using public rights of way as much as you would like to?

Reasons n.4267	Number	% giving this as one of their answers	% of those giving reasons which prevent them from using public rights of way
Nothing – I use public rights of way as much as I would like	2273	53%	
I worry about getting lost	421	10%	21%
I don't feel safe	352	8%	18%
I don't know where to find information about where to go on public rights of way	340	8%	17%
Anti-social behaviour	272	6%	14%
There is a lack of public transport to get to them	217	5%	11%
I'm too busy	211	5%	11%
I'm not confident in using them	139	3%	7%
My disability prevents me	83	2%	4%
I'm in poor health	70	2%	4%
I don't feel welcome / I feel out of place	70	2%	4%
I don't have access to a car to get to them	51	1%	3%
It's too expensive to get to them	35	1%	2%
I prefer to do other leisure activities	29	1%	1%
I'm not interested	2	0%	0%
Other	339	8%	17%

Chart 18: Do any of the following reasons prevent you from using public rights of way as much as you would like to? Those indicating something prevented them.



Other comments made were around:

- Poor condition of paths: Paths can be overgrown, muddy, uneven, or blocked. This makes them difficult or impossible to use for some people.
- Lack of signage: Some paths are poorly signed or not signed at all. This can make it difficult for people to find their way or know if they are on the right path.
- Inconsiderate dog walkers: Some dog walkers do not control their dogs properly, which can be frightening or intimidating for other users of the public rights of way.
- Traffic dangers: Where public rights of way cross busy roads. This can make them dangerous to use, especially for horse riders and cyclists.
- Lack of parking: There can be a lack of parking facilities near public rights of ways, which can make it difficult for people to get to them.
- Anti-social behaviour: anti-social behaviour, littering, fly-tipping, and drug use.
- Bridleways can be overgrown, narrow, or have low branches, making them difficult for horses to use.
- Lack of understanding: Some people do not understand that horses, cyclists, 4x4 vehicles and trail bikes have the right to use some public rights of way and may shout at or threaten users.
- Paths can be blocked by debris, fallen trees, or other obstructions.
- Safety concerns: safety issues such as traffic, out-of-control dogs, or aggressive actions from other users.

## Breakdown by Male / Female and Age Group

Although there was some variation there were no significant differences in between age groups.

There were some differences between males and females in their answers to factors which prevented them from using public rights of way as much as they would like. Overall, more males than females indicated that nothing stopped them using public rights of way as much as they



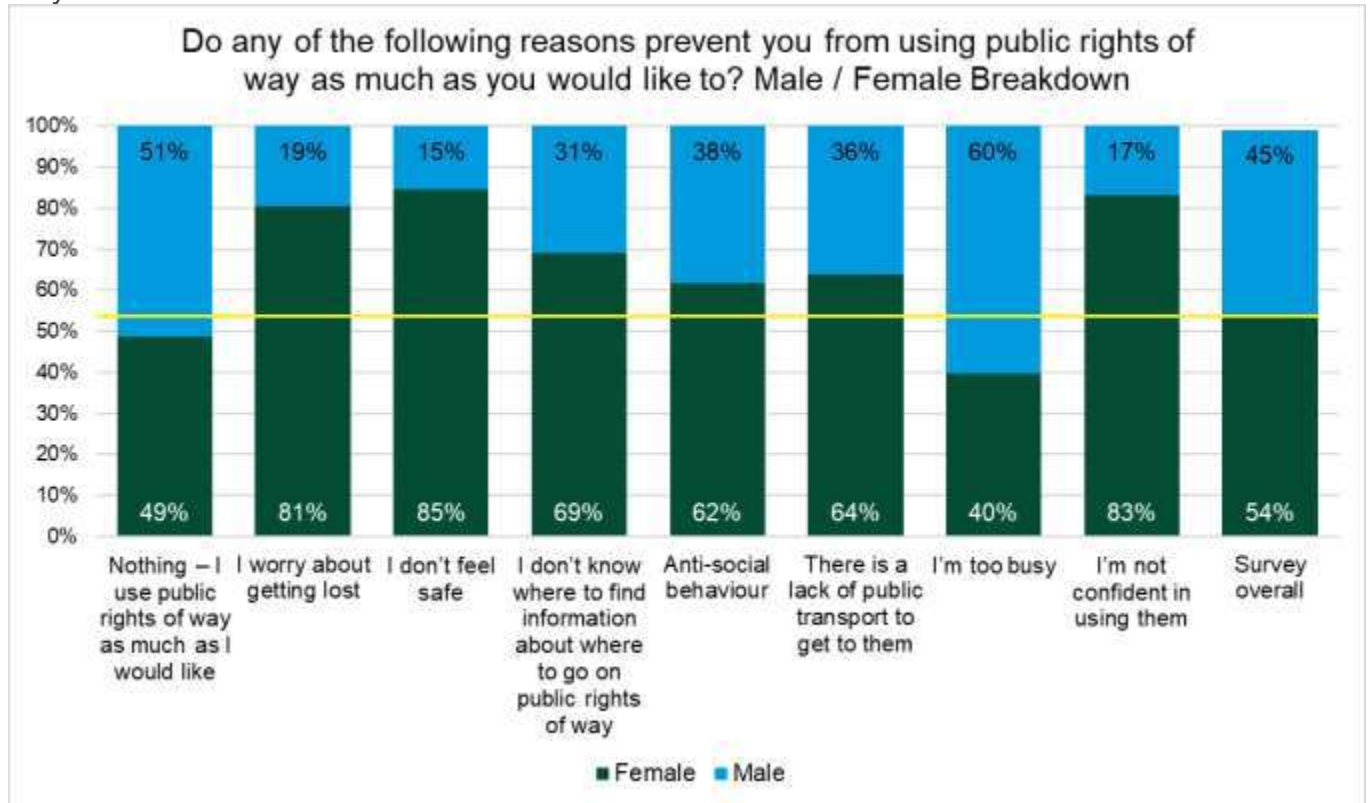
would like. The split was 51% male to 49% female, whereas overall for the survey the split was 45% male and 54% female.

Further analysis of the top reasons which prevented people, revealed that a significantly higher number of females gave these reasons. The greatest difference between males and females was for 'I don't feel safe', with 85% of responses given by females compared to 15% given by males. The second highest was 'I'm not confident in using them', with 83% of responses given by females compared to 17% given by males. For all of the top reasons, more females than males indicated these were factors which prevented them from using public rights of way as much as they would like, except for 'I'm too busy', for which 60% of responses were given by males and 40% by females.

Table 27: Do any of the following reasons prevent you from using public rights of way as much as you would like to? Female / Male Breakdown

Reasons	Female	Male
Nothing – I use public rights of way as much as I would like n.2273	49%	51%
I worry about getting lost n.421	81%	19%
I don't feel safe n.352	85%	15%
I don't know where to find information about where to go on public rights of way n.340	69%	31%
Anti-social behaviour n.272	62%	38%
There is a lack of public transport to get to them n.217	64%	36%
I'm too busy n.211	40%	60%
I'm not confident in using them n.139	83%	17%
Survey overall	54%	45%

Chart 19: Do any of the following reasons prevent you from using public rights of way as much as you would like to? Female / Male Breakdown



## Use of E-Bikes

Respondents were asked whether they used or planned to use an e-bike for off-road cycling. 1678 people answered this question.

- 35% already used an e-bike or planned to use an e-bike in the future
- 65% didn't currently use or plan to use an e-bike

Table 28: If you cycle off road, do you, or do you plan, to use an e-bike for this?

Options n.1678	Number	% of those giving an answer that they cycle (excluding not answered) n.1678
I cycle off-road and already use an e-bike	289	17%
I cycle off-road and plan to use an e-bike in the future	293	17%
I cycle off-road but don't currently use or want to use an e-bike	1096	65%

Chart 20: If you cycle off road, do you, or do you plan, to use an e-bike for this?



**Breakdown by Male / Female and Age Group**

More males than females answered this question – 59% male compared with 45% male overall. Those who currently used e-bikes were older than the overall profile of those answering this question, with 66% over 55 years old compared with 51% overall for those who answered this question.

Table 29: If you cycle off road, do you, or do you plan, to use an e-bike for this? Age over 55



## Use of Public Rights of Way for Commuting

Respondents were asked 'Do you use public rights of way for commuting – e.g. to work, to the shops or to other facilities, e.g. the station?'. Of those answering 'yes' or 'no', 40% use public rights of way for commuting and 60% did not.

Table 30: Do you use public rights of way for commuting – e.g. to work, to the shops or to other facilities, e.g. the station?

Answer n.4273	Number	% n.4273	% of those giving an answer n.4179
Yes	1661	39%	40%
No	2518	59%	60%
Not answered	94	2%	
Total	4273		

Respondents were then asked for what purpose they used public rights of way for commuting. Respondents could give more than one answer.

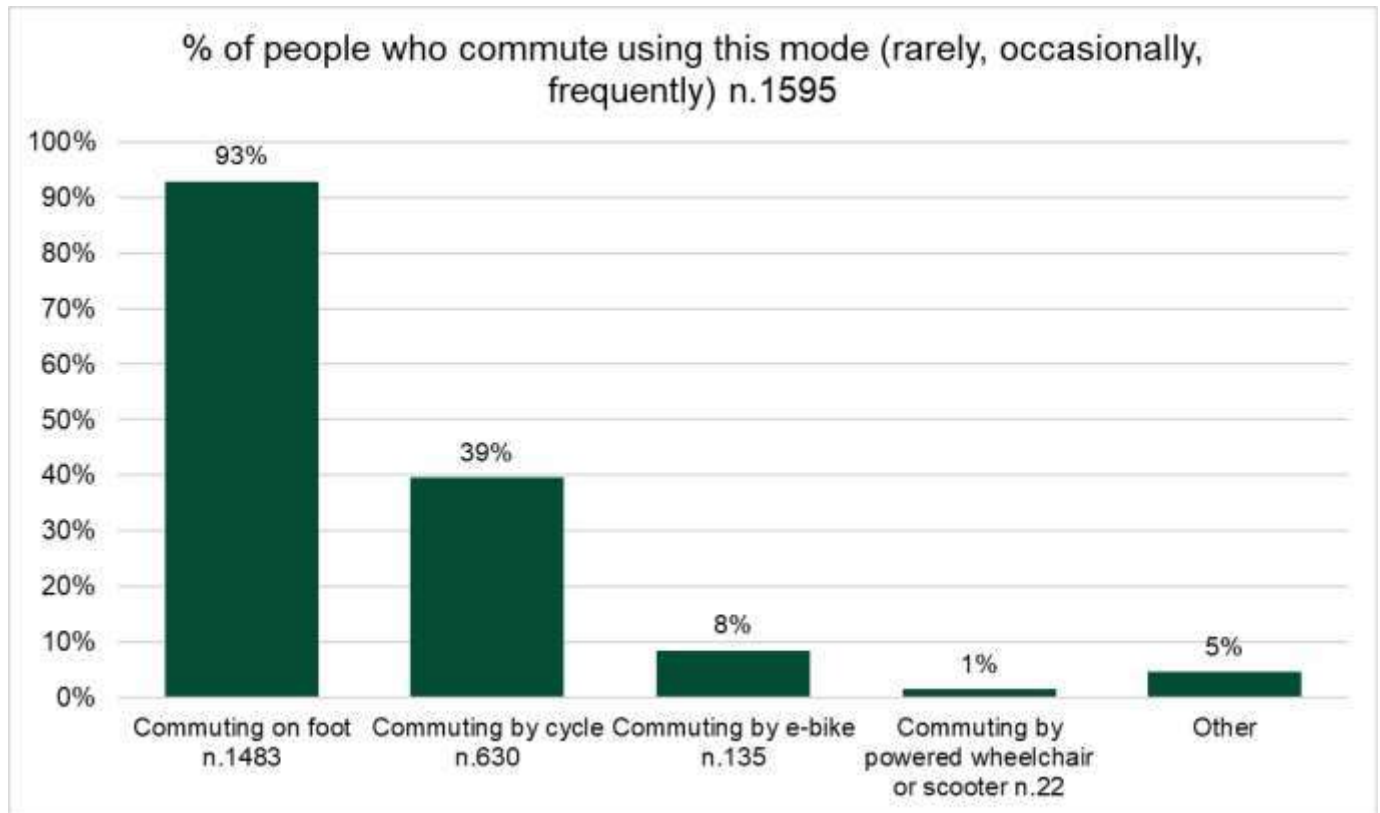
The highest response was 'To get to the station, shops or other facilities' with 81% giving this as one of their answers. Second was 'To get to work' with 32% of people giving this reason. Only 9% of respondents indicated that they used public rights of way to get to school.

Table 31: How do you use public rights of way for commuting?

Answer n.1622	Number	% of those giving this as one of their answers n.1622
To get to work	515	32%
To get to school	138	9%
To get to the station, shops or other facilities	1306	81%
Other	126	8%
Total giving an answer	1622	

Respondents were asked which mode of travel they used and how frequently they used it. The highest response, given by 93% of people, was commuting on foot. The second highest was cycling, given by 39% of people. 8% commuted by e-bike and 1% by powered wheelchair or scooter.

Chart 21: How do you use public rights of way for commuting? Percentage use by mode

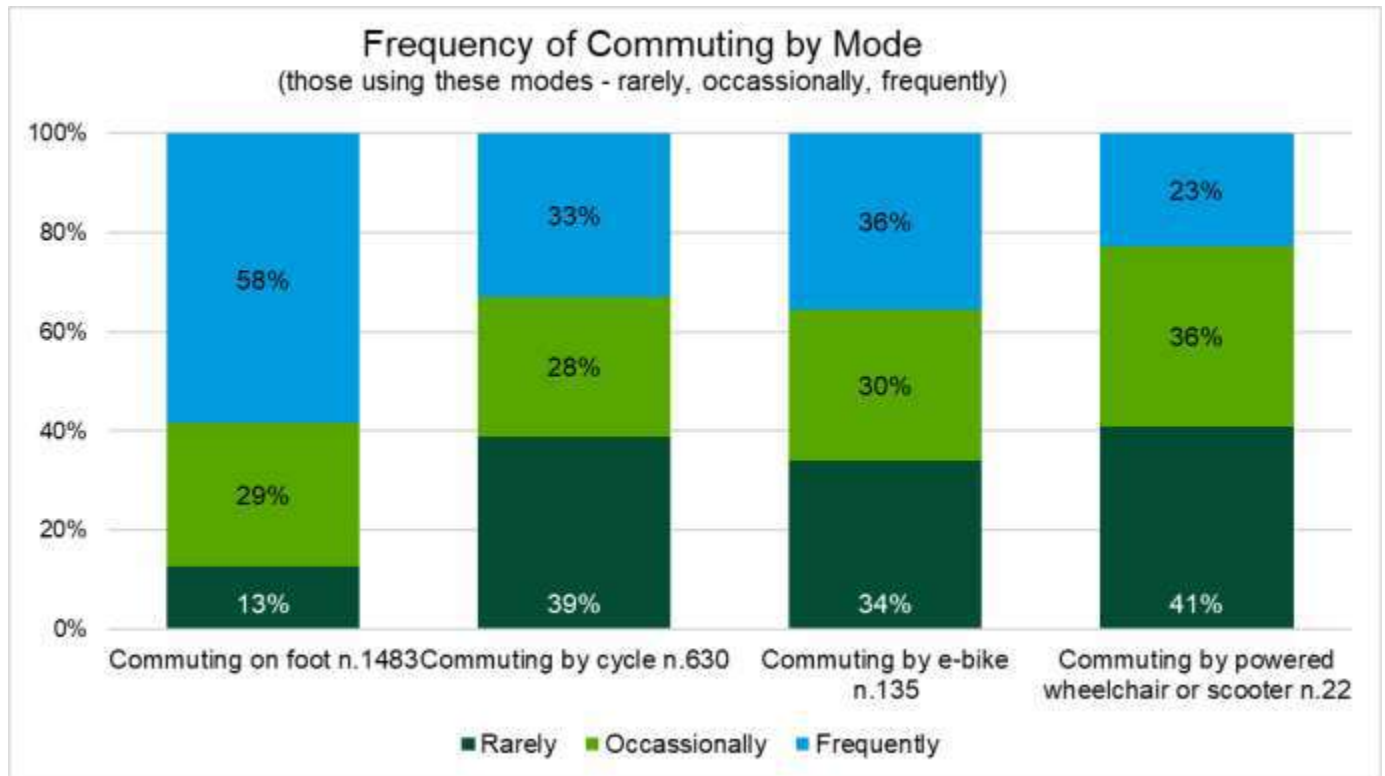


People also commuted on foot more frequently, with 53% saying they used this mode frequently, compared with 33% who cycle frequently, 36% who use e-bikes frequently and 23% who used a powered wheelchair or scooter frequently.

Chart 22: On average, how often do you commute using public rights of way, using these modes of travel? Excluding 'not answered' and 'never'

Mode of travel n.1595	Rarely – less than once a month	% of this user type	Occasionally – 1 to 3 times a month	% of this user type	Frequently – once a week or more	% of this user type	% of people who commute using this mode
Commuting on foot n.1483	188	13%	428	29%	867	58%	93%
Commuting by cycle n.630	245	39%	178	28%	207	33%	39%
Commuting by e-bike n.135	46	34%	41	30%	48	36%	8%
Commuting by powered wheelchair or scooter n.22	9	41%	8	36%	5	23%	1%
Other	9	13%	15	21%	48	67%	5%

Chart 23: How do you use public rights of way for commuting? Frequency by mode



### Breakdown by Male / Female and Age Group

Overall there was no significant difference in the male / female breakdown for this questions around commuting than for the survey overall – 54% female and 45% male. The only difference was in those using public rights of way to commute to school, which was 75% female and 25% male.

Table 32: Reason for Commuting and Commuting Overall – Female / Male Breakdown

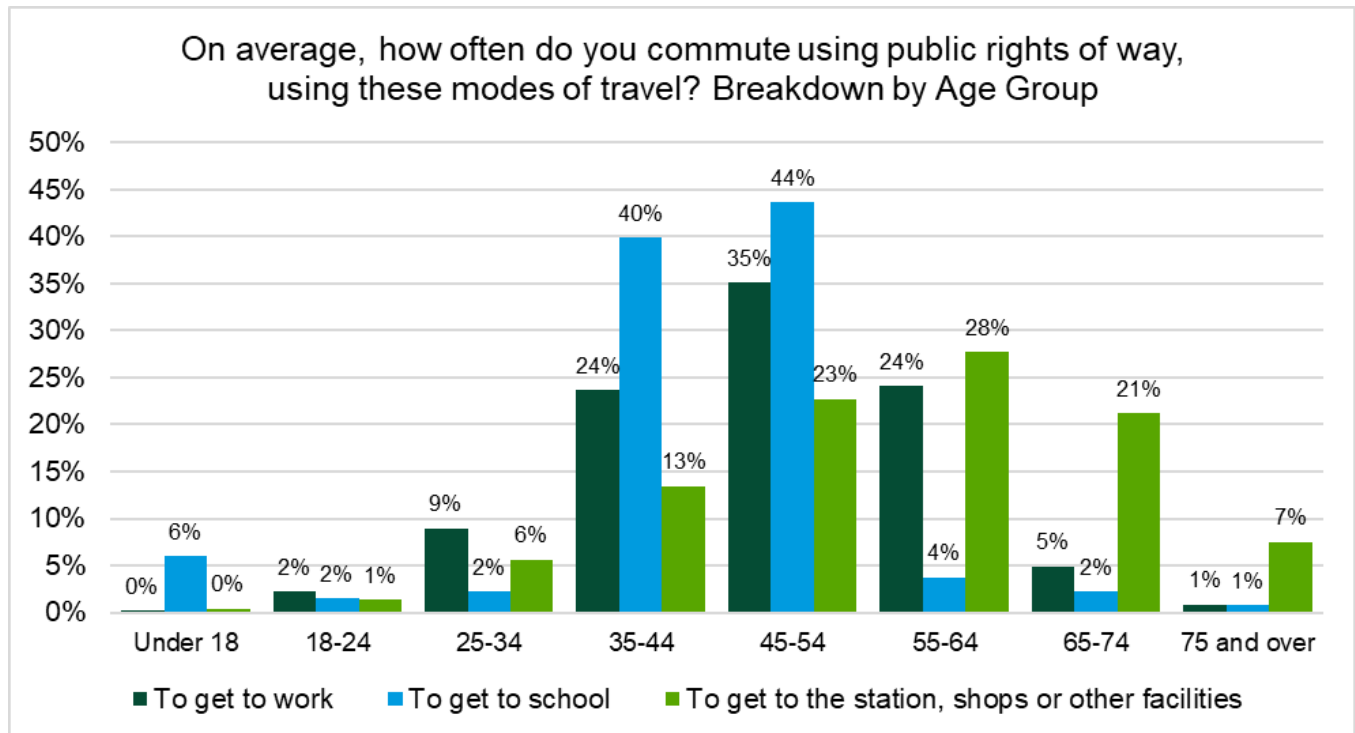
Reason for Commuting	Female	Number	Male	Number
To get to work	50%	238	50%	240
To get to school	75%	97	25%	33
To get to the station, shops or other facilities	57%	701	43%	538
Overall - those indicating they commute using public rights of way	54%	874	45%	704
Overall - entire survey	54%		45%	

For the three reasons for commuting there was some difference in the prevalence of commuting in the different age groups. There were more people aged between 35 and 54 and in the under 18 age group who use public rights of way to get to school. There was a higher prevalence in the older age groups, over 55, to get to the station, shops and other facilities.

Table 33: Reasons for Commuting – Breakdown by Age Group

Age Group	To get to work n.478	To get to school n.130	To get to the station, shops or other facilities n.1239
Under 18	0%	6%	0%
18-24	2%	2%	1%
25-34	9%	2%	6%
35-44	24%	40%	13%
45-54	35%	44%	23%
55-64	24%	4%	28%
65-74	5%	2%	21%
75 and over	1%	1%	7%

Chart 24: Reasons for Commuting – Breakdown by Age Group



# Condition, Maintenance and Problems on Public Rights of Way

## Issues which Negatively Affect Users' Experience on Public Rights of Way

Respondents were asked 'Have any of the following issues negatively affected your experience on public rights of way?'. More than one answer could be given.

Only 3% of respondents indicated that none of the issues had affected their experience.

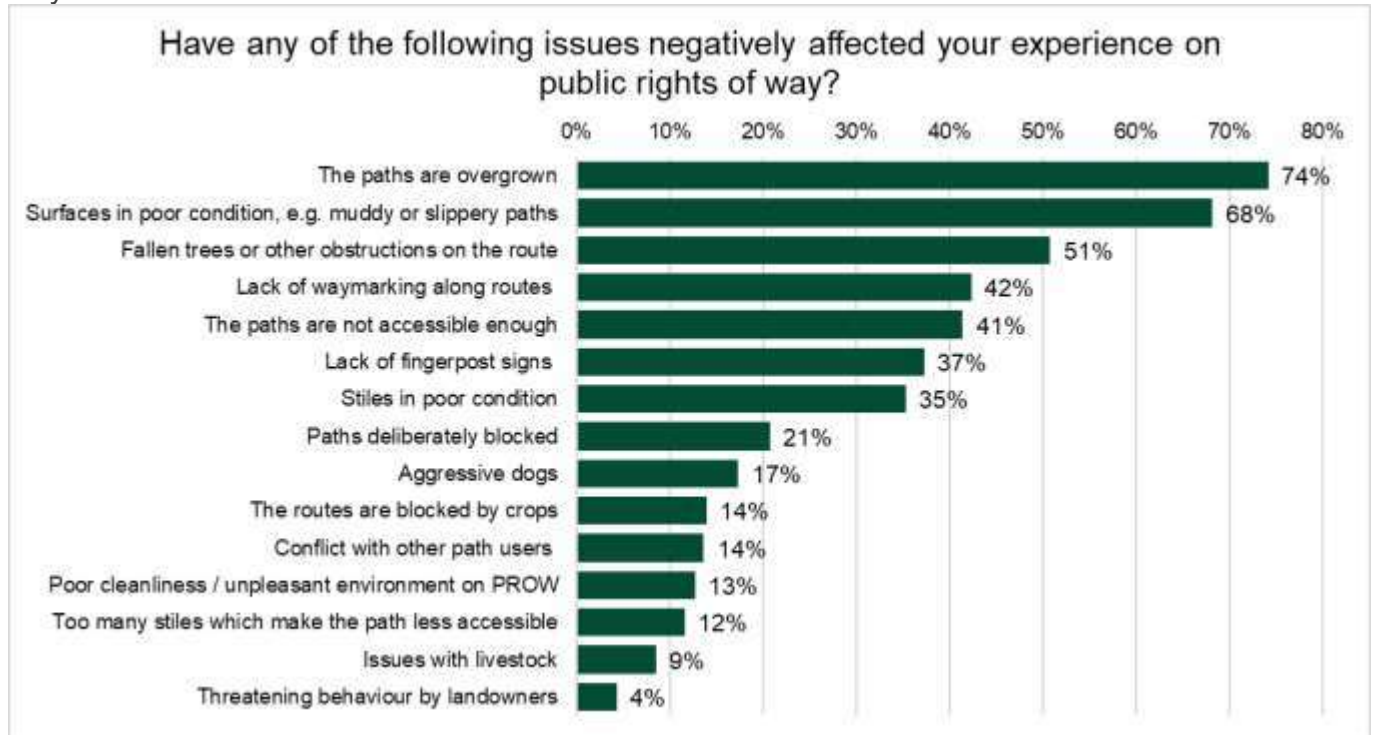
The highest number of responses was for 'the paths are overgrown', given by 74% of respondents. Second was 'surfaces in poor condition, e.g. muddy or slippery paths', given by 68% of respondents. Third was 'Lack of waymarking along routes' given by 51% of respondents.

Table 34: Have any of the following issues negatively affected your experience on public rights of way?

Issues n.4148	Number	% giving this as one their answers
The paths are overgrown	3079	74%
Surfaces in poor condition, e.g. muddy or slippery paths	2830	68%
Fallen trees or other obstructions on the route	2108	51%
Lack of waymarking along routes (directional signs on the route showing you where to go)	1757	42%
The paths are not accessible enough	1719	41%
Lack of fingerpost signs showing the start of public rights of way from the road	1549	37%
Stiles in poor condition	1467	35%
Paths deliberately blocked	860	21%
Aggressive dogs	721	17%
The routes are blocked by crops	579	14%
Conflict with other path users (provide further details in 'Other')	567	14%
Poor cleanliness / unpleasant environment on public rights of way	529	13%
Too many stiles which make the path less accessible	481	12%
Issues with livestock	354	9%
Threatening behaviour by landowners	180	4%
None of the above	137	3%
Other	296	7%



Plan 15: Have any of the following issues negatively affected your experience on public rights of way?



131 people made further comments. This was a small proportion of all of those who answered this question. The comments were categorised into similar sentiments.

The highest proportion of responses, with 34% of people who commented giving this as one of their answers, was around cyclists. Comments were made around speeding, not announcing their presence or not giving way to other users, scaring horses and damaging surfaces. Similar comments were also made about motorised vehicles, along with general objections to their rights of use, with this being third highest with 17% of comments.

8% of people commented that walkers and cyclists were aggressive or intimidating to motorised vehicle users when these users were legitimately exercising their rights.

7% commented that horses, cyclists and motorised vehicles used public rights of way which they did not have the right to use.

17% of people commented that there were aggressive dogs, dogs out control and dog fouling. Some commented that there has been an increase in dogs.

4% commented that there was litter and fly-tipping.

Table 35: Have any of the following issues negatively affected your experience on public rights of way? Further comments.

Categories n.131	Number	% giving this as one of their answers
Cyclists - speeding, not announcing presence, not giving way, on footpaths, scaring horses, damaging surfaces	44	34%
Dogs - aggressive dogs, dogs out of control, dog fouling	22	17%
Motorised vehicles - general objection, damage to surfaces, travelling too quickly	20	15%
Walkers and cyclists aggressive towards motorised vehicle users / not understanding right to use routes	10	8%
Horses, cyclists or motorised vehicles on rights of way where not allowed	9	7%
Disconnected network for equestrians (PROW do not meet, missing bridges) or poor surface / infrastructure limiting use	8	6%
Litter and fly tipping	5	4%
Unsuitable surfaces for equestrians (mud, hard or rocky surfaces)	4	3%
Water, flooding, blocked culverts	4	3%
Landowners closing paths	4	3%
Missing bridges	4	3%
Poor accessibility - pushchair and mobility scooter	3	2%
Too much traffic	3	2%
Horses and cyclists damaging surfaces	3	2%
Livestock	1	1%
Other	20	15%

## Improvements to Support Your Activity

### Walkers

- Better maintained: cleared of fallen trees, overgrown vegetation, and debris; repaired surfaces; improved drainage.
- Better signed: with clear waymarkers, information boards, and maps.
- More user-friendly: with kissing gates replacing stiles, fewer livestock encounters, and responsible dog owners.
- More extensive: with missing links reconnected, rights of way protected from closure, and more connecting paths for more route options.
- Safer: with better crossing points for roads, more consideration from cyclists and horse riders, and a reduction in dangerous features like barbed wire fencing.
- Less misuse by cycles on footpaths.

### Cyclists

- Missing links reconnected in the network.
- Improved surface quality.
- Clear signage for different users and the Countryside Code.
- Bridleways to be kept clear and complaints addressed.
- Better signage and education about sharing paths.

### Equestrians

- Signage: Many bridleways lack proper signage, making it difficult for users to find their way or understand who has right of way.
- Safety: Bridleway users encounter safety hazards from things like inconsiderate dog walkers, livestock in fields, dangerous road crossings, and poor surfaces.
- Connectivity: The bridleway network is fragmented, with many paths ending abruptly or requiring riders to use unsafe roads.
- Access: There are not enough bridleways.
- Education: There is a lack of understanding among the general public about bridleway etiquette and how to share the space with other users.
- Improved maintenance of bridleways, including drainage, surface repair, and vegetation control.
- Better signage for bridleways, including maps, directions, and information about permitted uses.
- More bridleways with better connectivity and fewer dead ends.
- Increased enforcement of right-of-way laws.
- Education campaigns to promote responsible use of bridleways by all user groups.
- Creation of new bridleways or conversion of suitable footpaths to bridleways.
- Better infrastructure for horse riders, such as safe parking for horseboxes and kissing gates instead of stiles.
- Consideration from cyclists and walkers who also use bridleways.

## Motorised Vehicle Users

- More signposts and better education for users: This would help to avoid misunderstandings about which users are allowed on which routes.
- Keep byways open
- More information and downloadable maps: This would help users to plan their routes and avoid private land.
- Better understanding between different users - walkers, cyclists, and motorcyclists should be more considerate of each other and understand that byways are shared spaces.
- More byways and better maintenance: there should be more byways and existing byways should be better maintained.
- Review and reinstate TROs: some traffic regulation orders (TROs) are unjust and should be lifted.
- Create more BOATs: more byways should be designated as Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs).

## Dogs on Public Rights of Way (all users)

- Dog mess is a major concern for many path users. People would like to see more dog bins and enforcement of rules about picking up dog mess.
- Many people would like to see dogs kept on leads, especially on bridleways where they can be frightening to horses.
- Some dog owners feel that other path users are not aware of the rights of dogs to use the paths.
- There is a need for better education for all path users about the Countryside Code and how to share the paths considerately.

## Condition of Public Rights of Way in the Last Ten Years

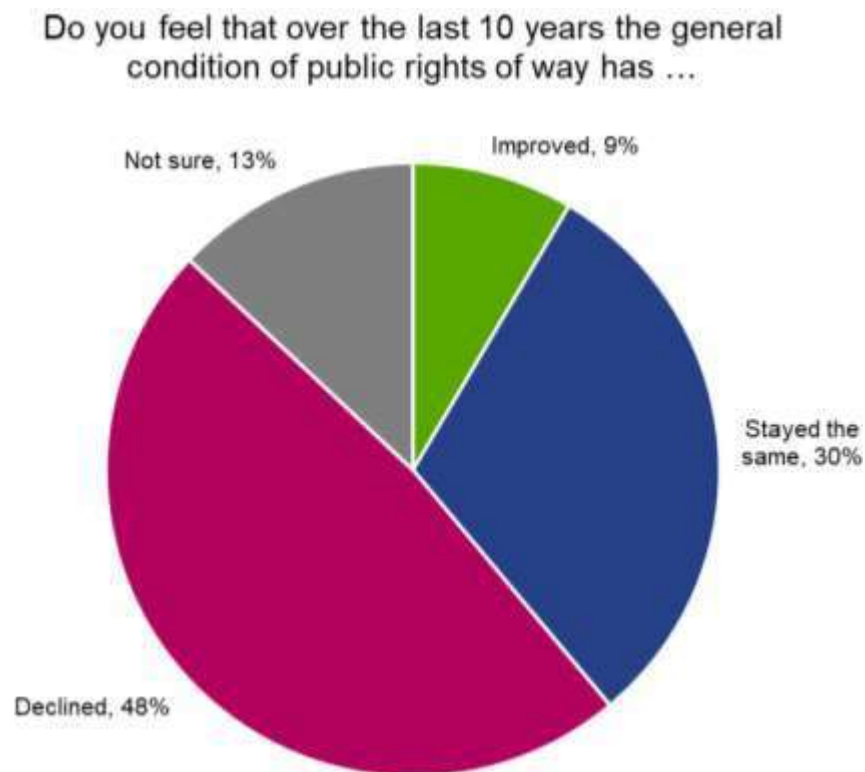
Respondents were asked 'Do you feel that over the last 10 years the general condition of public rights of way has – improved, declined or stayed the same?'

48% of respondents thought that the condition of public rights of way had declined in the past ten years. 30% thought the condition had stayed and the same and 9% thought it had improved.

Table 36: Do you feel that over the last 10 years the general condition of public rights of way has – improved, declined or stayed the same?

Condition Assessment n.4139	Number	%
Improved	352	9%
Stayed the same	1258	30%
Declined	1991	48%
Not sure	538	13%

Chart 25: Do you feel that over the last 10 years the general condition of public rights of way has – improved, declined or stayed the same?



Respondents were then asked to give reasons for their answers. 1739 people made further comments. These were categorised into similar comments. Some respondents made more than one point in their comment. Some of these comments were negative and some were positive. Others were neutral or were categorised as a contributing factor (usually to a decline in condition) i.e. they were outside of the control of Surrey County Council.

### **Overgrown paths**

The highest reason, with 25% of the answers, was overgrown paths. There were also comments around lack of winter cutting and prioritisation of some paths over others.

### **Lack of maintenance**

The second highest reason, with 24% of the comments, was lack of ongoing maintenance. Some people commented that day-to-day maintenance had decreased. Comments also covered a lack of investment and a consequent deterioration.

### **Surfaces**

There were several categories relating to surfaces. The third highest category overall, with 15% of people making this one of their comments, related to poor condition of surfaces. This covered a range of issues around surface condition including mud, erosion and flooding and lack of investment in surfaces. It should be noted that the survey was carried out during a very wet winter, and several respondents noted that a changing climate and wetter winters were a contributory factor (3%).

Some respondents commented that there were more cyclists and e-bikes which were causing damage to surfaces (2%) and some that motorised vehicles (1%). Comments were made around the unsuitability of surfaces for horses (1%).

Taken together, all negative comments relating to surface condition totalled 22% of respondents making a comment.

Conversely, 3% of respondents made positive comments around new surfaces being installed.

### **Positive Comments**

Fourth highest, with 9% of respondents making comments, was that they had not experienced any decline and / or were satisfied with the network. 4% commented that there had been some improvement overall. 3% noted an improvement in surfaces, usually due to a local project, 3% noted the removal of stiles and replacement with gates and 3% noted an improvement in fingerposts and other signs.

Overall, positive comments were made by 21% of people.

A further 4% indicated that overall some aspects had improved and some declined.

## Infrastructure decline

Fifth highest with 8% of people giving this as one of their responses, was a deterioration in signage – waymarking in particular. 6% of people commented that stiles and gates were in poor repair or not maintained well. 3% indicated a general decline but did not give a reason. 1% commented that bridges or steps were in poor condition.

Together, in total 18% of respondents made a comment around decline in infrastructure, or general decline.

## Contributing Factors

There were a range of other comments which could be classed as contributory factors and were outside the direct control of the Countryside Access Service.

Highest of these, with 5% making this as one of their comments, was the recognition of a lack of funding and resources for the public rights of way service. 2% commented that the service was now reliant on volunteers and good will to maintain the network.

Dogs were mentioned by 4% of respondents, usually in terms of more of them, more aggressive dogs or dogs not under control.

Climate change or changing weather were mentioned by 3% of respondents.

3% of respondents indicated a rise in fly tipping and litter.

3% mentioned landowners, with comments around ‘not doing their part’ to maintain the network or actively dissuading people from using the network (e.g. erecting signs to deter users).

2% mentioned that there were more cyclists and e-bikes on the network. Some commented that these were also causing more erosion. 1% commented that motorised vehicles were causing damage to surfaces.

1% mentioned fencing – barbed wire fencing or paths behind fenced into ‘alleyways’ after which they are more prone to becoming overgrown or muddy.

## Network for Equestrians and Motorised Vehicles

5% of people commented that there were not enough public rights of way for equestrians and 1% that surfaces were not suitable for equestrians – either through deterioration, gulying or through new surfaces which were not suitable. 1% commented that motorised vehicle user rights had been withdrawn.

Table 37: Do you feel that over the last 10 years the general condition of public rights of way has – improved, declined or stayed the same? Reasons for answer.

Categories n.1739	Number	% of people giving this as one of their answers
<b>Negative</b> - Overgrown paths	434	25%
<b>Negative</b> - Lack of maintenance	420	24%
<b>Negative</b> - Poor surfaces / mud / erosion / more flooding	258	15%
<b>Positive +</b> Not much change / no decline / satisfied with condition / maintenance	151	9%
<b>Negative</b> - Signage deteriorated	147	8%
<b>Negative</b> - Blocked paths - trees and landowners / impassable	131	8%
<b>Negative – contributing factor</b> Increased use / more people aware of them / increase during and post-Covid 19 Pandemic	122	7%
<b>Negative</b> - Stiles and gates in poor repair / less maintained	107	6%
<b>Negative</b> - Not enough routes for equestrians / maintenance of routes	92	5%
<b>Negative – contributing factor</b> Lack of resources / funding	87	5%
<b>Neutral</b> - / + Some improved / some declined	77	4%
<b>Negative – contributing factor</b> Dogs – more, aggressive, dog fouling	62	4%
<b>Positive +</b> Some improvement overall	62	4%
Not used public rights of way in Surrey for 10 years / not sufficient experience to comment	62	4%
<b>Positive +</b> Stiles removed / replaced with gates	59	3%
<b>Negative – contributing factor</b> Climate change / changing weather	59	3%
<b>Negative – contributing factor</b> Fly tipping / litter	57	3%
<b>Negative – contributing factor</b> Landowners not maintaining paths	55	3%
<b>Positive +</b> New Fingerposts and signage improved	50	3%
<b>Negative</b> - General decline / poor condition / could be improved (no reasons given)	50	3%
<b>Positive +</b> New surfaces	49	3%
<b>Negative</b> - / + Reliant on volunteers	36	2%
<b>Negative – contributing factor</b> More housing / traffic / development	30	2%
<b>Negative – contributing factor</b> More cyclists / e-bikes / erosion and damage by cyclists/ using footpaths	33	2%
<b>Negative – contributing factor</b> Damage by motorised vehicles / more motorised vehicles	29	1%
<b>Negative – contributing factor</b> Fencing	20	1%
<b>Negative</b> - Closure / loss of use of byways	18	1%
<b>Negative – contributing factor</b> Anti-social behaviour / not following Countryside Code / lack of respect between users	14	1%
<b>Negative</b> - Surfaces not suitable for horses	23	1%
<b>Negative</b> - Bridges, steps in poor condition	13	1%
<b>Negative – contributing factor</b> Horses / cyclists / motorised vehicles using PROW not entitled to use	8	0%
<b>Negative</b> - Cleared too much / infrastructure suitable for rural areas	7	0%
<b>Negative – contributing factor</b> Less inspection	4	0%
Other	63	4%



## Reporting Problems on Public Rights of Way

Respondents were asked 'How would you report an issue on public rights of way?'. No options choices were given to this question in order to try to gauge levels of awareness of where to report rights of problems. Answers were categorised into similar sentiments.

The highest category of response was the Surrey County Council website. This was only given by 25% of people. Those who indicated the public rights of way interactive map / CAMS system were separated out to gauge levels of awareness, but only 3% of people specifically indicated this route. Taken in total, 28% of people indicated the Surrey County Council website. A further 5% indicated Surrey County Council, 2% indicated they would email Surrey County Council, 3% indicated they would go direct to the Countryside Access Team / Rights of Way Officer and 1% indicated they would contact the Surrey County Council Contact Centre or Surrey County Council Highways. All responses indicating Surrey County Council are shown below.

Table 38: How would you report an issue on public rights of way? Surrey County Council Categories

Surrey County Council Categories	Number	% giving this as one of their responses (% of n.3403)
Surrey County Council website	845	25%
Surrey County Council (not specified)	158	5%
Specified via Surrey County Council CAMS / Interactive Map	98	3%
Surrey County Council Countryside Access Team / Rangers / Footpath Officer	90	3%
Surrey County Council - email	65	2%
Surrey County Council - Phone / Contact Centre	43	1%
Surrey County Council - Highways	21	1%
Total Surrey County Council		40%

The second highest was 'don't know / not sure', given by 23% of people. Some of these respondents went on to guess how they might attempt to report a problem.

The third highest category was 'the council' without specifying which one (19%). A further 3% of people indicated a borough or district council and 2% a parish council. The fourth was 'online' without specifying where online (10%).

3% indicated that there was little point in reporting a problem as nothing gets done and 1% indicated they would not report a problem. 1% indicated they had tried to report a problem in the past but had failed as the process was too difficult.

Table 39: How would you report an issue on public rights of way? All categories

Categories n.3403	Number	% giving this as one of their responses
Surrey County Council website	845	25%
Don't know / not sure	784	23%

The Council' or local authority (unspecified)	636	19%
Online / website (unspecified)	338	10%
Surrey County Council (not specified)	158	5%
Nothing gets done / little point in reporting / long wait for resolution	114	3%
Through District / Borough Council	99	3%
Specified via Surrey County Council CAMS / Interactive Map	98	3%
The Ramblers' Association / local walking group	95	3%
Surrey County Council Countryside Access Team / Rangers / Footpath Officer	90	3%
Through Parish / Town Council / Residents' Association	67	2%
Surrey County Council email	65	2%
To Councillor / MP	56	2%
I wouldn't report it	51	1%
By Googling / searching online	47	1%
Surrey County Council - Phone / Contact Centre	43	1%
Police	38	1%
Process is difficult / tried but failed	37	1%
Landowner (including National Trust, Forestry Commission, MOD)	36	1%
Email (unspecified)	33	1%
Phone (unspecified)	33	1%
Fix My Street	28	1%
British Horse Society / Bridleways group	26	1%
Surrey County Council - Highways	21	1%
TRF / GLASS	21	1%
Social media	20	1%
Issues on specific public rights of way or general comments on condition of public rights of way	13	0%
Through app (Clean Streets, Fix that Hole)	8	0%
Environment Agency	4	0%
National Government / Highways Agency	4	0%
Other	21	

## Awareness of the Interactive Map

Respondents were then asked 'Did you know that there is an online interactive map and an online form for reporting problems on public rights of way?'. 32% indicated that they did know about the interactive map, which was considerably higher than those who had specifically mentioned the would reports issues through this method in the previous question.

Table 40: Did you know that there is an online interactive map and an online form for reporting problems on public rights of way?

n.4163	Number	%
Yes	1326	32%
No	2837	68%

## The Experience of Those Reporting Problems

Respondents were asked 'Have you reported a public rights of way issue to Surrey County Council in the past 12 months?'. 17% of people taking the survey had reported a problem.

Table 41: Have you reported a public rights of way issue to Surrey County Council in the past 12 months?

n.4179	Number	%
Yes	692	17%
No	3487	83%

Respondents were then asked how they had reported they problem. 68% of people had used Surrey County Council's Footpaths and Bridleways Report a Problem Page online.

Table 42: How did you report the problem?

Routes to Report a Problem n.669	Number	%
Through Surrey County Council's Footpaths and Bridleways Report a Problem Page online	453	68%
Through Surrey County Council's Contact Centre	50	7%
Through Surrey County Council's highway reporting service	78	12%
Other	88	13%

120 additional comments were made. These were categorised into groups of comments with similar sentiments. Highest of this was going direct to the Countryside Access Team / Rights of Way Officer (17%) or through an email to the Countryside Access Service (12%).

Table 43: How did you report the problem? Other comments.

Categories n.120	Number	% giving this as one of their responses
Direct to Countryside Access Team / Officer	20	17%
Through a group or club	15	13%
By email to the Countryside Access Team	14	12%
Through a district council	10	8%
Fix My Street	10	8%
Through an Elected Councillor or MP	9	8%
Through Town or Parish Council	7	6%
Through another organisation	6	5%
The Council' unspecified)	6	5%
Surrey Countryside Access webpage	5	4%
All three methods listed in the question	4	3%
Phone (unspecified to whom)	4	3%
Surrey Highways or Parking	3	3%
Can't remember	2	2%
Tried but failed	2	2%
Other	8	7%

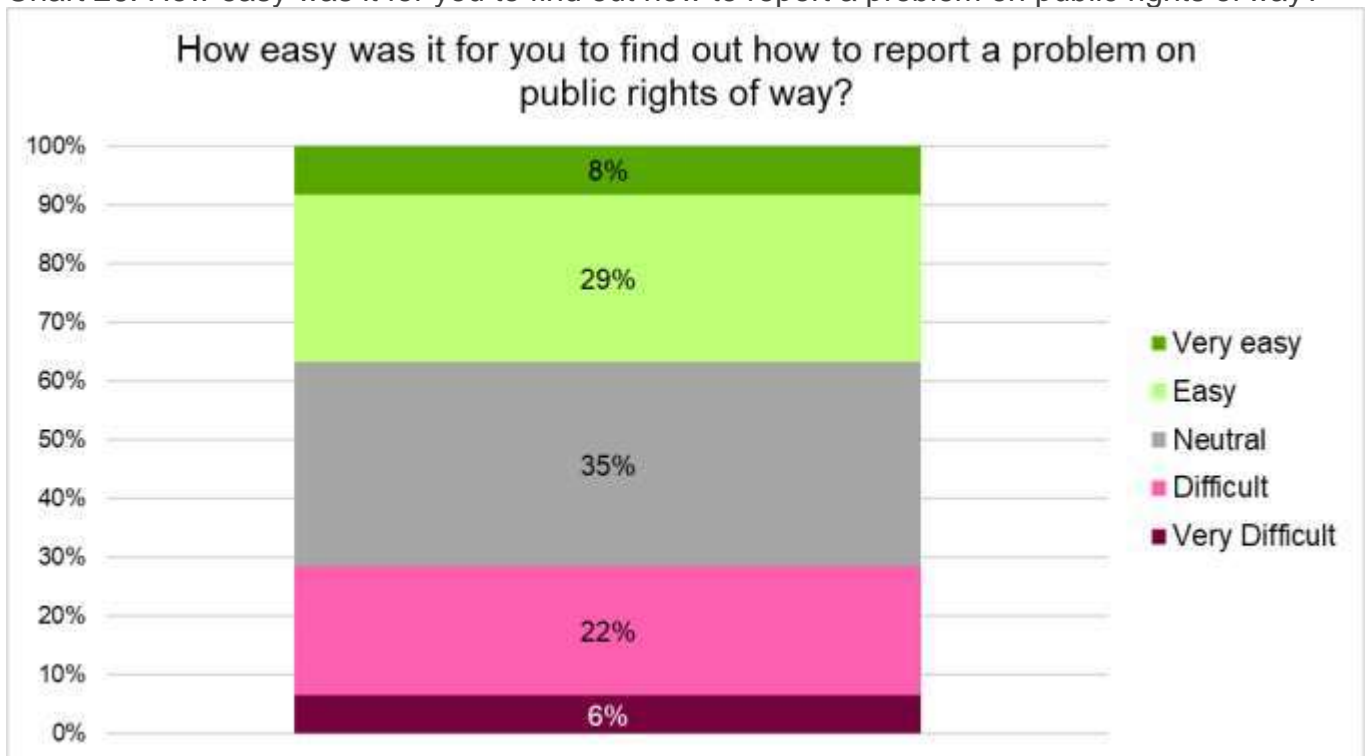
## Ease of Finding out How to Report a Problem

Those who had actually reported a problem were asked 'How easy was it for you to find out how to report a problem on public rights of way?'. 27% found it easy or very easy; 28% found it difficult or very difficult. The remaining 35% were neutral.

Table 44: How easy was it for you to find out how to report a problem on public rights of way?

Ease of Reporting n.689	Number	%
Very easy	56	8%
Easy	197	29%
Neutral	240	35%
Difficult	152	22%
Very Difficult	44	6%

Chart 26: How easy was it for you to find out how to report a problem on public rights of way?



## Service Received from Surrey County Council

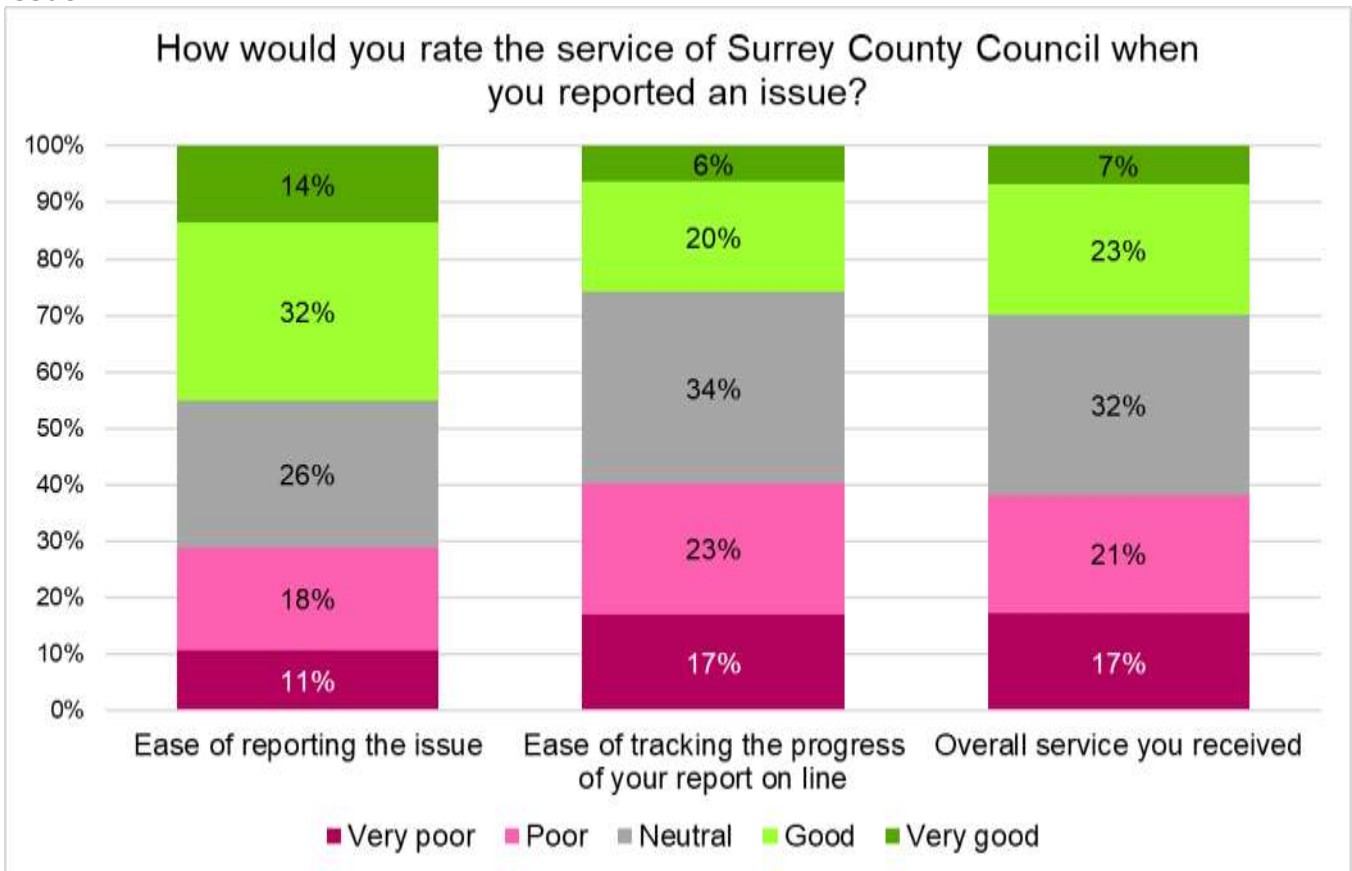
Respondents were asked 'How would you rate the service of Surrey County Council when you reported an issue?'. Respondents were asked to rate their experience in three areas – ease of reporting the issue; ease of tracking the progress of your report online and the overall service received.

All three areas were rated good or very good by less than half of respondents. 46% indicated that the ease of reporting the issue was good or very good; 26% thought ease of tracking the progress of their report online was good or very good and 30% thought the service overall was good or very good.

Table 45: How would you rate the service of Surrey County Council when you reported an issue?

	Ease of reporting the issue	%	Ease of tracking the progress of your report on line	%	Overall service you received	%
Very good	89	14%	38	6%	44	7%
Good	208	32%	119	20%	150	23%
Neutral	172	26%	206	34%	207	32%
Poor	120	18%	141	23%	137	21%
Very poor	70	11%	103	17%	111	17%
Total	659		607		649	

Chart 27: How would you rate the service of Surrey County Council when you reported an issue?



Respondents were then asked 'How could we have improved your experience of reporting a problem on a public right of way?'. 418 additional comments were made. This was a high proportion of those who were presented with this question. These were categorised into similar sentiments.

## Communication

The category with the highest number of comments, with 36% of people giving this as one of their answers, was around communication on the progress and resolution of the problem. The most common request was that there was no communication with them to let them know that the issue had been resolved and people wanted to know when it had been resolved via an email or text. Some people wanted to know how long it was likely to take for the issue to be resolved.

### **Reporting system**

There were several areas of comments around the reporting system.

Some people indicated that they found the online reporting system difficult to use, with 16% of people giving this as one of their answers. People commented that the online mapping system was not intuitive to use. Some questioned how inclusive the map service was. People also thought that having to set up an account might deter people. Others thought that the system was cumbersome and should incorporate more advanced technology such as being able to use 'What three Words' to locate problems.

Related to this, 4% of people commented that the reporting system does not work on mobiles. This, improving this, they suggested, would help people make reports in the field when the issue is encountered.

6% of people commented that the reporting page needs to be easier to find on Surrey County Council's website. People requested more cross-linkages from areas where people might land to try to report a problem, e.g. Highways.

Conversely, 5% of people commented that they thought the reporting system was easy to use.

### **Resolution of the Problem**

15% of people commented that they simply wanted the problem resolved and issue remedied, and that this would have improved their experience. 12% of people wanted the issue they had reported to be resolved more quickly.

13% of people indicated that the issue they had reported had not been resolved. Some indicated they or a landowner had resolved the problem instead. 4% of people indicated that there was a lack of resources to deal with problems.

2% commented that better maintenance was needed to reduce the number of problems reported.

4% of people said they were happy with how the report had been dealt with and the resolution of the problem.

Table 46: How could we have improved your experience of reporting a problem on a public right of way?

Categories of answers n.418	Number	% giving this as one of their answers
<b>Communication:</b> Acknowledgement of report / better communication on progress / timescales	150	36%
<b>Ease of using the reporting system:</b> Reporting system is difficult to use / system needs to be easier / upgrade interface / technology	67	16%
Fix the problem	62	15%
<b>Non-resolution of the issue:</b> My issue was not resolved / not resolved to my satisfaction	56	13%
<b>Faster resolution:</b> Resolve issues more quickly / takes too long for problems to be resolved	51	12%
<b>Ease of finding the reporting page:</b> Reporting page needs to be easier to find on the website / make it easier to know how to report a problem and who to	23	6%
Reporting system is OK / easy to use	20	5%
Satisfied with service received / resolution of issue	18	4%
<b>Mobile technology:</b> Make app / needs to be easier on mobile	17	4%
Lack of resources / more resource needed to deal with issues	16	4%
Better maintenance is needed	9	2%
Other	19	5%

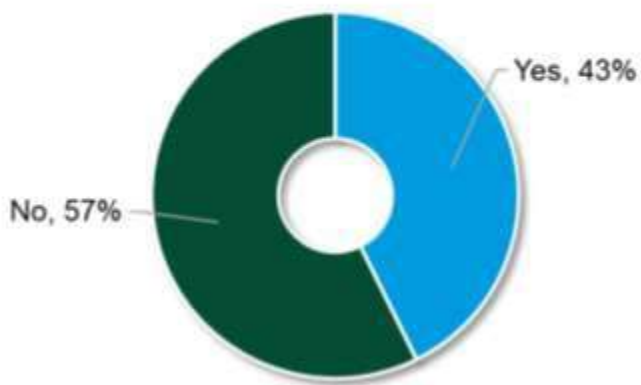
# Information Provision about Public Rights of Way

## Awareness of Information on Surrey County Council's Website

Respondents were asked 'Are you aware that you can download circular, linear and long-distance walking routes from Surrey County Council's website?'. 43% of people indicated that they were aware and 57% that they were not aware. 4169 people answered this question.

Chart 28: Are you aware that you can download circular, linear and long-distance walking routes from Surrey County Council's website?

Are you aware that you can download circular, linear and long-distance walking routes from Surrey County Council's website? n.4169



## Information on Accessible Routes and Easy Walks

Respondents were asked 'Do you think there is enough information on accessible routes – routes for people with mobility difficulties or other disabilities?'. 3580 people answered this question. However, there was an error in the construction of this question, which was a yes/no question with additional comments. Respondents indicated that they would have preferred a 'don't know' option as many felt they did not have sufficient knowledge or experience to comment. Therefore this question has been re-analysed to include the comments made to provide a more accurate result.

The highest category, with 34% of people giving this response, was 'no' with no further comment given. The second highest category was 'yes' with no further comment given (25%).

The next four highest answers were variations on 'I don't know' – I don't know / it doesn't affect me (20%), I've not looked for information (4%), I've not seen any information (3%), I'm not aware of this information (2%). Together, these totalled 29% of answers.



Table 47: Do you think there is enough information on accessible routes – routes for people with mobility difficulties or other disabilities?

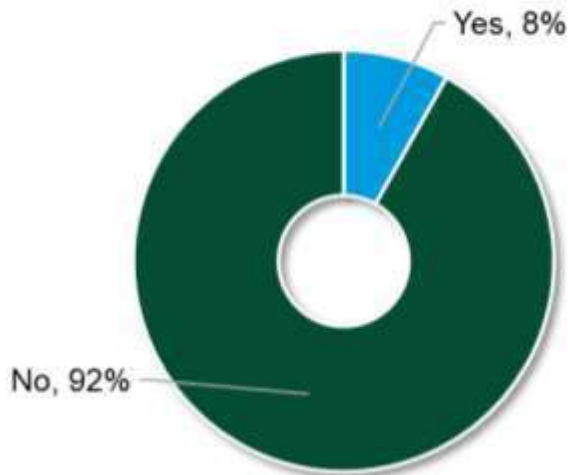
Categories n.3580	Number	%
No (only answer given)	1216	34%
Yes (only answer given)	910	25%
Don't know / doesn't affect me	733	20%
Not looked for information	129	4%
Never seen any information	117	3%
I'm not aware of this information	99	3%
The network is not accessible / routes are not suitable	63	2%
Not publicised / hard to find information	61	2%
Not enough information / could be more information	44	1%
There is enough information / information can be found	42	1%
Need information on where stiles are / surface condition / steps etc	40	1%
Internet is barrier / not everyone can access information online / apps difficult / printed materials needed	31	1%
Not seen signage on routes / need signage on routes	25	1%
Information can be inaccurate / out of date	15	0%
Not enough accessible routes / more routes made accessible	14	0%
Nothing for disabled equestrians or 4x4 users	10	0%
Toilets / public transport / parking needed and information on these	8	0%
I don't see people with disabilities on paths I use	7	0%
There is no need for this information / special allowance not needed / no need for access to the countryside	5	0%
Other	37	1%

## Use of Easy Walks

Respondents were then asked 'Have you used any of the 'Easy Walks' on Surrey County Council's website?'. 8% of people had used Easy Walks and 92% had not. 4179 people responded to this question.

Chart 29: Have you used any of the 'Easy Walks' on Surrey County Council's website?

Have you used any of the 'Easy Walks' on Surrey County Council's website? n.4179



Respondents were asked 'Please tell us your experience of using 'Easy Walks'. How might we improve your experience?'. 195 respondents made further comments. These were grouped into similar sentiments and categorised.

One third, 33% of respondents indicated that they were good and were happy with them and a further 21% indicated they were fine / OK. Together 54% of respondents were happy with Easy Walks.

9% of respondents commented that they were easy to follow and 6% wanted more of them.

16% of people commented that in places the description of the route was not accurate or the description could be improved so that people knew what to expect on the route. Some people indicated that better maps were needed.

There were some comments around maintenance of the routes. Several people indicated that poor maintenance or a discrepancy in conditions from what is described vs. what is on the ground can result in a negative experience especially for someone with a disability. 8% of people indicated that more maintenance was needed in some area and 6% that better signposting was needed.

Table 48: Please tell us your experience of using 'Easy Walks'. How might we improve your experience?

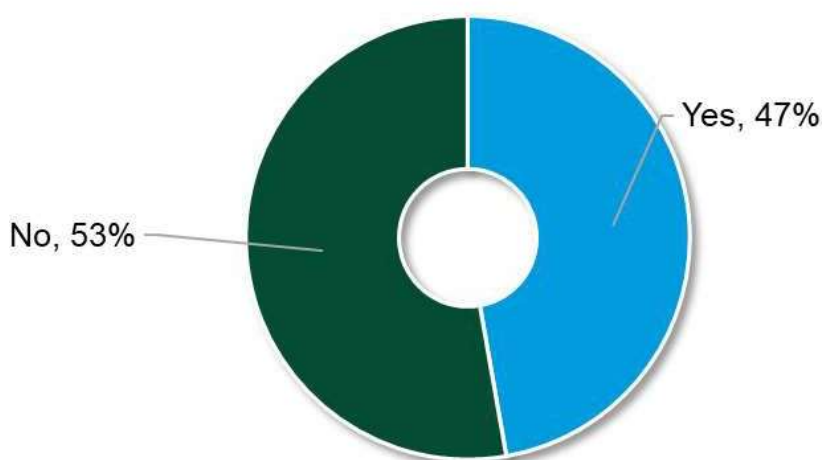
Categories n.195	Number	% giving this as one of their answers
Good / happy with them	65	33%
Fine / OK	41	21%
Difficult to follow / better directions and description of conditions and facilities / better maps / sometimes not accurate or are out of date	31	16%
Easy to follow	18	9%
Improvements - overgrown / poor surfaces / need more maintenance	16	8%
Need more of them	12	6%
Better signposting needed	11	6%
Publicise them more / raise awareness	8	4%
Downloadable / pdf or paper	6	3%
Experience marred by dogs / cyclists	6	3%
Suits children and families	3	2%
Include some longer routes	3	2%
Other	17	9%

## Information for Families

Respondents were asked 'Do you think there is enough information for families – e.g. for walking or cycling?'. 47% thought there was enough information and 53% thought there was not. 3352 people answered this question.

Chart 30: Do you think there is enough information for families – e.g. for walking or cycling?

Do you think there is enough information for families –  
e.g. for walking or cycling? n.3352



## Other Suggestions For Information Provision

A summary of other suggestions is shown below:

### Information

- How to access information (websites, apps, leaflets)
- Information on the condition of paths (muddy, overgrown, closed)
- Information on nearby facilities (parking, toilets, refreshments)
- Maps with points of interest
- Public rights of way displayed on maps (OS maps, council website)
- Information on different types of rights of way (footpath, bridleway, etc.)
- Up-to-date information on closures and diversions
- Information on how to report problems with rights of way

### Signage

- More signage on rights of way, especially at junctions
- Clear signage on types of users allowed (walkers, cyclists, horses)
- Signs with distances and walking times
- QR codes on signs for linking to online maps

### Apps and Websites

- Mobile app with route planner and information
- App with downloadable routes and current information
- Integration with existing apps like Strava or Komoot
- Easier search function on council website for walks
- Downloadable gpx files and clear differentiation between user types (walkers, cyclists, horses etc.)

### Other

- More circular walks
- More easy access routes
- Education on the Countryside Code and responsible use of rights of way
- Promoting lesser-known rights of way
- Organising walks and events
- Publish town / village maps with path networks
- Use social media to promote the rights of way network

# Views on Public Rights of Way, Priorities and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan

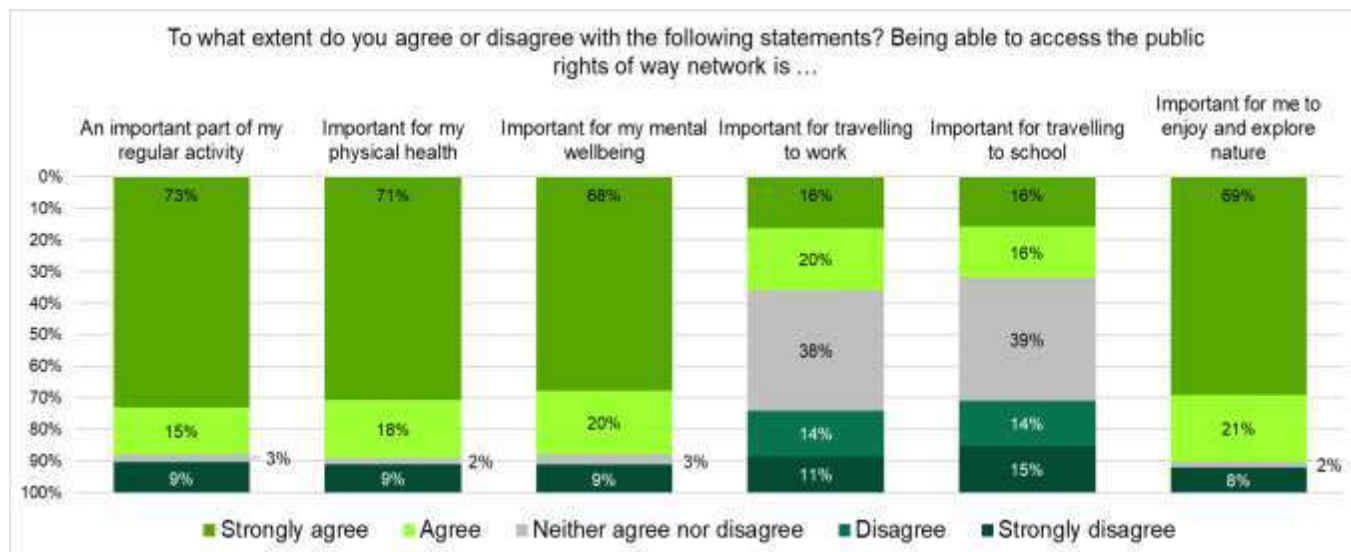
## Importance of Being Able to Access Public Rights of Way

Respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with six statements on the importance of public rights of way. A high proportion of people strongly agreed with public rights of way being 'An important part of my regular activity' (88%), 'Important for my physical health' (89%), 'Important for my mental wellbeing' (88%) and 'Important for me to enjoy and explore nature' (90%). A lower proportion agreed or strongly agreed that public rights of way were 'Important for travelling to work' (36%) and 'Important for travelling to school' (32%).

Table 49: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Being able to access the public rights of way network is ...

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Number answering	Strongly agree and agree
An important part of my regular activity %	73%	15%	3%	0%	9%	4137	88%
Important for my physical health %	71%	18%	2%	0%	9%	4120	89%
Important for my mental wellbeing %	68%	20%	3%	0%	9%	4077	88%
Important for travelling to work %	16%	20%	38%	14%	11%	2443	36%
Important for travelling to school %	16%	16%	39%	14%	15%	1929	32%
Important for me to enjoy and explore nature %	69%	21%	2%	0%	8%	4098	90%

Table 50: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? Being able to access the public rights of way network is ...



## Priorities for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan

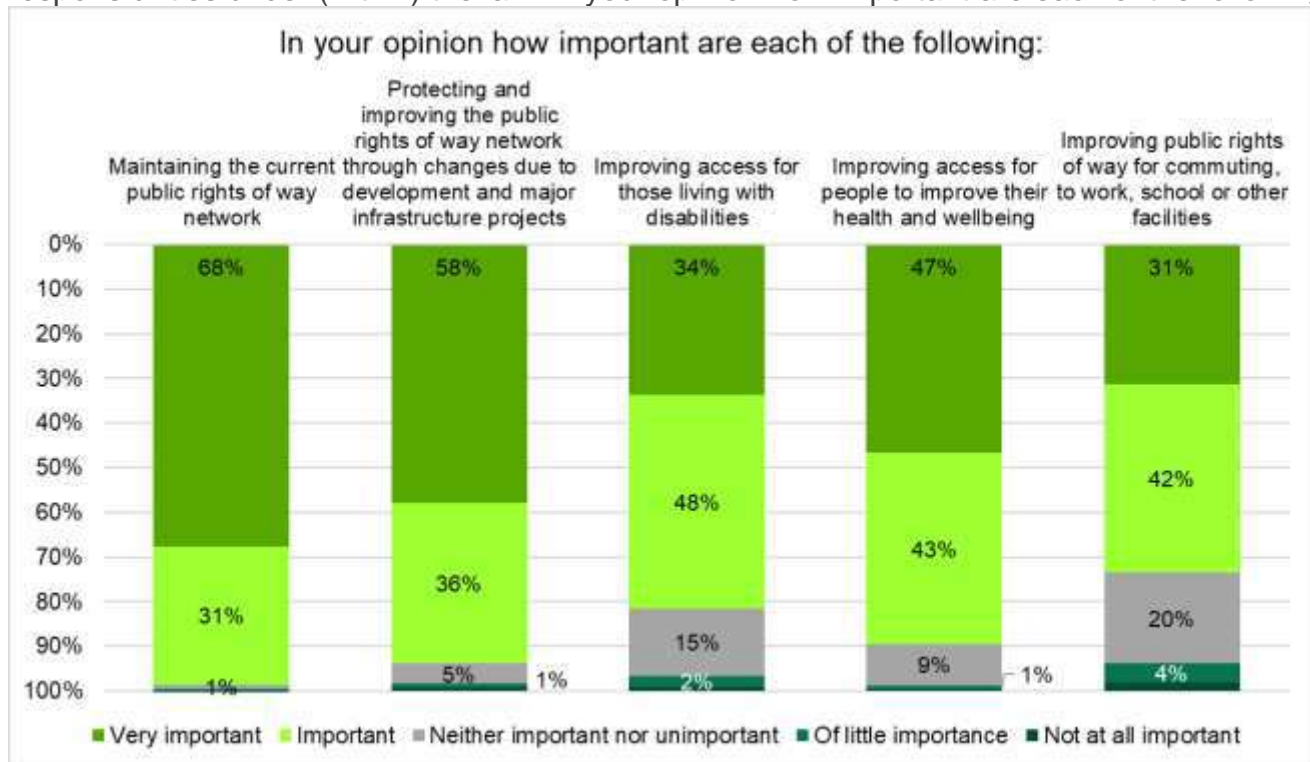
Respondents were asked 'We aim to provide a public rights of way network that serves the needs of Surrey County residents. To do this, we may need to prioritise where we spend our available budget while delivering on our responsibilities under (within) the law. In your opinion how important are each of the following:' with five statements to choose from.

The highest priority, with 99% stating this priority was important or very important was 'Maintaining the current public rights of way network'. Second, with 94% stating this priority was important or very important was 'Protecting and improving the public rights of way network through changes due to development and major infrastructure projects. Third, with 89% stating this priority was important or very important was 'Improving access for people to improve their health and wellbeing'.

Table 51: We aim to provide a public rights of way network that serves the needs of Surrey County residents. To do this, we may need to prioritise where we spend our available budget while delivering on our responsibilities under (within) the law. In your opinion how important are each of the following:

Priorities	Very important	Important	Neither important nor unimportant	Of little importance	Not at all important	Number answering	Important and very important
Maintaining the current public rights of way network	68%	31%	1%	0%	0%	4162	99%
Protecting and improving the public rights of way network through changes due to development and major infrastructure projects	58%	36%	5%	1%	1%	4138	94%
Improving access for people to improve their health and wellbeing	47%	43%	9%	1%	0%	4111	90%
Improving access for those living with disabilities	34%	48%	15%	2%	1%	4094	82%
Improving public rights of way for commuting, to work, school or other facilities	31%	42%	20%	4%	2%	4077	73%

Chart 31: We aim to provide a public rights of way network that serves the needs of Surrey residents. To do this we may need to prioritise where we spend our budget while delivering our responsibilities under (within) the law. In your opinion how important are each of the following:



A summary of areas of comments is shown below:

- Maintaining and improving the condition of existing rights of way.
- Creating new rights of way to link existing ones and to provide access to areas that are currently difficult to reach
- Improving signage and waymarking
- Providing more information about rights of way, including maps and downloadable routes
- Making rights of way more accessible for people with disabilities e.g. widening paths and creating alternative routes that are easier to use for people with mobility impairments.
- Ensuring that rights of way are safe for all users
- Protecting rights of way from development
- Improve traffic safety
- Taking enforcement action against obstructions
- Replace stiles with gates for easier access
- Educate dog owners about responsible behaviour
- Address safety concerns around livestock
- Prioritise accessible routes in new developments.
- Re-establish lost rights of way
- Develop off-road routes between towns for safer cycling alternatives
- Ensure wildlife habitats are protected along rights of way
- Promote rights of way as a healthy and low-cost activity
- Publicise the council map
- Balance the budget between maintaining existing rights of way and expanding the network
- Secure more funding for rights of way maintenance and more funding through developers
- Explore the use of volunteers' help for maintenance tasks
- Conduct user surveys to understand usage patterns and prioritise improvements effectively
- Educate countryside users about the Countryside Code and responsible behaviour

## Non-Users

39 respondents indicated they did not use public rights of way. These respondents were asked 'Do any of the following prevent you from using public rights of way?'

The highest category was 'I don't know where to find information about where to go on public rights of way', given by 59% of people who answered. Second highest was 'I worry about getting lost', given by 36% of respondents and third was 'I don't feel safe', given by 26% of respondents.

Table 52: Do any of the following prevent you from using public rights of way?

Categories n.39	Number	% giving this as one of their answers
I don't know where to find information about where to go on public rights of way	23	59%
I worry about getting lost	14	36%
I don't feel safe	10	26%
I'm not confident in using public rights of way	9	23%
Anti-social behaviour	8	21%
There is a lack of public transport to get to them	8	21%
My disability prevents me	6	15%
I prefer to do other leisure activities	6	15%
I don't feel welcome / I feel out of place	5	13%
I'm too busy	4	10%
I'm not confident in visiting the countryside	3	8%
I don't have access to a car to get to them	3	8%
I'm in poor health	2	5%
I'm not interested	2	5%
It's too expensive to get to them	1	3%



# Parish and Town Council Survey Results

## Introduction

All parish and town councils received an emailed letter and were invited to complete a survey, between 20th December 2023 and 25th March 2024. Two workshops were held through the Surrey Association of Local Councils, one with councillors and one with clerks. Each parish council was asked to only submit one response which was the view of the council.

Residents' Associations were also approach for their views and could submit written responses.

## Parish and Town Council Responses

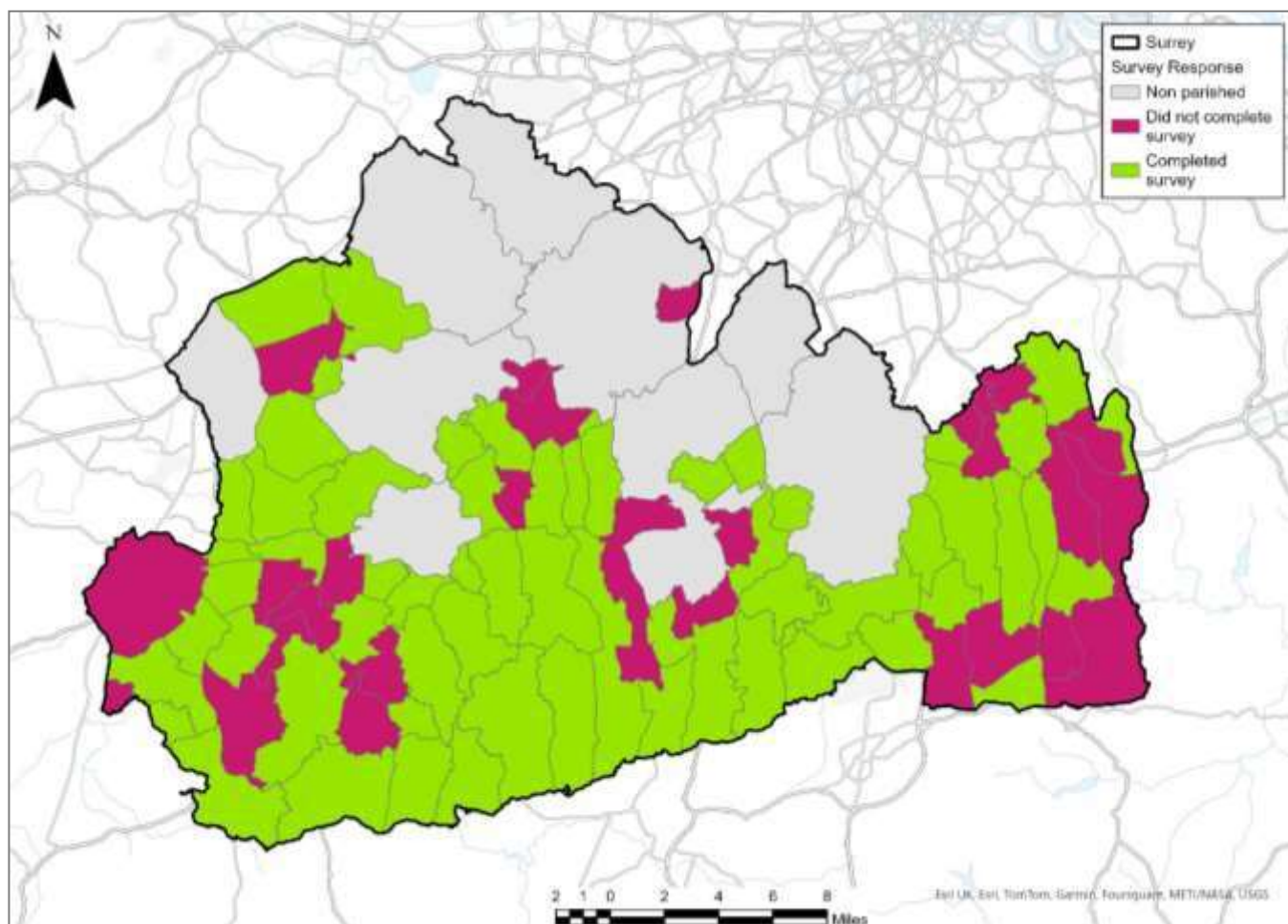
60 parish and town councils responded to the survey – 55 completed the online survey and 5 emailed their responses. With 86 parish and town councils in Surrey, this represents 70% of parish and town councils.

Table 53: Parish and Town Councils Responding to Survey

Abinger Parish Council	East Horsley Parish Council	Pirbright Parish Council
Albury Parish Council	Effingham Parish Council	Ripley Parish Council
Alfold Parish Council	Elstead Parish Council	Salfords and Sidlow Parish Council
Artington Parish Council	Ewhurst Parish Council	Seale and Sands Parish Council
Ash Parish Council	Felbridge Parish Council	Send Parish Council
Betchworth Parish Council	Frensham Parish Council	Shalford
Bisley Parish Council	Godalming Town Council	Shere Parish Council
Bletchingley Parish Council	Godstone Parish Council	St Martha Parish Council
Bramley Parish Council	Hascombe	Tandridge Parish Council
Buckland Parish Council	Haslemere Town Council	Tatsfield Parish Council
Capel Parish Council	Headley Parish Council	Tilford Parish Council
Chaldon Village Council	Horley Town Council	Tongham Parish Council
Charlwood Parish council	Leigh Parish Council	Wanborough Parish Council
Chelsham and Farleigh Parish Council	Mickleham Parish Council	West Clandon Parish Council
Chiddingfold Parish Council	Munstead and Tuesley Parish Council	West Horsley Parish Council
Chobham Parish Council	Newdigate Parish Council	Windlesham Parish Council
Churt Parish Council	Normandy Parish Council	Witley and Milford Parish Council
Cranleigh Parish Council	Nutfield Parish Council	Woldingham Parish Council
Crowhurst Parish Council	Ockley Parish Council	Wonersh Parish Council
Dunsfold Parish Council	Outwood Parish Council	Worplesdon Parish Council

The geographic spread of the councils who responded is shown in Plan 16.

Plan 16: Parish and Town Councils Responding to Survey



The survey asked 'In what capacity are you representing the parish or town council?'

63% of responses were provided by the parish or town council clerk and 27% were provided by a parish or town council councillor. 7% indicated they were the Chair.

Table 54: In what capacity are you representing the parish or town council?

n.60	Number	%
Parish or town clerk	38	63%
Parish or town councillor	16	27%
Chair	4	7%
Vice-Chair	1	2%
Parish Council Deputy Clerk	1	2%

# Public Rights of Way Maintenance and Promotion by Parish and Town Councils

## Public Rights of Way Officer or Warden

Councils were asked 'Does your parish have a public rights of way officer, warden or other representative. 20% of councils did and 80% did not. Councils were then asked to provide further details. Councils who answered yes and no both gave comments. 17 councils made comments.

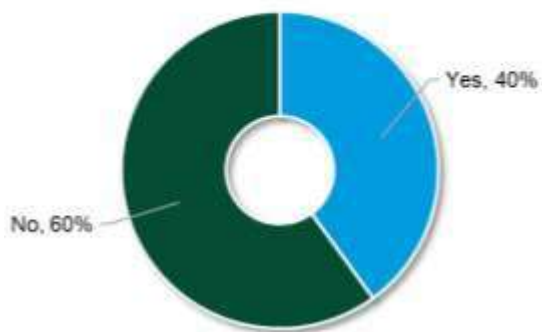
Many of these indicated that a parish councillor was responsible for public rights of way and reported that several councillors checked local paths and reported issues.

## Maintenance of Public Rights of Way

Councils were asked 'Do you pay for any maintenance work on public rights of way in your parish?'. 40% indicated that they did and 60% that they did not. Councils were then asked to provide further details.

Chart 32: Do you pay for any maintenance work on public rights of way in your parish?

Do you pay for any maintenance work on public rights of way in your parish?

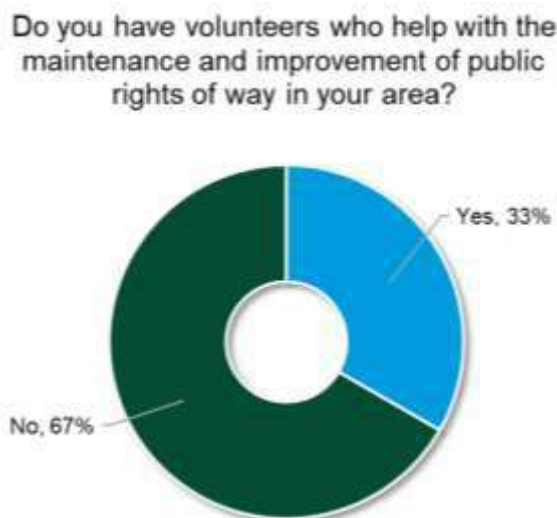


Councils who answered yes and no both gave comments. 29 councils made comments. Councils who did pay for maintenance generally spent around £1000 - £3000. Generally this was on vegetation clearance, tree surgery and resurfacing. Some indicated that they had spent higher sums for specific projects, such as path surfacing.

## Maintenance by Volunteers

Councils were asked 'Do you have volunteers who help with the maintenance and improvement of public rights of way in your area?'. 33% of councils did and 66% of councils did not. Councils were then asked to provide further details. Councils who answered yes and no both gave comments.

Chart 33: Do you have volunteers who help with the maintenance and improvement of public rights of way in your area?



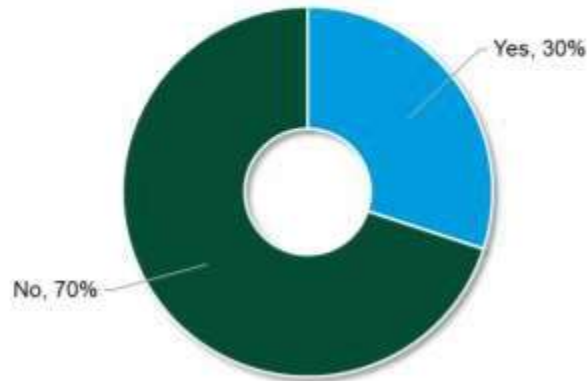
25 councils made comments. Generally these were *ad hoc* working parties. Several stated that they cleared vegetation and some parishes that they had installed kissing gates. Other common tasks included litter picking and inspecting paths.

## Exercising Powers under Section 43 Highways Act 1980

Councils were asked 'Would your council be interested in exercising your powers as a Parish Council under Section 43 Highways Act 1980 to maintain public rights of way, or to increase your involvement in other ways?'. 30% of councils indicated they would and 70% that they would not. Councils were then asked to provide further details. Councils who answered yes and no both gave comments. 48 councils made comments.

Chart 34: Would your council be interested in exercising your powers as a Parish Council under Section 43 Highways Act 1980 to maintain public rights of way, or to increase your involvement in other ways?

Would your council be interested in exercising your powers as a Parish Council under Section 43 Highways Act 1980 to maintain public rights of way, or to increase your involvement in other ways?



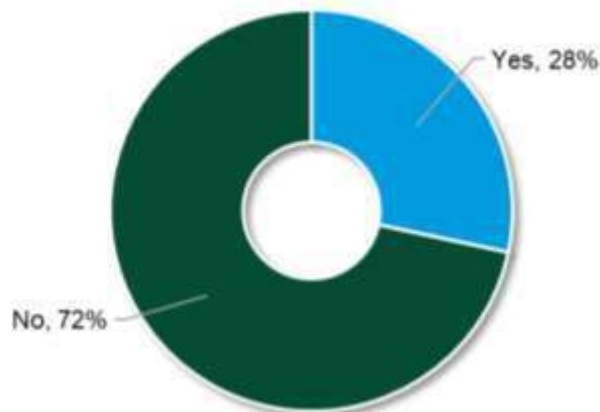
48 councils made comments. Those who indicated 'no' noted that they did not have the resources to do this. Those who said 'yes' stated that they would need further resources.

## Promotion of Routes

Councils were asked 'Does your council promote any routes?'. 28% of councils indicated they would and 72% that they would not. Councils were then asked to provide further details. Councils who answered yes and no both gave comments. 17 councils made comments.

Chart 35: Does your council promote any routes?

Does your council promote any routes?



17 councils made comments. Several councils provided links to online self-guided walks. Some had been produced for special occasions, such as the Coronation or Diamond Jubilee.

# Views on Public Rights of Way Condition and Importance, Problem Reporting

## Satisfaction with Public Rights of Way

Councils were asked 'How satisfied are you with the following aspects of public rights of way in your parish?'. Councils were asked to indicate how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with eight aspects of public rights of way in their area.

The answers were also weighted to provide an average score – very satisfied scored 5; satisfied scored 4; neither satisfied nor dissatisfied scored 3; dissatisfied scored 2 and very dissatisfied scored 1.

The aspect with the highest percentage of councils very satisfied and satisfied was fingerposts, with 38% of councils satisfied. The aspect with the second highest percentage of councils very satisfied and satisfied was the waymarking of routes, with 35% of councils satisfied.

The aspect with the highest percentage of councils very dissatisfied and dissatisfied was fingerposts, with 76% of councils dissatisfied. The aspect with the second highest percentage of councils very dissatisfied and dissatisfied was accessibility for less mobile users, with 75% of councils dissatisfied. This aspect also had the lowest average score and only 3% of councils satisfied or very satisfied. The aspect with the third highest percentage of councils very dissatisfied and dissatisfied was vegetation clearance, with 68% of councils dissatisfied.

Table 55: How satisfied are you with the following aspects of public rights of way in your parish?

Aspects of public rights of way	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	% satisfied and very satisfied	Average score
Vegetation clearance n.60	0%	8%	23%	52%	17%	8%	2.23
Reinstatement and clearance of paths through crops n.59	2%	20%	61%	12%	5%	22%	3.02
Waymarking of routes n.60	2%	33%	20%	33%	12%	35%	2.80
Fingerposts n.60	2%	37%	23%	27%	12%	38%	2.90
The condition of stiles and gates n.60	2%	17%	35%	35%	12%	18%	2.62
Surface condition n.59	0%	3%	20%	58%	19%	3%	2.08
Accessibility for less mobile users n.59	0%	3%	22%	37%	37%	3%	1.92
Paths being free from obstructions (excluding crops) n.60	3%	23%	37%	27%	10%	27%	2.83

Chart 36: How satisfied are you with the following aspects of public rights of way in your parish?

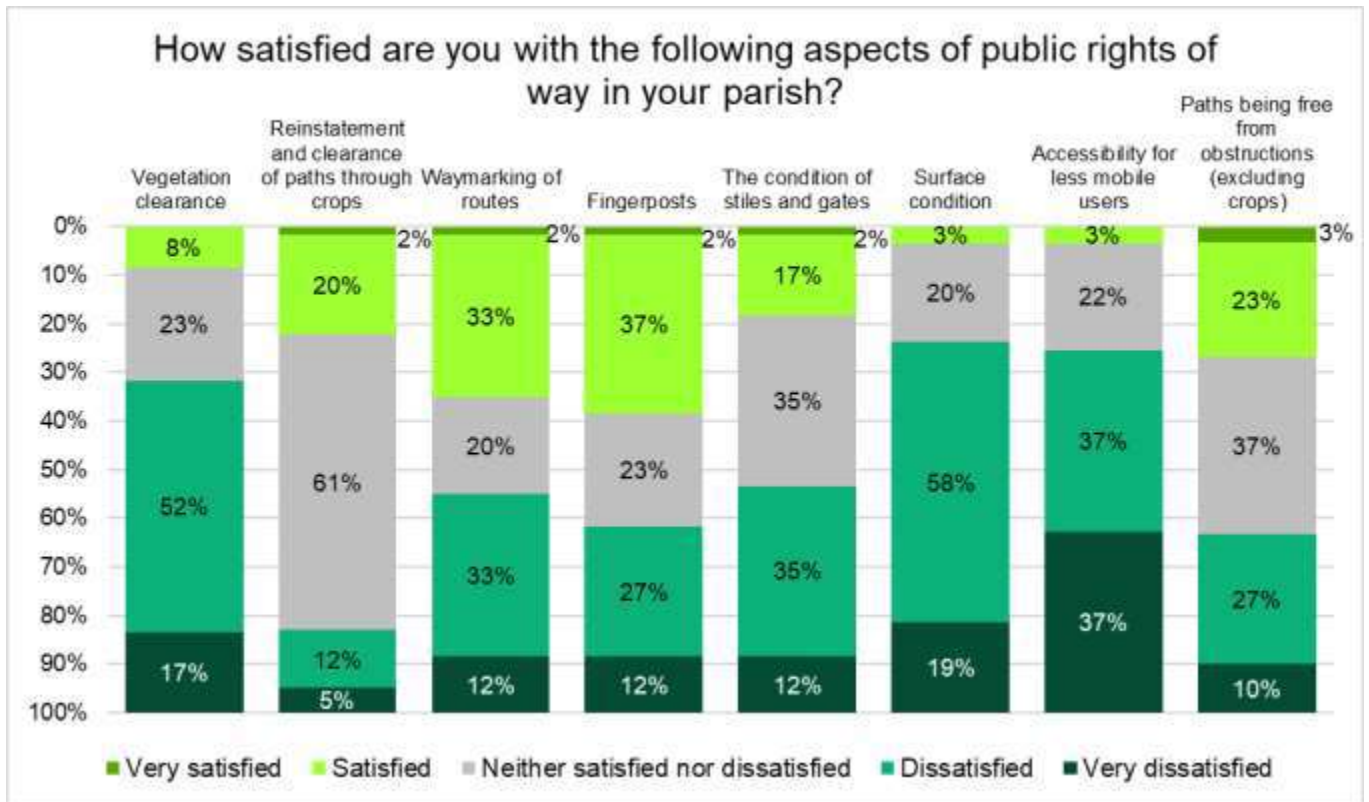
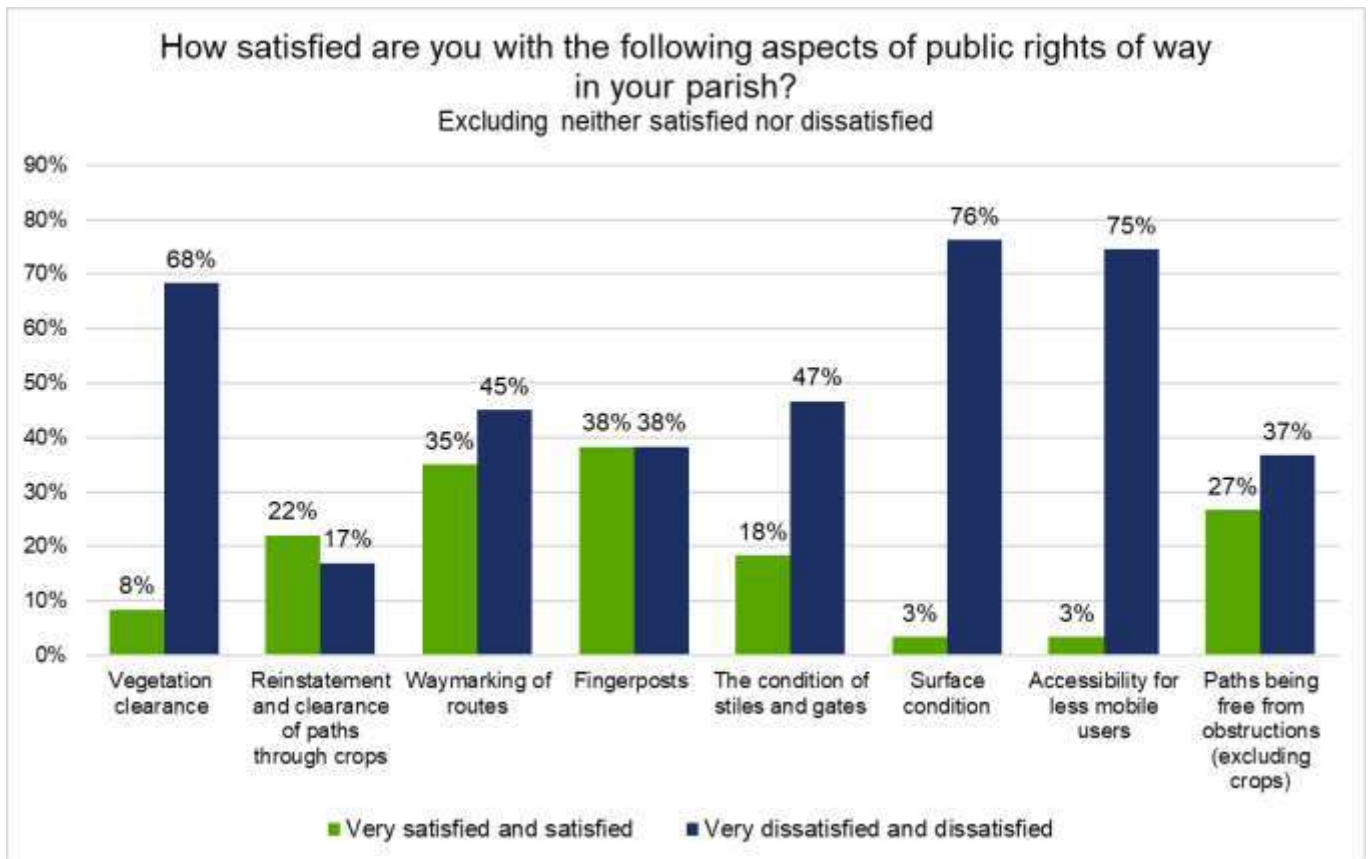


Chart 37: How satisfied are you with the following aspects of public rights of way in your parish? Excluding neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.



## Condition over Past Ten Years

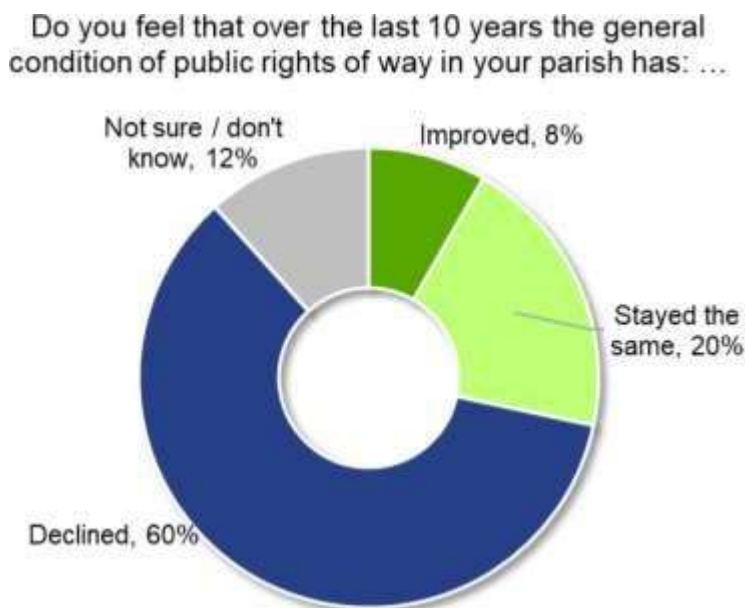
Councils were asked 'Do you feel that over the last 10 years the general condition of public rights of way in your parish has ...' with the options improved, stayed the same or declined.

8% of councils thought the condition of public rights of way had improved and 20% thought it had stayed the same. 60% thought the condition had declined.

Table 56: Do you feel that over the last 10 years the general condition of public rights of way in your parish has ...

n.60	Number	%
Improved	5	8%
Stayed the same	12	20%
Declined	36	60%
Not sure / don't know	7	12%

Chart 38: Do you feel that over the last 10 years the general condition of public rights of way in your parish has ...



Councils were then asked to provide further reasons for their answer. 47 councils made comments. Common themes were:

- Vegetation and overgrown paths (15 councils)
- Generally lack of maintenance and reduced investment (10 councils)
- Surfaces degraded (8 councils)
- Landowner actions (installing poor quality stiles, fencing etc.) (5 councils)
- Poor structures (4 councils)
- Signage issues (3 councils)
- Wear and tear from increased use (3 councils)

There was one positive comments made about each of the following – surfacing works, signage, kissing gates and pleased with working relationship with Surrey County Council officer.



## Problem Reporting and Resolution

Councils were asked 'Have you reported a public rights of way issue to Surrey County Council in the past 12 months?'. 80% had reported a problem and 20% had not.

Councils were then asked 'How did you report the problem?'. Councils could give more than one answer. 80% had reported the problem through Surrey County Council's Footpaths and Bridleways Report a Problem Page online.

Table 57: Have you reported a public rights of way issue to Surrey County Council in the past 12 months?

Reporting options n.45	Number	% giving this as one of their answers
Through Surrey County Council's Footpaths and Bridleways Report a Problem Page online	36	80%
Through Surrey County Council's Contact Centre	2	4%
Through Surrey County Council's highway reporting service?	5	11%
Other	10	22%

14 councils gave further detail on 'other' ways of reporting the problem. 8 had contacted the Countryside Access Team direct, 2 had contacted councillors, one had written a letter.

Councils were then asked 'How easy was it for you to find out how to report a problem on public rights of way?'. 47% of councils found it easy or very easy. 13% found it difficult.

Table 58: How easy was it for you to find out how to report a problem on public rights of way?

Ease of reporting n.45	Number	%
Very easy	4	9%
Easy	17	38%
Neutral	18	40%
Difficult	6	13%

Councils were then asked 'How could we have improved your experience of reporting a problem on a public right of way?'. 35 councils made comments. Common themes were:

- No feedback about the reported issue or when it would be resolved (16 councils)
- Response and resolution of the issue is slow, or does not happen at all (11 councils)
- Difficulties in using the online reporting system (10 councils)

Three councils noted they were happy with the system and the response of Surrey County Council.

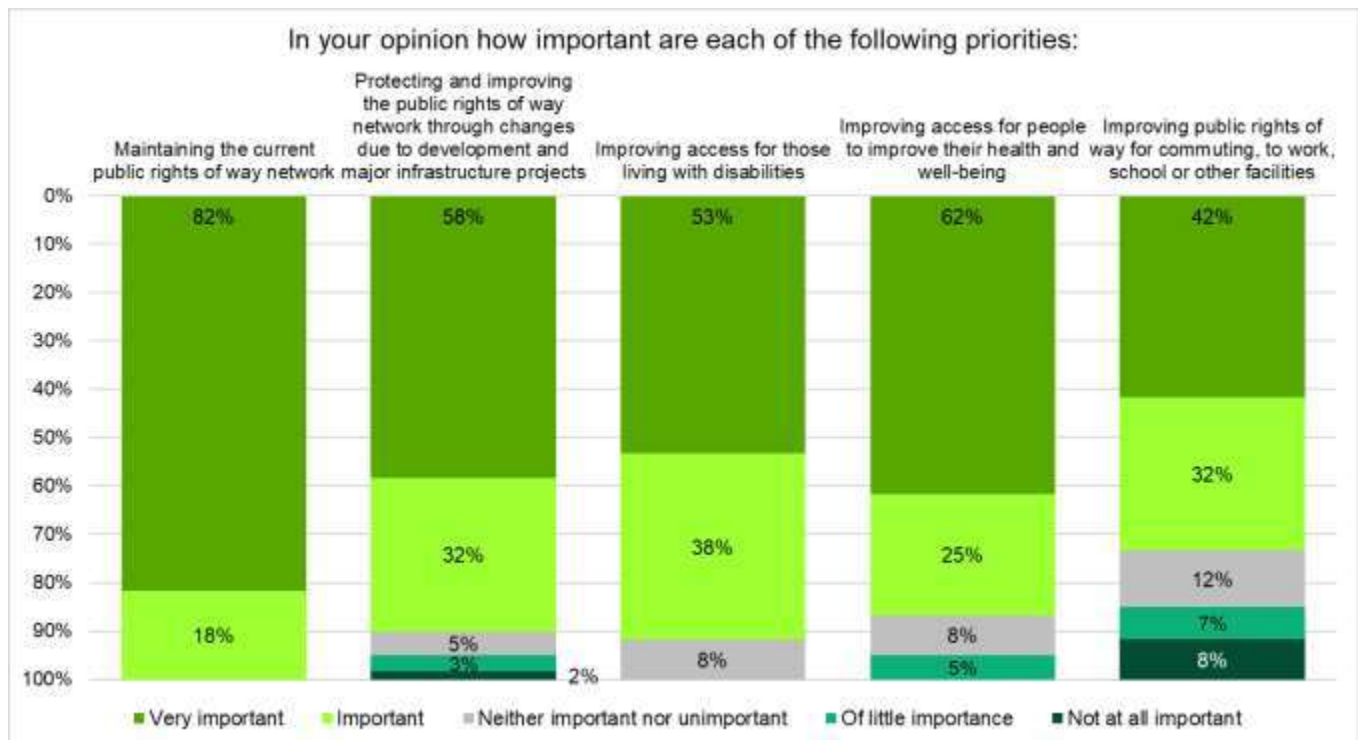
## Importance of Public Rights of Way

Councils were asked 'In your opinion how important are each of the following priorities:...'. Five potential priorities were listed. All of the potential priorities were important. Maintaining the current public rights of way network was deemed important or very important by all the councils. The priority which was least important was 'Improving public rights of way for commuting, to work, school or other facilities, but even this priority was important or very important for 74% of the councils.

Table 59: In your opinion how important are each of the following priorities:...

Potential Priorities n.60	Very important	Important	Neither important nor unimportant	Of little importance	Not at all important
Maintaining the current public rights of way network	82%	18%	0%	0%	0%
Protecting and improving the public rights of way network through changes due to development and major infrastructure projects	58%	32%	5%	3%	2%
Improving access for those living with disabilities	53%	38%	8%	0%	0%
Improving access for people to improve their health and well-being	62%	25%	8%	5%	0%
Improving public rights of way for commuting, to work, school or other facilities	42%	32%	12%	7%	8%

Chart 39: In your opinion how important are each of the following priorities:...



Councils were then asked 'Are there other areas which you think should be a priority?'. 29 councils made comments. These mainly related specific issues for their parish. Comments were made around maintenance, which included a range of issues which had already been mentioned including vegetation clearance, stiles, signposting and surfacing, predominantly made in connection to specific issues in their parish. 3 councils expressed a need for improvements for disabled people and those with reduced mobility. 4 councils highlighted the need for sustainable / active travel.

## Final Comments

Councils were asked 'Do you have any additional comments which will help us to draft the Rights of Way Improvement Plan? 34 councils provided comments.

There were a range of comments received across a wide range of topic areas. These included communication with Surrey County Council, more budget for implementing the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, improvements to feedback on reported issues, signage, vegetation clearance and a range of issues specific to their parish.

Councils were also asked 'Please tell us of any specific public right of way issues or improvements in your parish. Please provide route numbers (if possible) and/or a precise description of the location of the route.' 39 councils provided comments which have been recorded separately from this report.

# Landowners

## Online Survey

An online survey was circulated to landowners through the Country Land and Business Association and the National Farmers Union. Some landowners were also contact directly by Surrey County Council. The survey was online between 21<sup>st</sup> February 2024 and 14<sup>th</sup> April 2024. There were 10 responses to the survey. This is a very low sample size and therefore not possible to extrapolate answers to the wider landowner community. The views expressed cannot be taken to represent the entire landowning community but are the personal opinions of those completing the survey.

## About the Land Holding and Public Rights of Way

Landowners were asked what 'What type(s) of land owning / management practices do you carry out?'. The highest category, with 9 responses, was 'farming – livestock or dairy'. The second highest was 'farming – arable'.

Chart 40: What type(s) of land owning / management practices do you carry out?

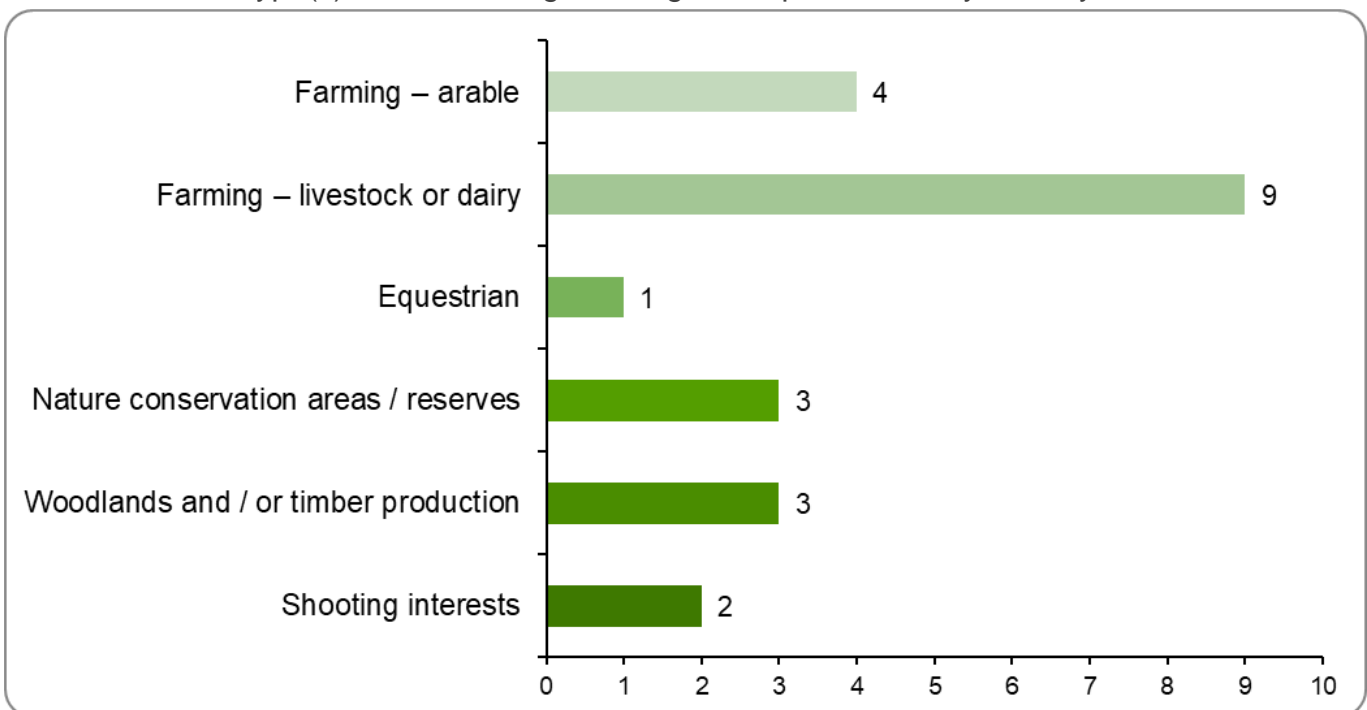
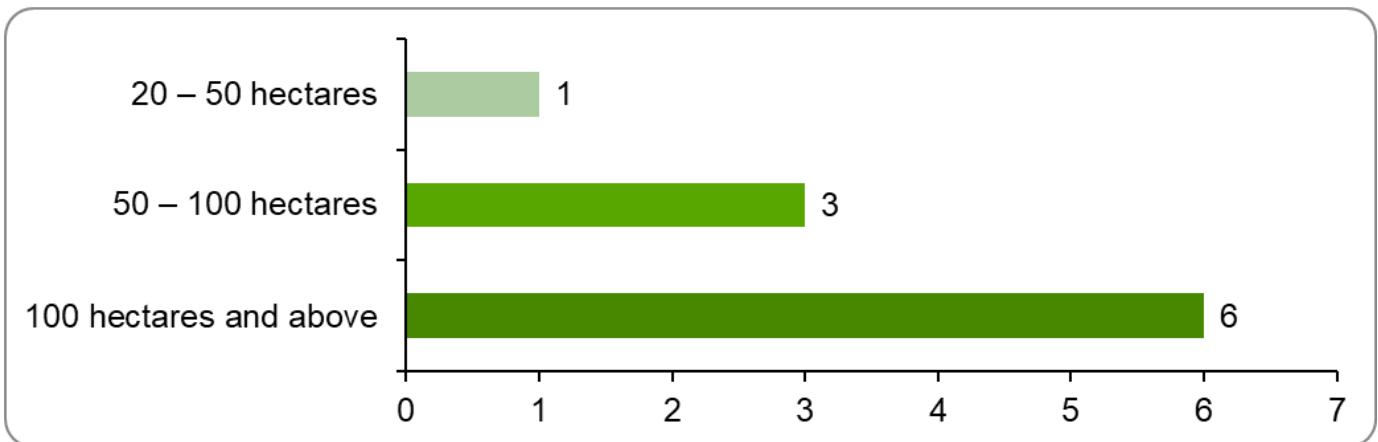


Table 60: What type(s) of land owning / management practices do you carry out?

Option	Number	Percent
Farming – arable	4	40%
Farming – livestock or dairy	9	90%
Farming – fruit, orchards, vineyards	0	0%
Farming – horticulture and vegetables	0	0%
Farming - Pigs and Poultry	0	0%
Equestrian	1	10%
Nature conservation areas / reserves	3	30%
Woodlands and / or timber production	3	30%
Shooting interests	2	20%
Other (please provide further details)	0	0%
Not Answered	0	0%

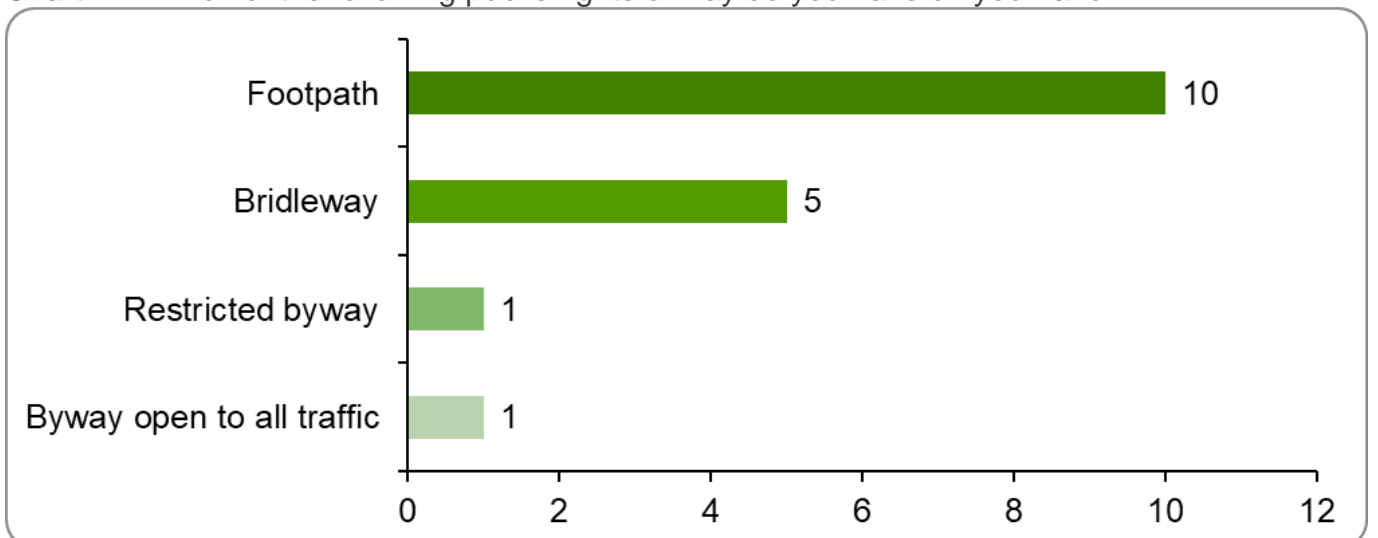
Landowners were asked about the size of their landholding. Most, 6, were larger than 100 hectares, 3 were between 50 to 100 hectares and 1 was between 20 and 50 hectares.

Chart 41: What is the size of your landholding?



Landowners were asked which type of public rights of way they had on their land. All had public footpaths, 5 had bridleways, one had a restricted byway and 1 a byway open to all traffic.

Chart 42: Which of the following public rights of way do you have on your land?

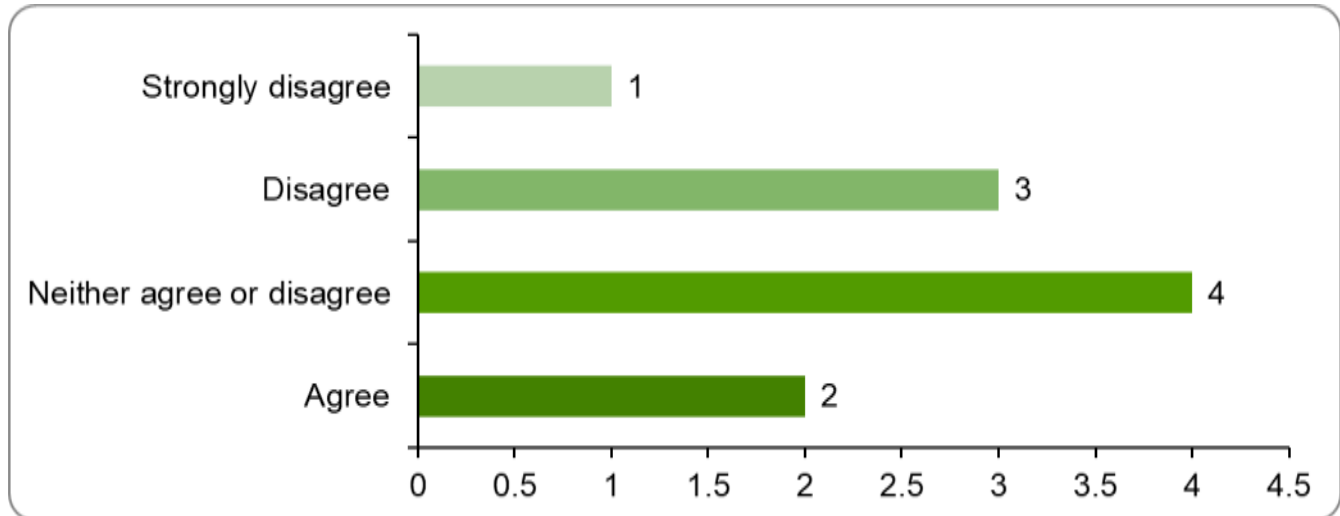


## Benefits of Public Rights of Way

Landowners were asked 'To what extent do you agree that the public rights of way on your land make a positive contribution in the following areas?'

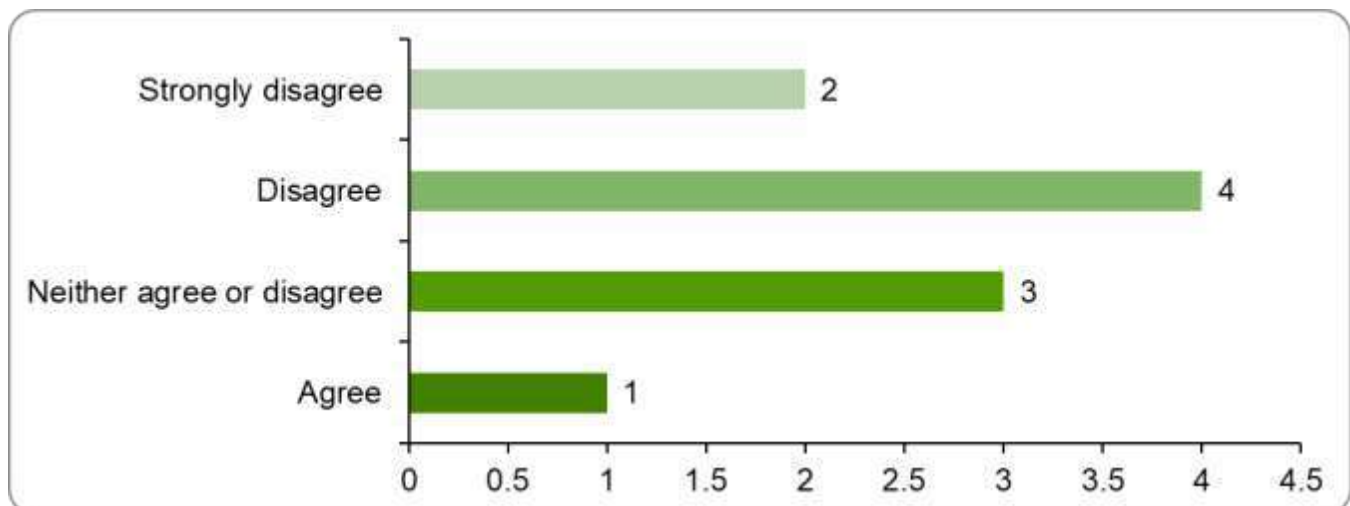
The first area was 'Public rights of way benefit tourism e.g. campsite, farm shop, B&B'. 4 landowners (40%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that they made a positive contribution. 2 landowners agreed they made a positive contribution. The remaining 40% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

Chart 43: Public rights of way benefit tourism e.g. campsite, farm shop, B&B



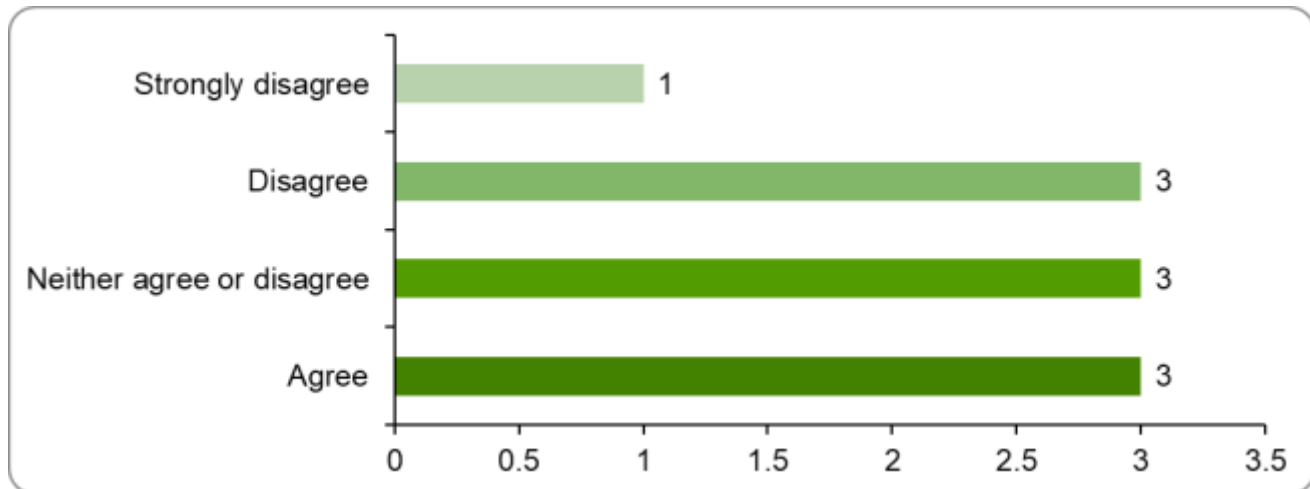
The second area was 'Public rights of way benefit awareness and knowledge of the countryside'. 6 landowners (60%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that they made a positive contribution. 1 landowner agreed they made a positive contribution. The remaining 30% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

Chart 44: Public rights of way benefit awareness and knowledge of the countryside



The third area was 'People report problems on my land (e.g. in regard to animals)'. 4 landowners (40%) disagreed or strongly disagreed that they made a positive contribution. 3 landowners agreed they made a positive contribution. The remaining 30% neither agreed nor disagreed with this statement.

Chart 45: People report problems on my land (e.g. in regard to animals)



## Issues with Public Rights of Way

Landowners were asked 'Which of these issues, if any, have you experienced connected with public rights of way?'.

- All landowners had experienced one or more issues
- All landowners had experienced 'Dogs not on the lead and bothering stock' and 'People not closing gates behind them'.
- 90% had experienced 'People getting lost', 'Crime and security issues', 'Trespassing', 'Littering' and 'Dog Fouling'.
- 70% had experienced 'Damage to path surfaces from overuse/misuse' and 'Illegal use – e.g. public footpath used by motorbikes'.

Chart 46: Which of these issues, if any, have you experienced connected with public rights of way?

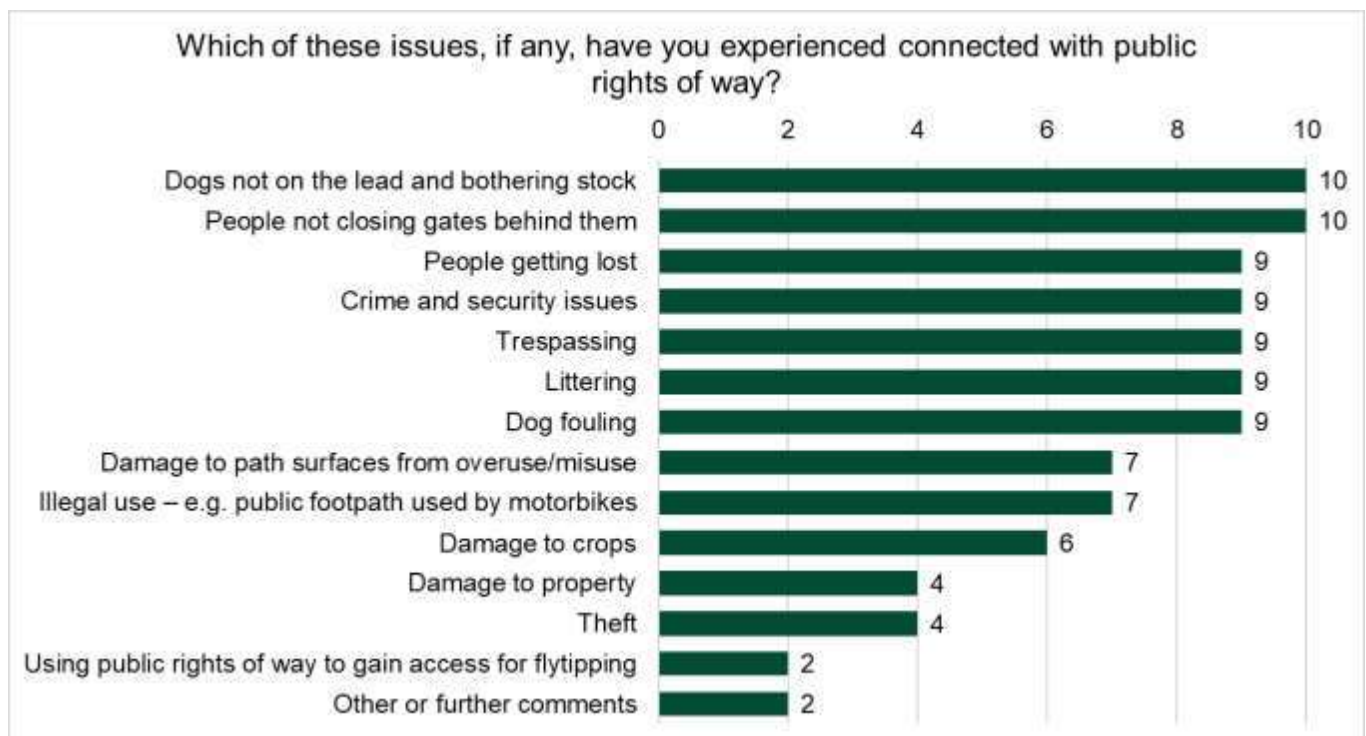


Table 61: Which of these issues, if any, have you experienced connected with public rights of way?

Option	Total	Percent
Dogs not on the lead and bothering stock	10	100%
People not closing gates behind them	10	100%
People getting lost	9	90%
Crime and security issues	9	90%
Trespassing	9	90%
Littering	9	90%
Dog fouling	9	90%
Damage to path surfaces from overuse/misuse	7	70%
Illegal use – e.g. public footpath used by motorbikes	7	70%
Damage to crops	6	60%
Damage to property	4	40%
Theft	4	40%
Using public rights of way to gain access for fly tipping	2	20%
Other or further comments	2	20%

There was a mixed response to whether levels of use had increased since the pandemic. 50% thought numbers had increased a little or a lot. 30% thought numbers had decreased a little or a lot and 20% thought they had stayed the same.

Amongst those who thought number had increased, 60% thought the increase had created problems. Additional comments were made around livestock worrying, erosion of paths, dogs off leads and not closing gates and not staying on the public rights of way.



## Maintenance

Landowners were asked whether they thought Surrey County Council or the landowner was responsible for a range of structures and for maintenance areas.

Chart 47: To help the Countryside Access Team manage public rights of way can you please tell us whether you think the following structures and issues on public rights of way are the responsibility of Surrey County Council or the landowner / land manager

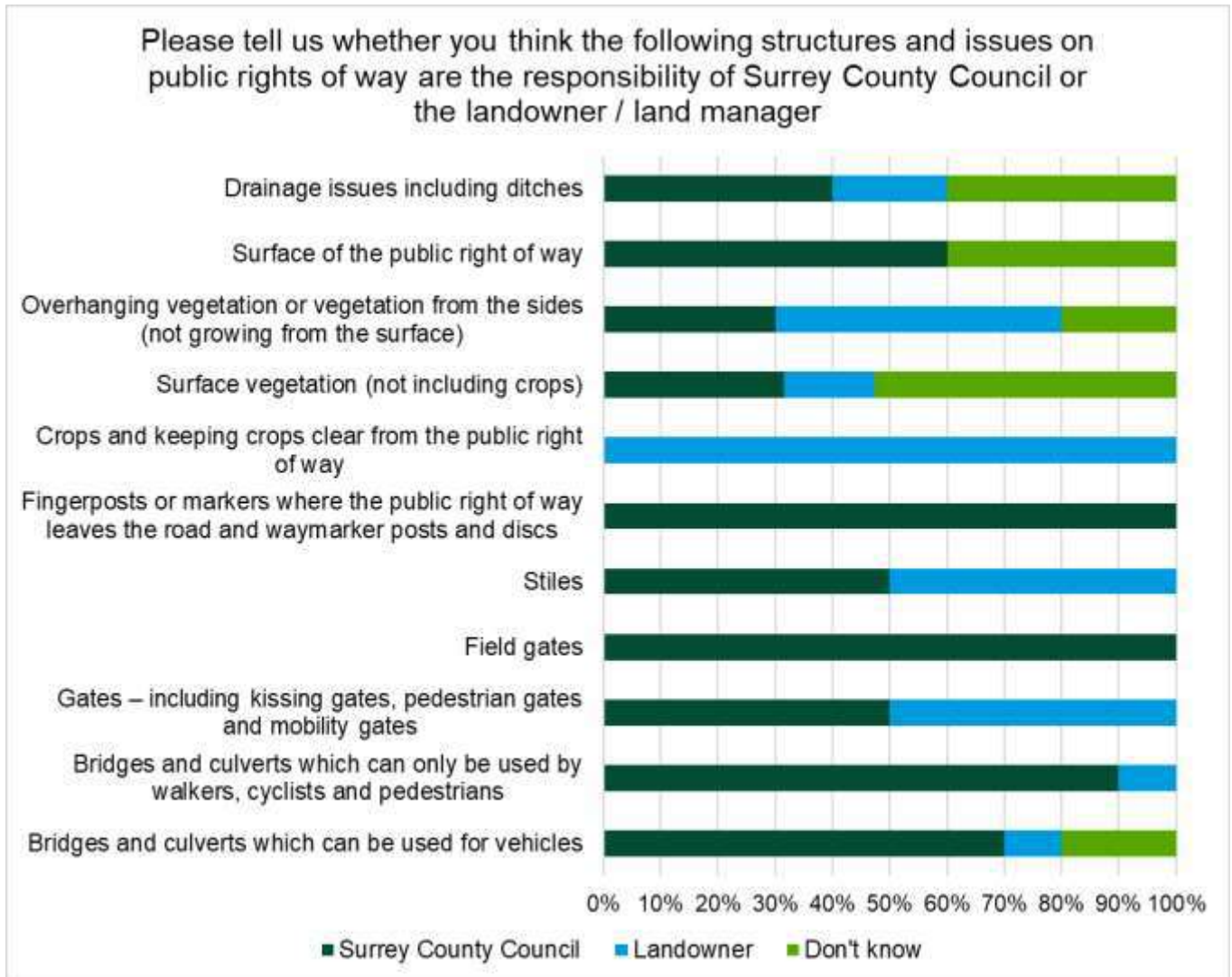


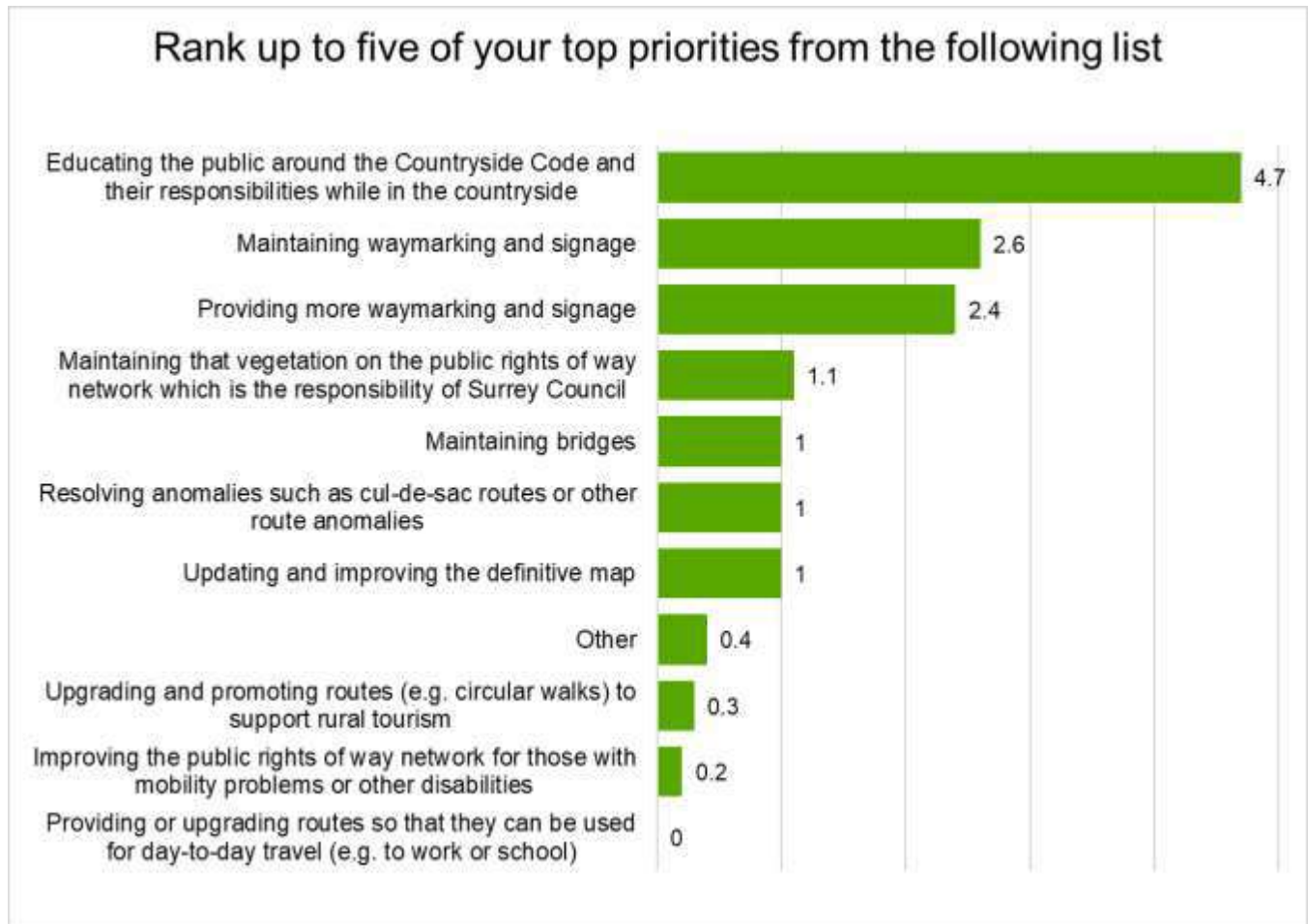
Table 62: To help the Countryside Access Team manage public rights of way can you please tell us whether you think the following structures and issues on public rights of way are the responsibility of Surrey County Council or the landowner / land manager

Categories	Surrey County Council	Landowner	Don't know
Bridges and culverts which can be used for vehicles	70%	10%	20%
Bridges and culverts which can only be used by walkers, cyclists and pedestrians	90%	10%	0%
Gates – including kissing gates, pedestrian gates and mobility gates	50%	50%	0%
Field gates	100%	0%	0%
Stiles	50%	50%	0%
Fingerposts or markers where the public right of way leaves the road and waymarker posts and discs	100%	0%	0%
Crops and keeping crops clear from the public right of way	0%	100%	0%
Surface vegetation (not including crops)	60%	30%	100%
Overhanging vegetation or vegetation from the sides (not growing from the surface)	30%	50%	20%
Surface of the public right of way	60%	0%	40%
Drainage issues including ditches	40%	20%	40%

Landowners were asked 'Thinking of Surrey County Council's Countryside Access Team and maintenance more generally, rank up to five of your top priorities from the following list'

- The highest priority with a score of 4.7 was educating the public around the Countryside Code and their responsibilities while in the countryside
- The second highest priority with a score of 2.6 was 'maintaining waymarking and signage' and third with 2.4 was 'providing more waymarking and signage'

Chart 48: Rank up to five of your top priorities from the following list



## Providing Information and Support for Landowners

Landowners were asked 'Do you think Surrey County Council should provide more information for landowners on public rights of way?'

- 70% said 'Yes – on responsibilities for public rights of way structures and maintenance'
  - 20% said 'Yes - on standards and designs for structures, e.g. stiles and gates'
- 20% said no information was needed

Landowners were asked 'How could Surrey County Council help you in managing public rights of way on your land?'. Comments received were around:

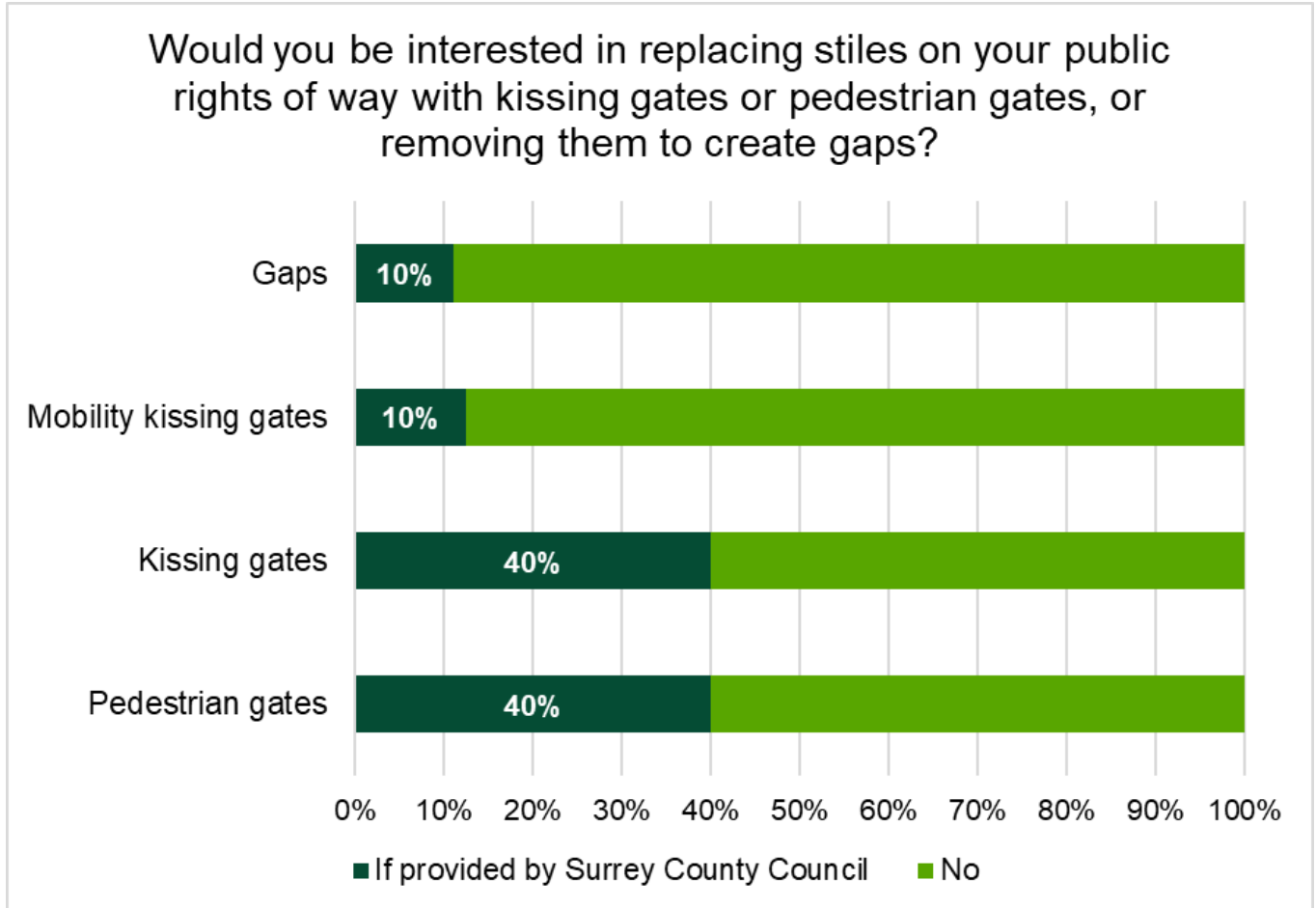
- The public keeping to public rights of way
- Clearing up dog fouling
- Observing the Countryside Code and responsible use of the countryside
- More signage

## Replacing Stiles with Kissing Gates

Landowners were asked 'Would you be interested in replacing stiles on your public rights of way with kissing gates or pedestrian gates, or removing them to create gaps?'

No landowners were willing to replace stiles unless Surrey County Council provided them

Chart 49: Would you be interested in replacing stiles on your public rights of way with kissing gates or pedestrian gates, or removing them to create gaps?



## Surrey County Council Tenant Farmers

A meeting of the Surrey County Council Tenant Farmers was attended. Issues raised in discussion were around:

- Trespassing and people wandering around land, think they are entitled to be there
- Cyclists using footpaths and e-bikes travel faster
- Issues with dogs – attacks and fouling
- Need additional signing and waymarking
- Want to get to know their local Countryside Access Officer and build a relationship
- Welcome more communication with the Countryside Access Team
- Various questions on technical issues relating to public rights of way which the officer in attendance clarified – demonstrating the value in communication, information sharing and partnership working to resolve issues

# Stakeholder Engagement

## Introduction

Workshops were held with user groups during February and March 2024:

- 4x4 / motorised vehicle users
- Ramblers' Association (x 2 workshops)
- Equestrians (x 3 workshops)
- Off-road cyclists

The following were attended to discuss and gain views on the Rights of Way Improvement Plan

- Camberley Mosque
- East Surrey Disability Empowerment Network
- Surrey Association of Parish Councils briefing for clerks and councillors
- Surrey Hard of Hearing Forum
- Surrey Parks and Countryside Forum
- Surrey Vision Action Group

Additional written responses were received and are summarised in the section '[Summary of Written Responses](#)'.

In addition, meetings were held with the following. The key points from these meetings have been used to inform the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

- Active Surrey
- Basingstoke Canal
- Forestry England
- Ministry of Defence
- National Trust
- North Downs Way Manager
- Surrey County Council teams:
  - Active Travel / Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan
  - Countryside Estate
  - Countryside Partnerships
  - Local Transport Plan
  - Placemaking
  - Social Care
  - Spatial Planning
  - Transport Development Planning
- Surrey Hills National Landscape
- Surrey Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Surrey Tenant Farmers

# Summary of Workshops

## Walkers

Representatives of Surrey Ramblers' Association groups attended.

### Accessibility

- Stiles pose a significant accessibility challenge, especially for older and less agile walkers. There is a need for standardised, accessible stiles (potentially adhering to British Standards).
- Improving accessibility for disabled users, including those with visual impairments, is a priority. Specific routes and networks catering to their needs should be developed.
- Stiles have been replaced by gates which is to be welcomed and Surrey County Council should be commended on this. This has been a joint exercise with the Ramblers'.

### Network Maintenance and Improvements

- The current system for reporting footpath problems (CAMS) can be inefficient, with many reported issues being outdated or non-existent, leading to wasted resources and frustration for volunteers.
- Muddy and waterlogged paths, particularly those churned up by horses and cyclists, create accessibility issues and require solutions like alternative routes or improved drainage.
- Sometimes there are tensions between different user groups, especially cyclists, particularly in popular areas like Leith Hill.
- Many paths cross dangerous roads with inadequate safety measures, making them unusable. This needs to be addressed through improved crossings or alternative routes.
- Creating paths that run parallel to roads 'behind the hedge' is suggested to avoid walkers having to use dangerous rat runs.
- The pandemic led to increased usage of public rights of way and this trend seems to be continuing, putting pressure on existing infrastructure.
- Improving public transport links to popular walking areas is crucial to reduce car dependency and improve access for those without cars.
- Rights of Way Improvement Plan needs to comprehensively address development.

### Communication and Partnerships

- Volunteers are currently restricted from communicating with landowners, which can slow down problem resolution. Finding ways to facilitate better communication could be beneficial.
- Volunteers play a crucial role in maintaining paths, but face limitations due to lack of staff support and access to tools (especially brush cutters which they are not permitted to use due to insurance issues).
- Providing landowners with clear information on path maintenance, stile standards, and potential funding opportunities (e.g. through environmental land management schemes) is important.

- Working with organisations like the Ramblers' Association, CLA, NFU and disability groups is essential to gather diverse perspectives and address specific needs.
- Would welcome further training so that volunteers can check structures and help to lower the number of outstanding issues on CAMS.

### **Positive Developments**

- The relationship between volunteers and the Surrey County Council Access Team has improved in recent years, with better communication and collaboration, and this is welcomed.
- Despite the challenges, there have been noticeable improvements in the network over the past 20 years, including stile replacements, upgraded surfaces, and better signage.

### **Equestrians**

Representatives from the British Horse Society, British Horse Society volunteers and other individuals. Both horse riders and carriage drivers attended.

### **Maintenance and Funding**

- Concerns were raised about the lack of maintenance of bridleways, particularly overgrowth and poor surfaces.
- Growth from sides and overhead is a particular issue and narrows the paths. Perception was that Surrey County Council does not seem to tackle this as it is the landowners responsibility, but it has a big impact on use of routes.
- Surrey County Council's (Surrey County Council) response to reported problems seems to vary depending on the area and the issue.
- Reporting problems online is difficult and there is low awareness of how to do this.
- Self-closing gates should be a last resort. Should be possible for gates to be opened without dismounting, need long handles and not strong self-closing springs.

### **Traffic and Roads**

- Roads are increasingly too busy and unsafe in many places.
- The A24 is substantially busier now than when designed and built with many disconnected bridleways due to an inability to cross safely.
- Verges and road margins could be improved and used by equestrians.
- 'Behind the hedge' routes could help to connect routes without the need to go on roads.
- The British Horse Society has an online facility to report incidents with horses including those on the road. Equestrians should be encouraged to use this.
- Signage on roads and around yards would be beneficial.

### **Access and Network Improvements**

- A list of connecting routes was submitted as part of the previous Rights of Way Improvement Plan and view was that no progress has been made.
- Links to commons could be improved.
- Forestry England could grant more access beyond the existing toll rides.

- National Trust should be encouraged to provide more equestrian access.
- Lost Ways need to be claimed.
- A desire for improved and extended bridleway networks was expressed, particularly in areas with limited off-road riding options.
- Lack of safe parking for horseboxes and trailers was identified as a barrier to accessing bridleways.
- The need for better information on permissive routes and parking facilities was emphasised.
- The success of the Dry Hill Rides network and its leaflet, including information on parking, was highlighted as a potential model for other areas.
- Surfacing on new and upgraded routes needs to be horse friendly, i.e. not tarmac
- More routes should be upgraded, ideally to restricted byways.

### **Conflicts Between User Groups**

- Concerns were raised about inconsiderate behaviour from some cyclists and dog walkers, including dogs running loose and cyclists passing too closely.
- The importance of mutual respect and education for all users of bridleways was emphasised.
- The use of headcams to record incidents and potentially deter inconsiderate behaviour was discussed.
- Particularly busy with cyclists around Leith Hill with the result that equestrians now avoid this area.

### **Volunteering and Community Involvement**

- There is a willingness among equestrians to volunteer for bridleway maintenance but frustration that due to health and safety the system can be cumbersome.
- Successful examples of volunteer involvement in the past, such as the Dry Hill Rides and Chobham Common, were highlighted.
- Willingness to volunteer but equestrians are harder to organise as a minority belong to organised groups.

### **Cyclists**

Attended by individuals from local clubs.

### **Maintenance and Funding**

- Concerns were raised about the deterioration of existing rights of way due to budget cuts and a lack of funding.
- Participants felt that major infrastructure projects often overshadow the need for maintaining existing paths.
- The need for prioritising maintenance over new improvements was highlighted.
- Participants observed a general decline in the condition of rights of way over the past 10 years, with some paths becoming dangerous due to lack of maintenance.



- A key factor contributing to poor maintenance is budget cuts and the lack of dedicated funding for rights of way maintenance. Money is often prioritised for large projects associated with new developments rather than maintaining existing paths.
- Participants cited specific examples of paths suffering from poor maintenance which have deteriorated due to heavy use. The path from Westcott to Dorking was also mentioned as an example of a relatively new trail already in need of repair.
- Given the limited resources, the council needs to prioritise maintenance based on factors such as path usage and severity of issues. The existing complaint system and feedback from users can help identify priority areas.

### **Conflicts Between User Groups**

- Increased usage of rights of way by different groups, including cyclists, walkers, and horse riders, has led to potential conflicts.
- Issues such as cyclists not using bells, walkers wearing headphones, and dog walkers not controlling their dogs were discussed.
- The need for better communication, education, and signage to promote awareness and respect between user groups was emphasised.

### **Volunteering and Community Involvement**

- Some participants expressed a willingness to volunteer but highlighted the need for better coordination. Due to health and safety the system can be cumbersome.
- The importance of engaging with local cycling clubs and groups to facilitate volunteer efforts was discussed.
- Cyclists sometimes carry out *ad hoc* maintenance on trails they use regularly, mainly trimming back overgrowth.
- There could be better coordination from the council in organising volunteer efforts.
- Volunteers feel they need more support and guidance from the council, including training and risk assessment procedures.
- There are individuals and groups willing to volunteer, but they need better co-ordination and support system.
- Cycling clubs could be more actively involved in organised volunteer maintenance.

### **E-bikes**

- E-bike usage is increasing: E-bikes have become increasingly popular, especially during the pandemic, and this trend is expected to continue. This is partly due to their ability to open up cycling to older and less fit individuals.
- Impact on paths: The increased usage of e-bikes, particularly heavier off-road models, is contributing to increased wear and tear on paths. This needs to be considered in planning and maintenance.
- User conflicts: While not a major issue, the rise in e-bike usage may contribute to increased user conflicts on paths, particularly with walkers who may not be used to encountering bikes on certain paths.
- Potential for e-bikes in active travel: There is potential for e-bikes to play a greater role in active travel and commuting, particularly for longer distances between villages and towns. This could be explored further in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

## Other

- The need to address mapping anomalies and "missing links" in the network.
- The growing popularity of off-road cycling among women was noted.

## Motorised Vehicle Users (MVU)

Representatives from Surrey Countryside Access Forum, Association of Land Rover Clubs, LARA, TRF and GLASS.

- There are economic benefits of MVU as a recreational activity, which is evidenced in reports by TRF and GLASS.
- Recreational use by MV users is important for their health and wellbeing.
- Recreation using MV can be particularly important for a person with a disability to enjoy the countryside.
- There's a sense of their use and enjoyment being under threat, with concern that in 5-10 years, many more byways will be lost. The changes only go in one direction – a reduction in the amount of public rights of way they can use as the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) sets out that no more can be created and gradually the existing byways are being closed through Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).
- Request that TROs are considered and assessed as to whether the reasons they have been put place still apply, and the TRO removed if not.
- Most users are responsible. These responsible users also 'police' the routes and challenge users who are not being responsible or using areas lawfully.
- There's frustration with the lack of communication and consultation from Surrey County Council and the Surrey Countryside Access Forum.
- The Essex Byways Group is effective and collaborative. Such an approach with Surrey County Council would be welcomed to cover the whole county.
- There is concern that Surrey County Council is under pressure to close more byways.
- Policy on TROs needs to be reviewed and concern that 'trigger-point' for closing byways is too low.
- The previous Rights of Way Improvement Plan (Rights of Way Improvement Plan) is criticised for not considering the needs of 4x4 users.
- Many users including TRF volunteers help to maintain the routes. There's a desire for more proactive maintenance and a willingness to contribute time and funds.
- TRF have installed signs to help communicate with all users but these were taken down.
- Illegal use of byways by motorbikes in areas where they are not permitted is a concern and damages the reputation of legitimate and law-abiding users. There were calls for increased policing and educational signage.

## Summary of Written Responses

This section includes the key points from the written responses. The entire text of the responses has not been included. Responses were received from statutory stakeholders, other stakeholders and representatives of organisations and groups and some interested individuals.

Written responses were received from:

- Association of Land Rover Clubs
- Bike 50
- Bracknell Forest Council
- British Driving Society
- British Horse Society
- Chobham and Downside Residents' Association
- Chobham Commons Preservation Committee
- Churt Parish Council
- Elmbridge Borough Council
- Ewhurst Parish Council
- GLASS
- Guildford Borough Council
- Hampshire County Council
- Hook Heath Residents' Association
- LARA
- London Borough of Bromley Council
- Newdigate Bridleways Group
- North Downs Way Project Manager
- Open Spaces Society
- Ramblers' Association
- Surrey County Council Heritage Team
- Surrey Countryside Access Forum (Local Access Forum)
- Surrey Nature Partnership
- Surrey Parks and Countryside Forum
- South Farnham Residents' Association
- Thames Basin Heaths Partnership
- Waverley Cycle Forum
- Waverley Friends of the Earth
- Woodcote (Epsom) Residents Society
- Weybridge Society
- Westcott Village Association
- Six private individuals

## Needs of Users, Use of Public Rights of Way and Safety

- Lack of maintenance and overgrown paths can inhibit use of public rights of way.
- Increase in dog ownership in recent years and perception from some that these are less well-trained, which has an impact on use and enjoyment of public rights of way. Perception of more negative impacts on livestock and landowner interests.
- Increased traffic making crossing or traversing along roads more difficult and dangerous.
- High quality access means a safe, 'fit for purpose', and inclusive for all public rights of way network. The condition of public rights of way can contribute to broader quality of life objectives associated with leisure and recreation.
- DEFRA's 'Presumption Guidance' seeks to strike a balance between recreational access and the rights of the farming community by recognising that where rights of way pass through gardens, curtilages of private dwellings, working farmyards and other commercial premises that greater consideration by Local Authorities is given to diverting some rights of way.
- Equestrians made points in relation to their use of public rights of way - increased traffic on roads and roads are becoming more dangerous, crossing roads is difficult. Disconnected in places. Fewer routes for carriage drivers. Routes parallel to roads can be useful. Tarmac is unsuitable for horses. Verges could be used more but need to be of a suitable standard and free from structures etc. More incidents of worrying by dogs. Increased number of cyclists. Recording levels of equestrianism is less accurate as Strava doesn't have a category to record equestrian activity. The British Horse society can assist with safety and educational signs for motorists.

## Active Travel

- Public rights of way can be important in active travel networks.
- Need to encourage more people to walk or cycle and seek links to schools and stations. Public footpaths that lead from residential areas to schools are probably already well used as safe routes by families and pupils. It is important to identify such routes and ensure that are well maintained with a good surface and without barriers such as stiles and kissing gates.
- Link active travel routes into the wider public rights of way network. Not all of these routes will need to be upgraded but will give people more options.
- Link bus stops and stations with public rights of way.
- Active travel projects can implement surfacing which is unsuitable for equestrians.

## Development and Growth

- Public rights of way are an essential component of green and blue infrastructure and should be included in green and blue infrastructure planning.
- As the population grows, it becomes more important to ensure that rights of way are kept open and properly maintained, so that the public can access them for fresh air and exercise.
- More maintenance, signage and other infrastructure will be needed to cope increased use especially where there is already a limited length / provision of public rights of way.
- Development is likely to increase use of the already busy public rights of way network.

- Higher status access should be sought as part of planning permission (bridleways or restricted byways rather than walking and cycling routes) together with funding from development to protect and enhance the higher status network in particular. This is especially important in respect of providing off road links between existing equestrian public rights of way and safe road crossings.
- Opportunities for connectivity and improvements need to be sought from both county and national highways projects.
- Identify routes for potential Community Infrastructure Levy.
- Developers of larger strategic sites should be encouraged to develop new public rights of way. Developer contributions should be sought in line with the conditions set out in the National Planning Policy Framework to deliver improvements.
- New Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) can provide opportunities to deliver links to the established public rights of way network as well as between a new development and a SANG itself.
- Further improvements to the network should focus on connections to and from populated areas to serve the greatest need.
- Crossings are needed when new development takes place as there will be more users of the public rights of way network.
- New developments need to create new public rights of way that links into existing network, improve connectivity and access for multi user groups.
- Increase the connectivity to open public recreation land and the provision of loops or circular routes for all lawful users. Use all available funding streams to benefit all lawful users not just pedestrians and cyclists.
- The Rights of Way Improvement Plan needs to acknowledge that Surrey County Council is not a unitary authority and to explain that whilst Surrey County Council is the Highways Authority it is the district councils that generally are the planning authorities. Consequently the Rights of Way Improvement Plan needs to consider carefully how prospective improvements that involve either enlarging the public rights of way network or would involve substantial capital outlay are communicated to the district councils. It being district councils who:
  - Can secure land dedication and access for enhancing the public rights of way network whenever a landowner seeks to push the boundaries of what might be permitted development; and who
  - Administer the relatively new Community Infrastructure Levy that could become the major source of funding for the improvements
- Surrey Countryside Access Forum strongly recommends that the most effective way for Surrey County Council and Countryside Access Team to communicate with the District Councils would be for the 2024 Rights of Way Improvement Plan to introduce a 'Register' sorted by each District Council of the identified prospective improvements. The Register would be owned and administered by Surrey County Council led by the Countryside Access Team. The Register should show potential initially perceived benefits from the prospective improvements. However, no endeavour should be made to prioritise them, as they will depend upon what planning applications are made that afford the opportunity for Planning Authorities to seek off-setting community gain; and it would then be for the District and Parish Councils, as holders of the CIL pots to decide what best meets their priorities. A start on the shape of such a Register is to be found in Appendix B. Such registers should be regularly updated by Countryside Access Team and then subject to formal review led by

Countryside Access Team every two years, working in conjunction with the District and Parish Councils and Section 61 consultees, including Surrey Countryside Access Forum.

## Partnerships and Communication

- Ramblers' Association wish to be involved or consulted on the following areas:
  - Helping with checking faults
  - Volunteer Path Wardens trained and going out to check issues.
  - Consultation on links anywhere in Surrey
  - Ramblers to be consulted as indicated in the previous Rights of Way Improvement Plan
  - Consultation on road crossings
  - New routes in areas of high demand outside honeypots (How are new routes created?)
  - We would like to be consulted on the best use of funds
- There are ten Ramblers' Association volunteer groups carrying out practical work – there may be scope to expand but perhaps these are at capacity. There is potential capacity for Volunteer Path Wardens to check and resolve small issues, possibly through the new task system. The Ramblers' Association could help further on checking on reported faults.
- The Trail Riders Fellowship and GLASS stated they provide volunteer support and are willing to do more.
- Permissive routes could be mapped on the online public rights of way map to enable public rights of way users to make use of these in their route planning.
- Communication is needed to raise awareness of the different types of public rights of way and the permitted users. A user friendly website might improve the behaviour and expectations of users.
- The Surrey Countryside Access Forum should be more accessible for the general public. It is very likely that most public rights of way users have no idea it exists nor its purpose. Surrey should lead the way by ensuring those people the Surrey Countryside Access Forum represents are aware of its existence, its powers and its limitations and how they can become involved.
- Navigating the Surrey County Council website is not easy.
- Local wardens could help to report any issues.
- Signage with information to advise users who can legally use which types of public right of way.
- Consult with mechanically propelled vehicle user groups e.g. TRF and GLASS when there are problems, for example mechanically propelled vehicle users driving off the legal right of way and onto private land. This can help lead to a solution that does not result in the loss of available routes. Contact provided for the Essex Byways Working Group as a good example of a productive forum for motorised vehicle users and the relevant authorities. Cooperative working is essential, rather than adversarial positions. This relates to all elements of the council including elected county and district members and MPs.
- Opportunities to make heritage assets more accessible and visible to the public, as long as these do not result in erosion and damage. Avoid over-exposing historic sites to public access to avoid erosion and other forms of damage, but at the same time enable the sensible user to gain a deeper understanding of their surroundings.

- Refer to the Surrey County Council dog walking code of conduct in the Rights of Way Improvement Plan <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/culture-and-leisure/countryside/what-can-you-do/walking/dog-walking/code-of-conduct>
- Protecting designated landscapes - opportunity to raise awareness to protecting the beautiful, natural countryside and empower local communities to have a greater say in regard to their public rights of way network.
- Since the Covid lockdowns, there has been a much greater interest in outdoor and healthy pursuits. This needs to be supported by new literature etc, informing people of circular and easy access routes either near where they live or where there is parking. These routes need to be identified, appropriately signed and highlighted for greater inclusion for those groups who may encounter problems.
- Education of current and potential users including respect for the countryside code is required to promote safe and tolerant interaction between different user groups.

## A Better Network

- When funds are available the Ramblers' Association suggest physical improvements:
  - Paths made where there are small gaps between existing public rights of ways
  - Work on the often small lengths of path that are impassible in winter e.g. draining flooded gateways
  - Routes made parallel to busy roads where there is no verge at present e.g. made in adjacent fields
  - Bridges or at least central islands to help walkers cross busy roads e.g. Newlands Corner
- Put directions and mileage distances on fingerposts and waymarks.
- Needs to be better joined up working, for example Surrey County Council Highways and Countryside Access Service.
- When forestry work is undertaken, contractors need to clear the paths.
- Many people are put off of cycling by busy and potholed roads. With the status of public rights of way based on arbitrary historical use rather than suitability for purpose there are narrow single tracks as bridleways and byways and wide surfaced roads as footpaths. This results in "roadblocks" in sustainable, traffic free routes between towns and villages together with a huge reduction in routes for leisure activities. Thousands of miles of traffic free routes could be opened up with zero capital expenditure.
- Some of the best all weather off road areas come under local council control with outdated and anti-cycling bylaws.
- Some public rights of way could be kept open all year round with attention to short sections which become boggy in winter rather than surfacing the whole route.
- Prompt progression of upgrades or additions to higher status routes where landowners have agreed and where funding has been offered.
- Addressing obstructions.
- Improved vegetation and overall maintenance.
- 'Lost Ways' need to be resolved before the cut-off date on 1st January 2031.
- Easier problem reporting and feedback given on resolution.
- High use of public rights of way can lead to erosion and deterioration of the surfaces.
- Network needs to be better connected.
- Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) on BOATs should be reassessed on a regular basis to check whether the TRO continues to be necessary, and whether it could be amended or

lifted completely due to changing circumstances. Temporary TROs should be in place for as short a time as possible and not extended repeatedly.

- Any public right of way that have since the last Rights of Way Improvement Plan either has been or is subject to a TRO, Surrey County Council involving Surrey County Council Highways should consider re-opening them to allow better connectivity and use by all users.
- Future population growth could cause pressure on an already comparatively short network. There is an opportunity for the Rights of Way Improvement Plan to include an aspiration to either maintain the existing provision of 3m of public rights of way per person, or preferably, explore opportunities to bring Surrey closer to other neighbouring counties where, at the upper end, there is 6m per person. Whilst publicly owned land perhaps provides a higher density of public rights of ways, incentives for new routes on private land might be of benefit.
- A review of the current network would help to establish a baseline of the condition of routes. As part of this review, it should be investigated whether it would be appropriate or advantageous to upgrade a footpath to allow use by a greater range of users.
- The network provides an opportunity for exercise and other recreation but this opportunity is not equal and there are areas with more public rights of ways than others. There should be an assessment allowing for greater understanding of the value and benefits public rights of ways presently provide locally e.g. through surveys and visitor counters. This would allow for a spatial assessment of priority areas to be realised.
- North Downs Way in Surrey tends to pass between towns, villages and populations. Better maintained, signed and promoted link routes to / from these gateway locations will improve access to North Downs Way and encourage use of public rights of way, use of sustainable transport options and ease pressure on honey pot sites / car parks.
- The North Downs Way in Surrey tends to be signed only in one direction (generally West to East). Signs should point in both directions.
- As recognised in the 2007 and 2014 Rights of Way Improvement Plans the network is fragmented, thus limiting accessibility. Particular problems arise where a right of way ends at the highway. Depending upon the level and speed of the traffic users can have problems crossing or using the carriageway, especially those on horseback.
- Where a higher-use class public rights of way (say, a bridleway / BOAT) either ends or meets a lower-use class public rights of way (say, a footpath / bridleway) then the practicalities of improving the lower-use path to increase the network's connectivity should be investigated; but always subject to ensuring that the widths and ground conditions of the upgraded section are such that it will remain passable to all users in all seasons and weathers, plus inspection of the existing ROW to ensure that it is also of sufficient width and ground conditions to support the increased use.
- The network is fragmented, with many anomalies and gaps, some of which are used by walkers/cyclists/horse riders but are either not on the definitive map or are incorrectly recorded: see map appended to Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2007, which also shows how some areas lack multi-user routes.



## Supporting Health and Wellbeing

- Equestrians - More than two thirds (68%) of questionnaire respondents participate in horse riding and associated activities for 30 minutes or more at least three times a week. Sport England estimate that such a level of sporting activity will help an individual achieve or exceed the government's recommended minimum level of physical activity. A range of evidence indicates the vast majority (90% plus) of horse riders are female and more than a third (37%) of the female riders who took part [in the survey] were above 45 years of age. Horse riding is especially well placed to play a valuable role in initiatives to encourage increased physical activity amongst women of all ages. Amongst the horse riders who took part in the survey, 39% had taken no other form of physical activity in the last four weeks. This highlights the importance of riding to these people, who might otherwise be sedentary. Horse riders with a long-standing illness or disability who took part in the survey are able to undertake horse riding and associated activities at the same self-reported level of frequency and physical intensity as those without such an illness or disability.
- Information should be included in doctors surgeries/physios/gyms/libraries/walk for health programmes/rehab programmes
- The network can support improvements in health and wellbeing by:
  - Making access to nature and greenspace easier from where people live, with well-marked circular routes of varying lengths.
  - This may mean providing the paths if they don't exist, either through permissive routes or taking advantage of development to provide suitable routes. Waymarking those paths and potentially finding local groups who can be responsible for that waymarking and any minor repairs.
  - Ensuring that any new development has paths from the housing/offices to a park or includes sufficient greenspace to allow short walks and links to the main network.
- Our ageing population wants to stay more active and to enjoy the countryside for longer, so encourage for health reasons gentle "walking for all" ambles, close to settlement centres. Around the settlements also establish level, obstacle free circular walks based on nearby car parks. Such easily accessible routes need to be promoted, and ideally have nearby public transport links identified.
- Covid highlighted everyone's needs for exercise not just for physical fitness, but also the mental health gains from easy access to the outdoors, and the interaction with our natural world. DEFRA's 25 year plan highlighted this need for high quality accessible, natural spaces close to where people live and work. This aspiration should be realised as close as possible to areas of greatest population density.
- DEFRA is currently consulting with the Country Landowners Association (CLA) among others on a 'public benefit' payment scheme to landowners to encourage, for instance, for greater permissive routes such as mountain bike runs.

## People Living with Disabilities

- Stiles and kissing gates should be removed from all RoWs as they impact wheelchair and mobility scooter users and people with limited mobility.
- Horses can help some people with mobility problems to access the countryside.
- For some the use of a 4x4 is the only way they can access the countryside. Having access to the countryside is known to be beneficial to mental health.

- Accessibility to the public rights of way network for those who are blind, partially sighted and others with mobility difficulties is in many cases poor. The reasons for this may vary locally but could be caused by varying surfacing, maintenance regimes and restrictions caused by the width of paths. Better connectivity of routes with parking areas/train stations/bus stops and the availability of circular routes may improve accessibility for some with disabilities, albeit this will differ from individual to individual. Information online or on apps can potentially set expectations on where opportunities exist, or where routes meet particular standards for a variety of individual needs.
- Understanding where people with limited mobility live and are using the network would make a start at where the priority should be to make routes more accessible. Removing stiles, improving gates, and surfacing routes, where feasible, would help a large proportion of the population. Identifying good locations for rest points and providing benches would also encourage use by people with limited mobility.
- There is a need for greater focus and consideration for users with specific needs so that the network is inclusive for all, especially in the light of a rapidly ageing population Amongst those who may encounter problems:
  - Those for whom some stiles can be too high;
  - Those who have recently undergone surgery;
  - Have cardiovascular ailments;
  - Parents encumbered by double buggies or jogging pushchairs;
  - Wheeled walking frames
  - Large diameter (e.g. 12+) wheeled mobility scooters
  - Those exercising on horseback if not agile enough to dismount and remount
- More needs to be done to support and add a greater variety to “walking for health” programmes, where there is a need to open up level-ish, obstacle-free circuits close to settlements.
- Countryside Access Team needs to secure one-off funding to ensure that the Interactive Map is up to date and contains information about easy access routes as well as details of such things as type of surface, stiles, small kissing gates, or barriers. This information, for circular and easy access circuits should also be available through leaflets and on websites, following the principle of “no-one left behind”.

## Levels of Users, Tourism, Visitor Economy

- Surrey County Council should consider making its walks pages much more comprehensive, to include as many walks as possible, giving the opportunity to businesses to support the information financially by advertising. There should also be a link to the excellent Surrey Countryside Estate Common Land and Rights of Way website, which shows and numbers all public footpaths and bridleways.
- Proximity to London will increase recreational user numbers greatly. Whilst boosting the economy through recreational activity and tourism is desirable, it should also be recognised that the majority of public rights of way cross privately owned land and thus affect farmers and other landowners. Their needs and views should be sought and taken into account and it will be important to liaise with them when creating new routes.
- Based on the figures above the North Downs Way is a well-used primary route in Surrey with over half of all trail users being recorded in only 33% of the entire trail length due to large urban populations in Surrey, proximity to London and good access via rail and car.

There are some clear honeypot sites on North Downs Way in Surrey (Newlands Corner / Box Hill / Reigate Hill) which could lead to overcrowding, erosion and other maintenance issues.

- One of the key issues for people in the county is access to important countryside sites. Most people arrive at Surrey's main tourist locations in the Surrey Hills by car and therefore not having access to a car is a disadvantage. Public transport tends to focus on built up areas with relatively few buses to rural areas, particularly at weekends.
- Car parks are often full on busy days with the result of frustrated visitors and a lot of wear and tear on the surfaces. Parking charges have proved to be quite controversial in Surrey, particularly on local authority owned sites and so many car parks are still free.
- Dogs, and particularly those walked by professional dog walkers, have caused several issues in the county, including deterring people from walking in certain areas and negatively impacting sites of nature conservation. Uncontrolled dogs can be a deterrent to other users and cause landowners to want to control the use of a path or even block it. They can worry some people, particularly where they are not confident with dogs or where they are being walked in large numbers and out of control. They also cause damage to the conservation, by disturbing wildlife and polluting the ground and water.
- Work with tourism locations to provide off road walking and cycling routes and incentives to leave the car at home.
- Link bus stops and stations with the footpath network and providing information on where to go and timings of transport to tie in with opening times of key sites, e.g. viewpoints, historic sites, villages, lakes etc.
- Develop waymarked paths that start from car parks, bus stops / stations and take in refreshment stops, shops, as well as points of interest, recreations centres etc. Ensure these routes are signed and the signage kept maintained.
- Footpaths are being used and damaged by cyclists.
- Protect designated landscapes, ancient woodlands, sites of special scientific interest, biodiverse rich areas and wetlands, rural character and heritage through 'buffer zones' where these are needed.
- The growth in mountain biking needs to be planned for as it represents a new type of user.

## **Content and Delivery of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan**

- The qualitative targets in the previous Rights of Way Improvement Plan were relevant.
- More money needs to be found for delivering the new Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- Targets and budgets should be set against the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- The previous Rights of Way Improvement Plan did not mention surface improvement in the action tables and there is no mention of drainage.
- New paths parallel to roads for safety of walkers not mentioned but the problem of traffic inhibiting walking is clearly understood.
- We understand that, whilst a Rights of Way Improvement Plan document is required in Law of the Highways Authority, its implementation is not and it is felt that this has certainly been the case with past Rights of Way Improvement Plans for Surrey CC. We acknowledge that funding cuts render many of the aspirations of such plans very difficult to implement but other Highways Authorities appear to have more success.
- Despite the stated aims of the Rights of Way Improvement Plans 2007 and 2014 to improve the network by closing gaps in the ROW network and by improving safety for walkers and

riders by providing safe verges or off road links between rights of way, little progress has been made.

- Previous ROWIPs have had limited implementation.
- It is key that the RoWIP is referenced to the other relevant plans across the County, for example the Local Plans, Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategies, Surrey Hills National Landscape Management Plan, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and Surrey Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Some of which are currently being reviewed.
- There has been a lack of progress in Rights of Way Improvement Plans to improve the network by closing gaps in the public rights of way network
- The stated aims of the 2007 and 2014 Rights of Way Improvement Plans corresponded with the objectives of Surrey Countryside Access Forum. The issue was the limited progress that has been made; which Surrey Countryside Access Forum attributes in part to Countryside Access Team not having effectively communicated with the District Councils. Surrey Countryside Access Forum proposes that this be tackled, as part of their 2024 Rights of Way Improvement Plan, by Countryside Access Team publishing and then regularly updating registers of worthwhile improvements and enhancements to the public rights of way network. This is now even more important with the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which could well become the most important source of capital funds for public rights of way improvements.
- Make full use of Garmin Connect, Strava heatmap data and other apps to identify the high usage routes. Where particular sections of public rights of ways are especially frequently traversed then Countryside Access Team might consider monitoring them as part of the twice yearly BVPI audits of public rights of way condition, and then when necessary prioritising their repair.
- The Definitive Map and Statement is a legal record and thus to make any additions or changes there is a legal procedure to follow. This takes a considerable amount of administrative time. It is therefore recognised that more staff hours would be required to effect improvements.

## Appendix

The following were contacted and invited to input their views into the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

### Surrey County Council Elected Members

A briefing was held and councillors were invited to submit their views.

### Disabilities

- Surrey Coalition of Disabled People
- Sight for Surrey
- Surrey County Council Adult Social Care
- Age UK
- Surrey Choices
- Alzheimer's Society
- Headway

### Youth

- D of E
- Surrey Scouts

### Parish and Town Councils, Residents' Associations

- All parish and town councils
- Surrey Association of Local Councils
- Ash Green Residents' Association
- Ash Residents' Association
- Ashford North Residents' Association
- Ashtead Residents Association
- Association of Ewell Downs Residents
- Banstead Village Residents' Association
- Birch Green Residents' Association
- Bisley Residents Association
- Bookham Residents Association
- Byfleet, West Byfleet and Pyrford Residents' Association
- Charlton Village Residents Association
- Chipstead Residents' Association
- Cobham & Downside Residents' Association
- Cobham Conservation and Heritage Trust
- Cuddington Residents Association
- Dippenhall, Runwick and Dora's Green RA
- Dorking Society

- Effingham Residents' Association
- Egham Residents Association
- Egham Residents Association
- Englefield Green Village Residents' Association
- Esher Residents
- Farnham Residents Group
- FEDORA
- Fetcham Residents Association
- Guildford Residents Association
- Hinchley Wood Residents Association
- Hook Heath Residents Association
- Horsell Residents Association
- Johns Road Residents' Association
- Kingswood Residents Association
- Knaphill Residents Association
- Leatherhead Residents' Association
- Long Ditton Residents Association
- Lower Kingswood Residents Association
- Lower Sunbury Residents Association
- Merrow Residents' Association
- Middleton Road Residents Association
- Molesey Residents' Association
- Mytchett, Frimley Green and Deepcut Society
- Nork Residents' Association
- Oxted and Limpsfield Residents Group
- Pixham Residents Association
- South Farnham Residents' Association
- Staines Town Society
- Stoke D'Abernon Residents' Association
- Stoneleigh and Auriol Residents' Association
- Tadworth and Walton Residents' Association
- Tatsfield Village
- Tattenham & Preston Residents Association
- The Godalming Trust
- The Woldingham Association
- Westcott Village Association
- Weybridge Society
- Woodcote (Epsom) Residents Association

### **Neighbouring Highways Authorities and Boroughs and Districts in Surrey**

- Slough Council
- Bracknell Forest Council
- Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
- Kent County Council
- Hampshire County Council

- City of London (London RoW)
- East Sussex County Council
- West Sussex County Council
- Croydon Council
- Sutton Council
- Bromley Council
- Kingston upon Thames Council
- Richmond upon Thames Council
- Hounslow Council
- Hillingdon Council
- South Downs National Park
- Runnymede Borough Council
- Spelthorne Borough Council
- Elmbridge Borough Council
- Woking Borough Council
- Surrey Heath Borough Council
- Guildford Borough Council
- Waverley Borough Council
- Mole Valley District Council
- Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
- Tandridge District Council

## **Walkers**

- Croydon Ramblers
- East Surrey Ramblers
- Farnham and District Ramblers
- Godalming and Haslemere Ramblers Group
- Kingston Ramblers
- Mole Valley Ramblers
- Richmond Ramblers
- Epsom and Ewell Ramblers
- Guildford Ramblers
- Reigate Ramblers
- Staines Ramblers
- Sutton and Wandle Valley Ramblers
- Surrey Heath Ramblers
- Woking Ramblers
- Surrey Young Walkers
- Surrey and Beyond Ramblers (SABRE)
- Ramblers Wellbeing Walks
- Mole Valley Walk for Health
- Waverley Health Walks
- East Surrey Walking for Health
- Elmbridge Health Walks and Cycle Rides
- Epsom and Ewell Health Walks

- Horley Health Walks
- Spelthorne Walking for Health
- Surrey Striders
- Long Distance Walking Association
- Dorking Walkers Club
- Back on Track
- Blaze Paths
- Go on Foot Walking Group
- Gay Outdoor Club
- Downs and Weald Rambling Group
- Surrey Walking Club
- Surrey Sighthound Walking Group
- North Downs Way Ambassadors

## Cycling

- Cycling UK Campaigns officer
- Charlotteville CC
- Redhill Raiders
- Sutton Cycling Club
- Addiscombe Cycling Club
- Bike 50
- Bellavelo CC
- Cranleigh Cycling Club
- Dittons Velo
- Dorking Cycling Club
- Dorking Cycling Club
- girls ALIVE
- Horsham Cycling
- Oxted Cycling Club
- PMCC
- Redhill CC
- Tri Surrey
- Surrey Cycling Club
- Walton Velo
- Woking Cycling Club
- Farnham RC
- Farnborough and Camberley CC
- Mud Club MTB
- Sustrans
- Mountain Bike Working Group
- Mole Valley Cycling Forum
- Active Surrey
- Auto Cycle Union
- Trail Break
- Surrey Hills Bike Rental



- Marmalade MTB
- Muddy Moles

## **4x4 / Motorised Vehicles**

- ALRC
- Trail Riders Fellowship - London & Surrey
- GLASS
- LARA
- Surrey Green Lane Tours
- Off The Kerb Trail Riding
- Surrey 4x4 Tours
- Southern Rover Owners Club

## **Equestrians**

- BHS Head Office
- Regional BHS Access Officer South East Region
- Chair of Surrey Riding Clubs
- British Horse Society
- British Horse Society Epsom & Ewell
- Chobham Commons Riders Association
- Reigate & Banstead
- British Driving Society
- Byways and Bridleways Trust
- Rusper and Newdigate Bridleways Association
- Headley Heath Riders Association
- Brockham Harness Club
- East Park Riding for the Disabled Club
- British Carriage Driving
- British Carriage Driving - Surrey
- British Scurry and Trials Driving
- Surrey Groups Riding for the Disabled
- Cranleigh Riding for the Disabled
- Horsehills Riding for the Disabled
- Gennets Farm Riding for the Disabled
- Stella Hancock Driving Group Riding for the Disabled
- Sandhurst Riding for the Disabled
- Samber Riding for the Disabled
- Quest Group Riding for the Disabled
- Horsley, Bookham and Leatherhead Riding for the Disabled
- Wildwoods Riding Accessibility Mark Centre
- Godstone Riding for the Disabled
- Quarry Farm Riding for the Disabled
- Little Brook Equestrian Riding for the Disabled
- Epsom Riding for the Disabled

- West Surrey Riding Club
- Wokingham and Bearwood Riding Club
- Wey Valley Riding Club
- Abinger Forest Riding Club
- Bookham Riding Club
- Newlands Corner Riding Club
- Chobham and District Riding Club
- Chipstead Riding Club
- Rudgwick and District Riding Club
- Tilford and Rushmoor Riding Club
- Horsham and District Riding Club
- Ewshot Riding Club
- Warlingham and District Horse Club
- Elstead Riding Club

## Other

- Surrey Countryside Partnerships
- Reigate and Redhill Society
- Guildford Orienteers
- Cobham Conservation and Heritage Trust
- Thames Basin Heaths Partnership
- Surrey Hills National Landscape
- Surrey Parks and Countryside Forum
- Chobham Common Preservation Committee
- Surrey Wildlife Trust
- Open Spaces Society
- Thames Basin Heaths Partnership
- Tice's Meadow Aftercare Management Committee
- CPRE
- North Downs Way National Trail
- Community Rural Advisory Group
- Surrey Community Action (SCA)
- Norbury Park Community Forum
- Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum (SMEF)
- Surrey Countryside Access Forum
- Wotton Estate
- Hampton Estate
- Albury Estate
- Byways Working Group
- National Farmers' Union
- CLA
- National Trust
- Forestry England
- Surrey Hills Society