



Shaping the future of our countryside access

eastsussex.gov.uk/haveyoursay



Consultation ends on 29 July

Shaping the future of our countryside access

Give us your views on our future plan for public rights of way and countryside sites

Overview

East Sussex County Council manages 2,000 miles of public rights of way and ten countryside sites across East Sussex. If you like to walk, cycle or ride in the countryside, then it is very likely that you use these paths and sites.

Public rights of way are footpaths, bridleways and byways. If you are not sure if you use a public right of way, there is more information on our website eastsussex.gov.uk/rightsofway.

We are actively involved with ten countryside sites across the county:

- Camber Sand Dunes/Johnson's Field
- Ditchling Common Country Park
- Forest Way Country Park
- Ouse Estuary Nature Reserve
- Riverside Park
- Seven Sisters Country Park
- Cuckoo Trail
- Shinewater Park
- Chailey Common Local Nature Reserve
- Weir Wood Local Nature Reserve

What have we done?

We have been looking at how we can manage public rights of way and the countryside sites in the future. In order to do this, we have examined why they are needed and how they are used; in particular by researching the health benefits of activity, assessing the impact of countryside access on our economy, and liaising with landowners, partners and user groups.

This information gives us a better understanding of public rights of way and the countryside sites, and how we can structure our services to make the best use of our resources in the future.

We have set out all our findings in our draft plan, which is called the '**Countryside Access Strategy**'. East Sussex County Councillors have approved the draft and we would now like to know what you think of our proposals by taking part in our survey.

You can read the full Countryside Access Strategy on our website at www.eastsussex.gov.uk/shapingthefuture.

Who can take part?

The survey is open to everyone, from individuals and user groups to landowners and partners and should take around 15 minutes to complete. You have until **29 July** to give us your views. If you can complete it electronically please visit eastsussex.gov.uk/haveyoursay.

If you would like a hardcopy of the strategy, please contact the Highways Contact Centre on 0345 60 80 193 or email scs@eastsussex.gov.uk. We can also provide that and the survey in a different format such as large print, braille or a different language.

What happens next?

We will combine your responses with other feedback and information to finalise the strategy for approval by East Sussex County Councillors in autumn 2016. Work will begin once this has happened.

**Please hand in your completed survey to your local library
or post to: Countryside Access Strategy, West B, County Hall,
St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, BN7 1UE**

Why we need public rights of way and countryside sites

We have already undertaken research in a number of areas to understand the need for public rights of way and countryside sites. These areas included: how and why people use them, health and wellbeing benefits, economic impact, conservation and how other parties are involved.

From this research we have set out three needs:

1) Health and Wellbeing

Regular activity and interaction with nature to maintain a healthy lifestyle and promote physical and mental health, either through group or individual activity.

2) Conservation

Land managed to sustain and enhance wildlife and biodiversity in East Sussex.

3) Sustainable economy

Information on the public rights of way and countryside sites to enable local businesses to plan and complete the East Sussex visitor offer.

Q1

How strongly do you agree that these needs correctly reflect what people need from public rights of way and countryside sites? PLEASE  ONE BOX FOR EACH ROW

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Health and Wellbeing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conservation	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sustainable economy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

An opportunity to make comments or suggestions is available at the end of the survey

Our vision for the service

In creating our plan we are determining what we want our public rights of way and countryside site service to look like. In developing our service we aspire to continue to provide a network of public rights of way and countryside sites that are safe and welcoming to residents, visitors and wildlife. It will meet the three needs of health and wellbeing, conservation and sustainable economy within the resources we have. The purpose of the strategy is to ensure we continue to achieve best value in all our work and maximise our impact.

By setting this out in a clear and simple form, we can define what we will be working towards. This is ‘Our Vision Statement’:

“To ensure that our public rights of way and countryside sites are accessible, maintained, enhanced and promoted; meeting and delivering the needs of our residents and visitors in the most efficient, affordable and effective manner.”

Q2

How strongly do you agree that this vision reflects how public rights of way and countryside sites should be managed in the future? PLEASE ☒ ONE BOX ONLY

☐ Strongly agree

☐ Agree

☐ Neither agree nor disagree

☐ Disagree

☐ Strongly disagree

☐ Don't know

An opportunity to make comments or suggestions is available at the end of the survey

The strategic outcomes prioritising our future spend

In writing the plan we have set out four strategic outcomes which will be used to prioritise our work. These four strategic outcomes will underpin our plans to realise Our Vision and to meet those three core needs of 'Health & Wellbeing', 'Conservation'; and 'Sustainable Economy'.

The four strategic outcomes are:

- 1) **Safety.** Enable residents and visitors to safely use our public rights of way and countryside sites.
- 2) **Rights.** Enable and support landowners, stakeholders and residents to exercise their rights and fulfil their responsibilities.
- 3) **Optimum.** Achieve the optimal management of our public rights of way and countryside sites for the benefit of residents, visitors and wildlife.
- 4) **Community.** Enhance local communities through engagement with our public rights of way and countryside sites.

These four outcomes are directly based on our understanding of need, so they ensure that we continue to put what people need at the heart of our plans. This can be used to structure our services and ensure that we make the best use of our limited resources.

Q3

How strongly do you agree that these priorities represent how we should manage public rights of way and countryside sites? PLEASE ☒ ONE BOX FOR EACH ROW

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Safety	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Rights	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Optimum	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Community	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

An opportunity to make comments or suggestions is available at the end of the survey

How we will meet the four strategic outcomes (see previous page for details)

In the plan we set out some broad information for how we intend to manage public rights of way and countryside sites in the future. Once the plan is finalised the Rights of Way and Countryside Team will implement it. In some areas we have proposed little or no change. In others we propose that there will be a very different way of working in the future. Exactly how the changes are made will be developed by the Team and using the findings of the research and the strategic outcomes set out in the plan. This will ensure that the needs for public rights of way and countryside sites remain at the centre of our future service provision. All the research is summarised in the plan in three sections: ‘Understanding Need’, ‘Understanding Supply’ and ‘Technical Appendices’.

The plan proposes that:

- Public rights of way will be managed in-house; this covers areas such as maintenance and legal record keeping. Our research found that we apply an efficient asset management program which effectively balances reactive and proactive maintenance. The information gathered also found that we operate at a competitive cost when measured against external providers. By managing the service in-house, we maintain a high level of flexibility in planning how we meet the strategic outcomes.
- In a small number of areas (in public rights of way) we identified changes that may benefit how the Council is able to meet need and make best use of its resources. These include how we structure our work with Public Health, how we communicate and work with our colleagues developing new paths and the delivery of our volunteer offer.
- We believe that, by changing how the countryside sites are managed, we may be able to improve how effectively we are able to meet need and utilise our assets appropriately. By working with partners experienced in community engagement, conservation and visitor experience we hope to improve what the sites have to offer across all three areas of health and wellbeing, conservation and sustainable economy. If we are able to enhance their financial management they will also have long term protection from the continued financial difficulties all organisations are experiencing.

Q4

How strongly do you agree that these methods will benefit how we manage public rights of way and countryside sites? PLEASE  ONE BOX FOR EACH ROW

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Public rights of way management in-house	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Countryside site management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

An opportunity to make comments or suggestions is available at the end of the survey

Any other comments

As well as your answers to our questions we would like to hear any other comments you have about our plan for managing public rights of way and countryside sites. If you would like to make any comments please make them here.

Q5 Do you have any other comments you would like to make about our plan for public rights of way and countryside sites?

Q6 Please leave your email or address if you would like to be updated about the project

Email address

Postal address

Your involvement with public rights of way and countryside sites

From December 2014 to March 2016 we ran an engagement process to understand how and why people use public rights of way and countryside sites, as well as how different groups, organisations and individuals are involved. We advertised two surveys and held five meetings.

Q7 Did you respond to the previous engagement phase? PLEASE ✓ ONE BOX FOR EACH ROW

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Individual survey	☐	☐	☐
Stakeholder survey	☐	☐	☐
Stakeholder meeting	☐	☐	☐

Q8 Which of the following do you use, or are you actively involved with? PLEASE ✓ ALL BOXES THAT APPLY

☐ Chailey Common Local Nature Reserve	☐ Weir Wood Local Nature Reserve
☐ Ditchling Common Country Park	☐ Public rights of way: Walking
☐ Ouse Estuary Nature Reserve	☐ Public rights of way: Horse-riding
☐ Shinewater Park	☐ Public rights of way: Bicycling
☐ Riverside Park	☐ Public rights of way: Carriage-driving
☐ Seven Sisters Country Park	☐ Public rights of way: Motorcycling
☐ Forest Way Country Park	☐ Public rights of way: Off-road driving (4x4)
☐ Cuckoo Trail	☐ Other*
☐ Camber Sand Dunes/Johnson's Field	☐ None

*If other please explain.

Q9 If you are responding to this consultation on behalf of an organisation or group. In our strategy we explain we would like to identify the right partners to manage the sites in the future, improving how they meet the needs of health and wellbeing, conservation and sustainable economy. These could be charities we work with at the sites already, organisations or community groups. They will need to prioritise community involvement, conservation and visitor engagement, as well as have the skills and ability to put in place site management arrangements. **Please tell us if your organisation or group is interested**

☐ Yes we are interested in taking on countryside site(s)

☐ No we are not interested in taking on countryside site(s)

Q10

Please tell us if you are completing this survey regarding your own use or replying on behalf of an organisation, group or business. PLEASE ☒ ONE BOX ONLY

☐ Individual (resident) - go to question 14, page 8

☐ Individual (visitor) - go to question 14, page 8

☐ Other (such as landowner, user group, charity or partner) - go to question 11

Q11

Please provide the details about your group or organisation.

Organisation name

Your name

Your position in the organisation

Q12

Please tell us how you would describe your sector PLEASE ☒ ONE BOX ONLY

☐ Public sector

☐ Private sector

☐ Association or Society

☐ Voluntary organisation or group

☐ Other*

*If Other, please explain

Q13

Please tell us which of these best describes how your organisation or group is involved with public rights of way and countryside sites PLEASE ☒ ONE BOX FOR EACH ROW

	No involvement	Occasional involvement (1-5 times in the past six months)	Regular involvement (more than 5 times in the past six months)	Don't know
Monitoring and management	☐	☐	☐	☐
Education	☐	☐	☐	☐
Economic or business use (for example, farming, bike shops or ice creams vans)	☐	☐	☐	☐
Health and Exercise	☐	☐	☐	☐
Volunteering/community involvement	☐	☐	☐	☐
Enjoyment of the countryside	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conservation	☐	☐	☐	☐
Other*	☐	☐	☐	☐
*If other, please explain				

About You

It may not seem relevant but this information is useful. We want to make sure that everyone is treated fairly and equally and that no one gets left out. That's why we need to we ask you these questions.

We won't share the information you give us with anyone else. We will only use it to help us make decisions and make our services better. If you would rather not answer any of these questions, you don't have to although it would help us if you do.

Q14 How did you hear about the consultation? PLEASE ✓ ALL BOXES THAT APPLY

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ In a newspaper | ☐ A district or borough council website |
| ☐ On the radio | ☐ Other website |
| ☐ Via Social Media (e.g. Facebook, Twitter etc) | ☐ Another person |
| ☐ Your County magazine | ☐ A poster |
| ☐ An invitation or personal letter/email | ☐ A leaflet |
| ☐ The County Council website/Have Your Say hub | ☐ User group |
| | ☐ Other (please explain) |

If Other, please explain

Q15 Are you...? PLEASE ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|
| ☐ Male | ☐ Female | ☐ Prefer not to say |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|

Q16 Do you identify as a transgender or trans person? PLEASE ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| ☐ Yes | ☐ No | ☐ Prefer not to say |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|

Q17 What is your age? PLEASE ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| ☐ Under 18 | ☐ 35-44 | ☐ 60-64 | ☐ Prefer not to say |
| ☐ 18-24 | ☐ 45-54 | ☐ 65-74 | |
| ☐ 25-34 | ☐ 55-59 | ☐ 75+ | |

Q18 What is your full postcode?

Q19

To which of these ethnic groups do you feel you belong? (source: 2011 census)

PLEASE ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

☐ White British

☐ White Irish

☐ White Gypsy/Roma

☐ White Irish Traveller

☐ White other (please expand)

☐ Mixed White and Black Caribbean

☐ Mixed White and Black African

☐ Mixed White and Asian

☐ Mixed other (please expand)

☐ Asian or Asian British Indian

☐ Asian or Asian British Pakistani

☐ Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi

☐ Asian or Asian British (please expand)

☐ Black or Black British Caribbean

☐ Black or Black British African

☐ Black or Black British (please expand)

☐ Arab

☐ Chinese

☐ Other ethnic group (please expand)

☐ Prefer not to say

If Other, please expand

The Equality Act 2010 describes a person as disabled if they have a longstanding physical or mental condition that has lasted or is likely to last at least 12 months; and this condition has a substantial adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. People with some conditions (cancer, multiple sclerosis and HIV/AIDS, for example) are considered to be disabled from the point that they are diagnosed.

Q20

Do you consider yourself to be disabled? PLEASE ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to say

Q21

If yes to question 20 please tell us about the type of impairment that applies to you.

PLEASE ✓ ALL BOXES THAT APPLY

☐ Physical impairment

☐ Sensory impairment (hearing or sight)

☐ Long standing illness or health condition, such as cancer, HIV, heart disease, diabetes or epilepsy

☐ Mental health condition

☐ Learning disability

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Other* (please expand)

*If Other, please expand

Q22

Do you regard yourself as belonging to any particular religion or belief? PLEASE ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to say

Q23 If yes to question 22 which one? PLEASE ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

☐ Christian

☐ Muslim

☐ Jewish

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Hindu

☐ Buddhist

☐ Sikh

☐ Other*

*If Other, please explain

Q24 Are you...? PLEASE ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

☐ Bi/Bisexual

☐ Gay woman/Lesbian

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Heterosexual/Straight

☐ Gay man

☐ Other*

*If Other, please explain

Q25 Are you currently pregnant or have you been pregnant in the last year? PLEASE ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to say

Q26 Are you a parent or guardian of a child or young person under the age 19? PLEASE ✓ ALL BOXES THAT APPLY

☐ Yes - 0-3 years old

☐ Yes - 8-11 years old

☐ Yes - 15-18 years old

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Yes - 4-7 years old

☐ Yes - 12-14 years old

☐ No

Q27 Are you married or in a civil partnership? PLEASE ✓ ONE BOX ONLY

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Prefer not to say

This is the end of the survey, thank you very much for your time. You have until 29 July to give your views. We will look at what you have said and use them to inform how we finalise our plan to meet the long term need of residents in East Sussex. We will do this over the summer and it will be passed to councillors for approval later this year.