

Rights of Way Team

Outline of Service Areas

Background

The Vale is a diverse county, including a lengthy shoreline, good agricultural land and urban centres. There are approximately 573 kilometres (km) of public rights of way (PROW) in the Vale of Glamorgan. The network includes:

- 511 km of footpaths
- 40 km of bridleways
- 22 km of restricted byways

The work of the Rights of Way Team is guided by the Rights of Way Improvement Plan. This is currently in the process of being republished.

Maintenance

The Council undertake work to ensure the surfaces of public rights of way are kept in repair to a standard suitable for ordinary use. This most often includes cutting overgrowth where paths become overgrown or repairing the surface of paths where required. Each year a number of paths that are known to be problematic are targeted proactively for cutting at the beginning and end of the summer.

The Council also undertake work to replace dilapidated structures on behalf of landowners. This helps ensure stiles, gates etc remain in a fit state for use.

Additional practical works such as waymarking, installation of signage or management of condition surveys are also carried out by the team.

Enforcement

The Council are required to assert and protect the rights of the public to use paths. As such a number of enforcement duties exist to remove obstructions, hazards or to take action where certain types of unlawful activity occur. Responding to an enforcement issue involves investigation of the problem, determining parties involved, establishing contact and developing an appropriate response (typically negotiation, informal warning, service of notice or prosecution)

Definitive Map and Statement

The existence and location of Public Rights of Way are legally recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement. The Council maintain these documents continuously by processing orders where legal events giving rise to changes occur or by investigating cases where it is claimed routes should be shown or not shown. The Council republished its definitive map in 2016.

Definitive map work can involve, amongst other things, administration, quality assurance of data, historic research, collection and analysis of evidence, presentation of cases, referral and representation at public inquiry.

Legal Orders

Legal orders may be made to alter the public rights of way network due to necessity or a particular interest (e.g. due to development, public or private interest). The Council are able to process such applications in order to give effect to the application or otherwise test it against the necessary legal criteria.

Legal orders can involve administration, negotiation, analysis of applications, referral and representation at public inquiry.

Improvement

A significant amount of funding of Public Rights of Way work is provided through grant assistance. The Public Rights of Way Team is therefore involved in generating and delivering access improvement projects as well as administering associated grant funding.

Information

The Public Rights of Way Team work with and support numerous stakeholder groups including user groups, partner organisations and community footpath forums. Promotion of the network through attendance at events or publication of leaflets is also undertaken by the team.

Performance indicator and network management information is also collected and analysed by the team.