

Asked	Answered	From	To	Question	Answer
29/08/2023	01/09/2023	Paul Gadd	Cllr Lee Scott	<p>As you will be aware, the Government has introduced extremely regrettable legislation to abolish the public's right to use unregistered footpaths.</p> <p>This has led to a huge effort by a number of bodies, including the Ramblers Association, to map and register as many unregistered paths as possible, and I understand that Essex County Council - and presumably all county councils - are facing a huge increase in applications to register unregistered paths. I've recently been told that ECC legal department have an estimated 4 year backlog of applications.</p> <p>I'm conscious of the funding pressure that ECC is under, but would ask please whether more funding can be found by ECC to support this vital work, or whether ECC can canvass central Government to reverse this proposal, or both. It's obviously not</p>	<p>Thank you for your written question about unregistered footpaths.</p> <p>The government did indeed introduce a cut off date of 2026 for the public to lodge claims pursuant to Section 31 Wildlife and Countryside Act for adding Public Rights of Way to the Definitive Map, which were not already recorded. We have been made aware that Defra has recently announced that there will be an extension to 1/1/2031.</p> <p>These public rights of way are those which exist through unhindered use by the public for a period of more than 20 years, or those of an historic nature which can be proven on an evidential basis.</p> <p>Whilst the cut-off for such claims is set at 2031, it is important to clarify that this is the date by which the claims had to be lodged with the Surveying Authority, not the date by which they have to be determined. Providing they have been received by the cut- off, the Surveying Authority will continue to assess all applications that were</p>

				<p>in the interests of Essex residents to lose any rights of way.</p>	<p>correctly lodged until they have been processed, regardless of how long that timeframe is.</p> <p>In Essex, the Public Rights of Way review process has been ongoing for a significant period of time, long before the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 brought the 2026 cut- off date into force. As such, many Public Rights of Way have already been added to the Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way in Essex.</p> <p>I take note of your comment for more funding to support this work, and whilst I am not in a position to propose additional funding at this stage, I do appreciate your concern and interest in this work.</p>
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