

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****CABINET****DATE: 22 NOVEMBER 2016****REPORT OF: MR MIKE GOODMAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING****LEAD OFFICER: TREVOR PUGH, STRATEGIC DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE****SUBJECT: SMARTER WORKING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT – POLICY AND ACTION PLAN****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

In December 2015 a motion was carried by the Council to support action in reducing the Council's emissions and building resilience to a changing climate. In February 2016, the Council signed up to the LGA's Climate Local Initiative, including a commitment to produce an action plan outlining our approach.

An environment policy statement and action plan have been developed to set out the council's approach to environmental sustainability, including responding to climate change. The activities of the County Council have many interfaces with the environment, ranging from risks posed by the environment, to the potential for enhancing the local environment and managing environmental impacts and resource consumption. These issues are both direct, such as service provision and estate management and indirect through the Council's influence over the £37.5 billion of economic activity in Surrey and the council's role in the lives of 1.15 million residents.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Cabinet is recommended:

- to approve the proposed 'Smarter Working for the Environment' Policy Statement (Annex 1) and the associated Action Plan (Annex 2).
- to delegate authority to the Strategic Director for Environment and Infrastructure, in consultation with Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning, to authorise minor future revisions to the policy and action plan.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Implementing the policy and associated action plan will:
  - Provide a basis for engagement with our suppliers when seeking their support for our objectives and maximising value from our contracts
  - Increase value for money by being joined up in our decision making
  - Provide support to external funding bids by publishing the council's overall commitment to environmental sustainability

- Support a 'one team' approach for improved outcomes in relation to corporate priorities for the economy and resident wellbeing.
- Delegating authority for minor revisions, to the Strategic Director for Environment and Infrastructure, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning, will allow the Council's approach and commitments to be kept up to date; incorporating continuous improvement internally, reflecting changes in the national policy context and if necessary, to prioritise activities in response to resource constraints.

#### **DETAILS:**

1. The Council faces the continuous challenge of rising demand for its services whilst financial resources are decreasing. It is important to recognise that part of this increased demand, now and in the future, is the challenge of a changing climate and the risks this brings to our residents, our businesses and infrastructure. The severe weather and floods of 2013-14 affected over 2,000 properties, caused significant damage to council infrastructure and had wider health and well-being impacts for those affected. The events cost the County Council an additional £27.1m in response and recovery (revenue and capital) of which only £11.7m was offset by central government support.
2. An Environment Policy Statement is increasingly common amongst large organisations and is in place in neighbouring authorities including Kent CC, East Sussex CC and West Sussex CC as a statement of commitments and priorities.
3. The policy and action plan bring together the Council's response to managing environmental risks, impacts and opportunities, which has been developed through a process as set out below:
  - i. benchmarking of 'Climate Local' action plans, environment sustainability strategies and Carbon Management Plans of other local authorities<sup>1</sup>.
  - ii. internal consultation with relevant services to ascertain current baseline of activity and areas of opportunity for Surrey
  - iii. external consultation with partners via service partnership groups
  - iv. development of themes and specific commitments to action.
4. As a result of this process, the scope of activity was defined, options were considered and shortlisted for an action plan and the resource implications were assessed, in the context of ongoing financial constraints.

#### **Environment Policy Statement**

5. The Policy sets out the context in which we will work with our stakeholders (in particular residents, businesses, suppliers and staff) to manage our environmental responsibilities and demonstrate leadership.

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<sup>1</sup> Over 120 local authorities have Climate Local Action Plans and many of these are set with wide ranging environment and or sustainability strategies led by multi agency steering boards.

6. The challenge is to go beyond legal and regulatory minimum requirements and provide additional voluntary and collaborative action at a local level, ensuring Surrey is, and remains, a clean, green and resilient place. This, however, needs to take account of increased demand for services and cost of delivery which is compounded by funding reductions. Therefore, any such action will be required to deliver a positive business case to the Council and/or for the costs and benefits to our stakeholders to be aligned through developing appropriate partnerships.
7. The Council's vision is to be 'one place, one budget, one team for Surrey' and by applying this in the context of environmental impacts we will ensure our activities are mutually reinforcing, provide value for money and be more enduring, in turn meeting the Council's strategic goals. Without a coherent approach across the Council with respect to environmental sustainability, progress in one area is at risk of being undermined by unsustainable activity in another.
8. In light of the above, our approach is:

**Services, business processes and suppliers will take account of their environmental risks and positive and negative impacts, in particular and where relevant:**

- Resilience to risks posed by a changing climate
- Sustainable travel
- Waste minimisation and recycling
- Efficient and low carbon energy
- Biodiversity and landscape quality in Surrey
- Prevention of hazardous pollution of air, water and soil

**Our environmental services and initiatives will take account of the council's strategic goals, which are:**

- Wellbeing - Everyone in Surrey has a great start to life and can live and age well
- Economic Prosperity - Surrey's economy remains strong and sustainable
- Resident Experience - Residents in Surrey experience public services that are easy to use, responsive and value for money

9. The Policy sets out the headline indicators to assess progress, which are designed not to duplicate the many existing service-level indicators and targets.
10. The Council delivers an extensive range of environmental services for which a range of strategies are already in place (Local Transport Plan, Surrey Waste Plan, Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy, Carbon and Energy Policy, Sustainable Procurement framework, Countryside strategies, Flood Risk Management Strategy etc.). Many of these are linked to statutory duties as indicated in Appendix II of the policy.

### **Environment Action Plan**

11. To build on our existing work programme the Council's priority commitments for action focus on increasing our resilience to climate change and managing environmental impacts over which we have greatest influence. The Action Plan is attached as Annex 2 and actions are grouped in five themes:

- (1) Embedding environmental considerations (managing risks and impacts) in decision making across council services
  - (2) Resource efficient buildings and operations
  - (3) Suppliers environmental impacts and risks
  - (4) Air quality and lower carbon transport
  - (5) Resilience of communities and our estate to future climate conditions
12. The Action Plan sets out how we will work to manage risks and negative environmental impacts and increase the wider benefits of activities in these areas, focusing on:
- protection and enhancement of the local environment in Surrey
  - improved value for money and business continuity of council services
  - a more resilient and prosperous local economy
  - improved wellbeing of residents, in particular reducing health inequalities
13. It is not expected that each individual action will deliver every benefit but it is the intention that as a package of measures the Council will contribute to achievement of all of these benefits.

#### **Monitoring and reporting progress**

14. Monitoring in relation to the key indicators for the Council's environmental sustainability will occur annually and the results will be published in the council's Annual Report, published each summer.
15. Progress in relation to the activities set out in the Action Plan will be reported to and considered by the Economic Prosperity, Environment and Highways Board.

#### **CONSULTATION:**

16. Wider consultation has included related partnerships, including Surrey Community Resilience Partnership, Surrey Energy and Sustainability Partnership and Surrey Nature Partnership and ongoing partnership working including these groups is a key element of many of the commitments in the Action Plan.
17. The Council's Economic Prosperity, Environment and Highways Board scrutinised the proposed policy and action plan on 19 October 2016. The Board commended the proposed policy and action plan to the Cabinet. Discussion highlighted the committee's concern about air quality and its associated health impacts, particularly in the north of the county/London border areas.

#### **RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:**

18. Risk management is inherent to the policy's objectives in terms of risks to, and posed by, the environment.

The primary risks to the successful implementation of the policy itself are:

- a) Further budget constraints in the future, affecting the council's ability to resource activities, even where these may have a positive long term business case.

- b) Lack of buy in across services due to competing pressures for officer time and attention.
19. These risks will be managed by:
- a) A robust approach to cost benefit assessment to ensure informed decision making and prioritisation.
  - b) The mandate from Cabinet in approving this policy and effective communication of expectations of services to support the policy and action plan.

### **Financial and Value for Money Implications**

19. The action plan sets out 'smarter working' actions, such as further partnership working, strengthening processes to support the council to think ahead to better anticipate potential opportunities and consequences. These are deliverable within existing resources.
20. Some actions involve investigating options which are likely to require investment in the future. In such cases, any additional funding commitment would be subject to a business case appraisal.
21. The financial implications of the intended outcomes are positive, in particular:
- a) reducing/managing direct costs through resource efficiency in estate management e.g. efficient water consumption (Action Plan 2.1) and parking management (Action Plan 2.3)
  - b) reducing/managing direct costs through cross-sector service delivery e.g. Seasonal Health strategy (Action Plan 5.1) will seek to better identify the most at risk vulnerable people to alert them to home insulation grant funding and thus reduce social care service costs of ill health, compared to business as usual.
  - c) improving the council's position for grant funding income by having an Environment policy to refer to in bids, which is often a standard expectation of funders.

### **Section 151 Officer Commentary**

20. The anticipated costs of implementing the Action Plan will be delivered from within existing resources or where necessary will be subject to the appropriate reporting/approval process.

### **Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer**

21. The Council has a range of legal obligations aimed at mitigating the impacts of climate change and this policy aims to underpin this. Examples of these obligations include participation in the 'Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) Energy Efficiency Scheme' pursuant to the Climate Change Act 2008, and through its role as the lead local flood authority, coordinating flood risk management for the area in accordance with the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. Appendix II of the Policy statement (Annex 1) more

extensively outlines the context of the council's statutory obligations with respect to many aspects of environmental management.

### **Equalities and Diversity**

<b>Information and engagement underpinning equalities analysis</b>	The policy and associated action plan do not set out proposals at a level at which an equalities analysis can be effectively conducted.
<b>Key impacts (positive and/or negative) on people with protected characteristics</b>	The policy statement itself does not have any negative/positive impacts on groups with protected characteristics. Commitments in the action plan will be considered separately and where required, an EIA will be conducted to assess impacts on any groups with protected characteristics.
<b>Changes you have made to the proposal as a result of the EIA</b>	None required.
<b>Key mitigating actions planned to address any outstanding negative impacts</b>	None required.
<b>Potential negative impacts that cannot be mitigated</b>	None.

### **Public Health Implications**

22. The policy will positively contribute to supporting the health and wellbeing of residents. For example, health benefits from reduced transport-related air pollution and reassurance and/or actual health benefits from supporting vulnerable people and communities in situations such as heatwaves and flooding.

### **Climate Change/Carbon Emission Implications**

23. The policy has been developed directly to support the resilience to a changing climate and reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

24. The policy and action plan will be published on the council's website.
25. The detailed steps envisaged for the delivery of each action will be developed and delivered accordingly.
26. Future Cabinet reports will include assessment of environmental impacts and risks, which Cabinet will be asked to consider in their decision-making.

27. Monitoring in relation to the key indicators for the council's environmental sustainability will occur annually and the results will be published in the council's Annual Report, published each summer.
28. Progress in relation to the activities set out in the Action Plan will be reported to and considered by the Economic Prosperity, Environment and Highways Board.

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**Consulted:**

Economic Prosperity, Environment and Highways Board  
Boroughs and Districts via Surrey Energy and Sustainability Partnership

**Annexes:**

Annex 1 Smarter Working for the Environment: Policy Statement  
Annex 2 Smarter Working for the Environment: Action Plan

**Sources/background papers:**

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