

Statement of Common Ground

Between: Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) and Kent County Council Public Rights of Way (KCC PRoW).

Relating to: Public Rights of Way (PRoW) infrastructure to support the Sevenoaks District Local Plan and supporting Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

1. Purpose of this Statement

- 1.1 This Statement of Common Ground records the shared understanding between Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) and Kent County Council Public Rights of Way (KCC PRoW) regarding the role of public rights of way infrastructure in supporting the level and distribution of growth proposed in the Sevenoaks District Local Plan. It provides evidence of ongoing engagement and collaboration and supports the Infrastructure Delivery Plan by confirming areas of agreement and identifying any matters where further work may be required.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 SDC is responsible for preparing the Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan, identifying infrastructure needs arising from growth, and securing delivery through planning policy and developer contributions.
- 2.2 KCC PRoW is the service within KCC responsible for protecting and maintaining the public rights of way network across Kent. It is a statutory consultee in the planning system, with responsibilities including the management and protection of a network of public footpaths, bridleways and byways. KCC PRoW plays a key role in ensuring these routes are safe, accessible and well maintained, and in securing enhancements where appropriate in the context of plan-making and infrastructure delivery.

3. Evidence Considered

- 3.1 Both parties have considered the following evidence in forming this Statement:
- The scale and distribution of growth set out in the Sevenoaks District Local Plan;
 - The Infrastructure Delivery Plan 2026;
 - Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan (2018-2028);
 - Sevenoaks Urban Area Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2023);
 - Swanley Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2024);
 - Edenbridge Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2026);
 - Kent Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (2024);
 - National and local policy and guidance, including the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG); and

- Information on the existing Public Rights of Way network and opportunities for enhancement across the District.

4. Areas of Agreement

4.1 SDC and KCC PRoW agree that:

1. Proportionate engagement has taken place between SDC and KCC PRoW in the preparation of the Sevenoaks District Local Plan, including consideration of the implications of planned growth for the Public Rights of Way network.
2. Both parties recognise the importance of the public rights of way network as part of the District's wider walking, wheeling and cycling network, supporting sustainable transport, recreation and health and wellbeing.
3. The preparation of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan has been informed by relevant evidence and strategic guidance, including the Kent Rights of Way Improvement Plan and local walking and cycling strategies.
4. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies opportunities to enhance the public rights of way network, which are considered deliverable in principle, subject to further development and refinement, including the availability of funding.
5. Development proposals should seek to retain and, where possible, enhance the public rights of way network, ensuring routes are integrated into site layouts and contribute positively to place-making and connectivity.
6. Development should have regard to the Kent Rights of Way Improvement Plan and support the delivery of its objectives where appropriate.
7. Developer contributions may be required, where necessary, to mitigate the impacts of development on the public rights of way network and to support improvements to capacity, quality and connectivity.
8. Both authorities are committed to ongoing engagement throughout the plan period, including regular review and updating of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan to ensure it remains accurate, up to date and reflective of emerging evidence.
9. SDC and KCC PRoW will continue to work collaboratively on planning applications to secure appropriate developer contributions and support the delivery of public rights of way enhancements and improvements.

5. Areas of Ongoing Work / Matters Not Yet Agreed

5.1 The following matters require further work or clarification:

1. The identification of site-specific requirements for the protection, enhancement and integration of the public rights of way network as development proposals come forward.
2. Ongoing refinement of opportunities identified within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, including those relating to the public rights of way network, as further design, funding and delivery mechanisms are developed.

5.2 Both parties are committed to resolving these matters through continued engagement.

6. Delivery and Phasing

6.1 SDC and KCC PRoW acknowledge that the delivery of improvements to the public rights of way network will depend on:

- The timing and phasing of development;
- The identification of site-specific requirements as development proposals come forward;
- The availability of funding, including developer contributions where applicable; and
- Coordination with relevant stakeholders, including developers, the local planning authority and the highway authority.

6.2 Opportunities to enhance the public rights of way network are identified within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and will continue to be refined as proposals are developed, funding becomes available and delivery mechanisms are progressed.

7. Signatures

Signed on behalf of Sevenoaks District Council	
Name:	
Role:	
Date:	

Signed on behalf of Kent County Council Public Rights of Way	
Name:	
Role:	
Date:	

DRAFT