

Our Surrey

Report on engagement feedback
on the draft Vision for Surrey to
2030 - DRAFT September 2018

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Executive Summary

- a. Over the summer of 2018, Surrey County Council carried out the most systematic and extensive engagement exercise of residents and partners it has ever done to get their views on a new Vision for Surrey to 2030. This included reaching out to a wide range of people and communities to make sure their views were represented, such as those who were homeless and people who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). In total, 3,125 people provided views. 2,192 people shared their views via an online survey, over 200 completed a paper survey in their local library or via an easy read survey, 500 more shared their views across 40 events and meetings and 203 people gave video or audio interviews at over 30 events or High Streets across the county.
- b. People said Surrey was a beautiful place, with multiple advantages offered by its location, such as access to London, countryside, coast and major transport infrastructure, including Gatwick and Heathrow airports. They valued the mix of urban and rural life, in particular green spaces and the countryside, and the peace and tranquillity that life in the county offers.
- c. Some valued the relative safety of living in Surrey with relatively low levels of crime. They valued access to good quality public services, such as the high-performing schools and hospitals, and loved the strong sense of community spirit fostered by caring, supportive and friendly people who lived there. They also appreciated the strength of Surrey's economy, with low unemployment and thriving independent local businesses.
- d. Like other places, Surrey has its share of issues, and there were a number of concerns people raised that affected quality of life in the county. They said the county's physical, social and natural infrastructure was struggling to cope with the needs of a rapidly growing population. They worried about their ability to travel round the county, with high levels of traffic congestion and concerns about the condition of the local road network, leading to increased pollution and long journey times. They said public transport was too expensive and unreliable, and there was a lack of infrastructure to support alternative and more environmentally friendly means of transport, such as cycle and bus lanes.
- e. Housing was a key issue, but in different ways and with a clear division among stakeholders on the way forward. Some stakeholders, including young people and people on lower incomes, complained that housing in Surrey was unaffordable, and there was not enough alternative provision, such as social housing, that they could afford. Others were anxious about the level of development in Surrey, with worries about the implications for the county's green spaces and additional pressures on infrastructure that comes with more homes.
- f. Some stakeholders talked about the levels of inequality in Surrey, and the growing gap in the experiences of richer and poorer residents. Issues such as food bank use,

homelessness and lack of support for some of the county's more vulnerable residents, such as older and disabled people, were a worry.

- g. Pressures and funding issues for public services were mentioned including demands on NHS and social care services; funding and places in the county's schools; improvements in services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND); a need to see rapid improvement in social care services for children and young people; more work and leisure opportunities for young people; access to waste and recycling facilities and library services; and funding for emergency services and adult education.
- h. Some were concerned that issues such as restricted operating hours for streetlights and lack of a visible police presence were leading to certain types of crime increasing, such as burglary and anti-social behaviour.
- i. Environmental issues were also raised such as the impact of fracking; the erosion of natural habitats and increased emissions from new development; and the efficiency and effectiveness of the waste disposal and collection system in Surrey.
- j. Residents also mentioned the high levels of council tax, questioned why the County Council still needed to make savings in spite of annual increases, and why more was spent in some parts of the county than others. They wanted the Council to prioritise spending on the most essential services,

and greater transparency on what their council tax was paying for. They also wanted public services to be better at listening to the views of residents, and to be clear about plans for how the vision would be delivered.

- k. Stakeholders shared their hopes on what Surrey would be like by 2030. They hope that Surrey will remain a county that retains its green spaces and protects these now and for future generations. There is a lack of consensus on the future of housing in the county - some hope for a county that has more affordable homes for people to live in, others want development to be tightly managed and restricted to protect Surrey's natural environment and avoid infrastructure becoming overwhelmed.
- l. There is also less consensus on the future of travel and transport in the county. Some want more transport infrastructure, such as parking spaces and roads, to make it easier to get around the county by car. Others argue the county should focus policy on discouraging people from using cars, and provide alternative transport solutions, such as public transport and bicycles.
- m. Some people want a county where people look after each other, and where everyone has the same chances to access opportunities and services. They want more help to invest in local support networks so people have greater capacity to help each other.
- n. People want a county with public services that have the resources to serve the people that need them. They want to

be able to access health and care when they needed it, a continued drive to improve standards in education and children’s social care, and to use community facilities that are accessible to all, such as recycling centres and libraries.

- o. Some want the county to be safer than it is now, and stronger relationships between the police and the community. They also want to see a county where council tax levels were lower than they are now, more evidence on how their money is being spent, and a place where public service organisations are good at listening to and working closely with residents to provide services they needed. Partner organisations across public, private and voluntary sectors also want to make sure that there is a culture of honesty, respect and appetite for collaboration in the approaches to working with each other and with residents.
- p. The issues raised in this report are complex and, in some cases, consensus will need to be built to agree how to tackle some of them. The ideas and views from stakeholders will help shape a new Vision for Surrey that is shared by everyone that lives and works in the county. To achieve the aspirations set in the vision, working in partnership across organisations from the public, private and voluntary, community and faith (VCF) sectors will be central to this. Partners sharing their skills, insights and experiences will be crucial in enabling the changes needed to make the vision a reality.

1. Introduction

1.1. On 22 May 2018 at the full meeting of Surrey County Council, the Leader of the Council, David Hodge CBE, presented a draft vision for Surrey to 2030. The aim of the vision was to inspire public services, businesses, charities and the third sector and residents to achieve a better quality of life.

1.2. He also announced there would be intensive and widespread engagement to get their views on what a vision for Surrey should look like:

“[This] is a vision that must be shared by everyone in Surrey. That is why I am calling on everyone to help us shape it – residents, Members, partners and staff. We are beginning a period of intense engagement so that all those with a stake in the future of our beautiful county can have their say.”¹

1.3. The County Council facilitated a number of meetings and events over the summer of 2018 with over 500 people across the county and there were over 2,100 responses to a survey on the vision. This was the most extensive and systematic engagement exercise the Council had ever undertaken. This included reaching out to a wide range of people and communities to make sure their views were represented, such as those who were homeless and people who identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). Messages coming back painted a clear picture of the kind of Surrey they

wanted to live and work in by 2030. Further details on the engagement programme can be read in Appendix A (page i).

1.4. The stories, experiences and ideas people shared are captured in this document. Their vision of Surrey’s future was understood by them talking about:

- What they valued about Surrey;
- What their concerns were; and
- What their hopes are for 2030.

By listening to their views and ideas, these lay the foundations for a vision that recognised the priorities and future that residents and local organisations wanted to see for Surrey by the end of the next decade.

¹ Leader’s Statement to County Council, 22 May 2018

2. What do people value about Surrey?

2.1. **How people describe Surrey** – Most people said Surrey is a beautiful place to live that offers a high quality of life. The county’s geography offers a good mix of urban and rural living that combines the peace and quiet of living in the countryside with the cosmopolitan nature of the county’s towns. Some said it was a good place to raise a family with lots of activities for young people and families to take advantage of, access to shops and a number of ways to relax and have fun.

2.2. Some described Surrey as a place of opportunity, whether in employment, activities or education. Some residents also thought their communities were diverse, multi-cultural and inclusive. The county was also described as affluent, but also viewed by some stakeholders as expensive and had a “posh image” that was not the same experience for everyone living in Surrey.

“I value living in this beautiful wooded county.”

Survey respondent

2.3. **Access and connectivity** – People value the access and connectivity to services and activities within the county that Surrey offers, and its national and international links. A number of residents commented on the ease and convenience of being able to access local services, for example, high streets and other shopping facilities. They also

valued the number of cultural opportunities on offer, such as theatres, galleries and libraries and places of historical significance.

“Living where I do very much suits my lifestyle and needs. I can get transport links where I need them, my job is nearby and the surroundings are gorgeous!”

Survey respondent

2.4. The advantages offered by Surrey’s geographical location and the quality of transport networks that connected people to London, the coast or the countryside were highlighted. For example, nearly 15% of survey respondents said they valued being so close to London, without necessarily living in the city. Being close to two of the UK’s major airports – Gatwick and Heathrow – and motorways were further benefits.

“...London and Brighton are both very accessible by rail and road.”

Survey respondent

2.5. Access to good quality public transport was important for getting round the county and beyond, but it was mentioned there was scope for improvement. Some residents expressed an appetite for more transport infrastructure that also supported conservation of the environment and reduced the amount of traffic on Surrey’s roads, for example, cycle lanes. However, some people valued being able to get around the

county in their cars, and did not want to see measures introduced that drivers felt were punitive to them and infringed on their ability to use their vehicles. This is further explored on page 10.

“We must preserve our green spaces and whilst the need for development is important, we must consider the environment.”

Survey respondent

2.6. **Natural and built environment** – One of the most important aspects of Surrey that residents care about was the quality of Surrey’s natural environment. Nearly 30% of survey respondents said they valued the green and open spaces in Surrey, such as the Surrey Hills, North Downs, Box Hill and Farthing Downs, with its diverse range of woodland, wildlife and countryside.

2.7. Many people commented that having access to this green space and nature was a key part of the attraction of living in Surrey, and there was a strong desire to see this preserved. In particular, a number of residents were keen to see continued conservation and protection of green spaces. There were views that these spaces are essential to the health and wellbeing of people in Surrey, and offered families the opportunities to relax, explore and appreciate the natural environment.

2.8. There were also some positive comments on the cleanliness of the county, with low levels of air pollution and good waste

disposal and recycling facilities.

2.9. Some residents also mentioned the appeal of the local built environment, and said Surrey has a range of attractive towns and villages that have character, individuality and architectural diversity. Places such as Farnham and Guildford were mentioned for their historic significance and individuality.

2.10. **Communities** – Stakeholders were positive about the diverse nature and character of Surrey communities. In general, Surrey’s communities were perceived as friendly, caring and supportive, and there is a great sense of community spirit. There was also appreciation for the diverse and multi-cultural character of some of Surrey’s communities.

“I have lived in Cranleigh for nine years and value the village life. I rarely walk into town without meeting someone I know and stopping for a chat. This sense of community is a plus for sustaining community feeling and promoting mental health.”

Survey respondent

- 2.11. There were a number of comments on the strength of community spirit in Surrey. People commented that Surrey has a strong volunteering culture, which has a key role in bringing communities together. Surrey’s voluntary, community and faith sector was mentioned as a key player in addressing some of the most challenging social issues, such as domestic abuse or supporting refugees.
- 2.12. Some stakeholders commented that the strong community spirit in Surrey was at risk due to growing inequality on certain issues, for example, young people unable to access the housing market. They also highlighted homelessness and poverty as further issues of concern and the need to boost support for disabled people.
- 2.13. **Public services** – Residents really appreciated having access to high quality public services in Surrey. In particular, there were a number of comments on the good schools, colleges and universities, good hospitals, such as East Surrey and Epsom hospitals, and leisure services across the county. A range of other services were also mentioned including early years services, fire and rescue and children’s centres, such

as the Reigate and Redhill Sure Start centres.

“Increase police numbers so that they have sufficient resources to tackle burglaries, vehicle crime and all the other things that have been deprioritised due to cuts, cuts and more cuts.”

Survey respondent

- 2.14. **Safety** – Nearly 12% of survey respondents mentioned they felt safe living in Surrey and that it is generally a low crime county. Some places, such as Haslemere and Dorking, were particularly highlighted as being safe. Some residents commented that local police were doing a good job in tackling crime such as anti-social behaviour and theft. However, this experience was not replicated in all parts of the county as

“There needs to be wider availability of social housing. This is critical for the health and wellbeing of Surrey’s residents.”

Housing association at partner event in Leatherhead

some voiced concerns that crime is increasing in their local areas. People said causes of this included streetlights being switched off and reductions in police numbers or visibility of police presence.

- 2.15. **Economic prosperity** - A number of residents were proud of the strength of Surrey’s economy. This included the high employment rate, low unemployment and number of job

opportunities in the county compared to other areas. People also valued having access to local, independent businesses and wanted more support and encouragement for them to foster a stronger sense of community and creation of more local jobs.

- 2.16. Key to supporting the county's economic strength was having access to good quality housing and infrastructure. Young people in particular said they wanted more affordable housing, and many organisations also mentioned this as a key issue to focus on for the benefit of key workers and residents on lower incomes. One suggestion was more schemes, like the Thameswey scheme in Woking, should be replicated to ensure more people could afford a home of their own. People also wanted access to improved, affordable and more regular public transport, such as bus services.

3. What are people's concerns?

3.1. While Surrey offers a number of strengths and opportunities for the people that live and work there, there were some key issues identified that residents wanted to see addressed over the next 12 years.

3.2. Their concerns were primarily rooted in the impact a growing and ageing population is having on the county's physical, natural and social infrastructure, the quality and availability of public services, and the difficulties experienced by some of the more vulnerable people in Surrey.

3.3. **Population** – Some residents felt that growth in Surrey's population meant the county was overcrowded, and this meant an adverse knock-on effect on local infrastructure and services.

“Too many people are moving to Surrey, therefore, there is a pressure on housing. Overcrowding could result in Surrey becoming another London and losing the countryside feel”

Survey respondent

3.4. There were also worries about whether local services, particularly social care, would be available to support the growing ageing population.

““We have lost several care homes just in Farnham over the last few years and I am deeply concerned about the lack of social care for the elderly.”

Survey respondent

3.5. **Transport and travel** – Nearly 37% of survey respondents said they were dissatisfied with Surrey's roads. Some talked about the condition of the network, particularly potholes, and this was exacerbated by the extreme weather and high number of vehicles using the roads. There were comments that more proactive planning was needed to manage these issues, including using materials for road resurfacing that were more durable and longer lasting.

“The roads are an absolute disgrace. I've lived in Caterham since 1954 and have never seen the roads as bad as they are now.”

Survey respondent

3.6. Issues mentioned were the condition of the roads causing damage to private vehicles and the danger posed to cyclists using the network. It also had a knock-on effect on drivers' behaviour as they had to occasionally swerve to avoid potholes, which then put other road users at risk.

- 3.7. The level of road congestion was another concern. Some said that no matter the length of the journey, getting anywhere took a long time, and this affected people’s ability to commute, to do the school run or to go on a day out with their families. Congestion hotspots mentioned included the A3, M25, A31 and A317.

“The roads have to be made safe. I drive and am a road cyclist. The potholes: they are not holes anymore but craters and dangerous for cars. I have bought a four wheel drive vehicle because a normal car cannot cope with our road surfaces.”

Survey respondent

- 3.8. The amount of traffic from both cars and commercial vehicles also raised concerns for residents about increasing levels of air and noise pollution. Some commented that not enough was being done to discourage the use of cars, for example, increasing investment in public transport or building safe cycle

“I live in Hascombe, through which we have nose to tail traffic going through during the rush hours, along with HGVs and building supply lorries, all going far too fast on a road which is too narrow and usually full of potholes. The road congestion is actually ruining the quality of life here, so much so that my wife and I are on the verge of moving to another county.”

Survey respondent

lanes.

- 3.9. An increasing number of cars meant additional pressures on parking provision in the county. People who used their car as their preferred means of transport said it was becoming more difficult to find parking and the level of parking charges in some places was too high. They said this would affect local economies and impact on the ability of town centres to attract people to do their shopping.
- 3.10. Some residents said they had seen increases in inappropriate parking activity, for example, parking on double yellow lines or grass verges, and that with some households owning more than one car, this made residential areas feel crowded and restricted available parking for residents.
- 3.11. There were some mentions about the condition of some of Surrey’s pavements. Residents commented that if they either had poor eyesight, needed to use a wheelchair or mobility scooter or if they were pushing a pram, the unevenness made it difficult to navigate and caused potential trip hazards.
- 3.12. Stakeholders were also worried about the quality, affordability and reliability of public transport. They said this was one of the reasons why residents were so reliant on their cars to get around the county.
- 3.13. Some residents commented that bus services were too expensive. Young people, a stakeholder group more likely to use buses, also said they were unhappy with the cleanliness

and did not feel safe on some buses. There were very few services to communities outside of major town centres, meaning some felt cut off from being able to access services.

“Buses are expensive and services have been reduced since I moved to Woking 12 years ago. Buses aren’t reliable as the countdown timers aren’t always accurate. Sometimes it gets to zero and no bus comes and you have to wait for the next one.”

Survey respondent

3.14. Some people also commented on local train services. They said services were unreliable, due to issues like constant cancellations or changes to timetables, not as frequent as they should be and expensive. They also mentioned how congested they could be at peak times, and that projects, such as Crossrail 2, would be helpful in addressing this.

3.15. There were concerns about expansion plans to build a third runway at Heathrow airport. People said this would add further traffic to a highway network already under severe pressure, and have impacts on air and noise pollution and climate change.

3.16. Some residents who advocated alternative means of transport to cars, expressed frustration that the infrastructure provided for cyclists was not safe due to the lack of an integrated off-road cycling network. Some said they were not using existing

cycle lanes because they were not fit for purpose.

3.17. People who wanted to invest in electric vehicles also said there was a lack of charging points, and they wanted to see additional investment in more points being set up across Surrey.

“Very dangerous cycle infrastructure. Surrey seems to have a general dislike of cycling and cyclists, yet it is the only “cheap” way to overcome our chronic congestion. Surrey’s EV (electric vehicle) plans are woeful ... and just shows the car is king now and in the future.”

Survey respondent

3.18. **Housing** – There were very different perspectives from stakeholders on the topic of housing in Surrey, which revealed a lack of consensus on how to address to county’s future housing needs. The difference came between those that advocate increasing the number of homes in Surrey to boost affordability, and those who want to protect their local communities and environment from new development.

3.19. People who advocated increasing the housing supply were

“Housing isn’t cheap in this area. We need more affordable homes – there simply aren’t enough!”

Farnham resident video interview

“We need more genuinely affordable housing. We can do this by making cheap land available for social providers”

Housing trust

worried about how expensive housing is in Surrey. The median price for a house in Surrey is 12 times the average annual salary of residents².

3.20. Those who were particularly concerned were parents whose children had not been able to leave home, lower income households and key workers. This was also a concern of some organisations who worked closely with more residents

“The price of housing makes it virtually impossible for young adults to buy a home. We get very limited help towards our first buy, and for some people, despite having saved money, due to their lower salary, they cannot get a mortgage. How can someone in their 20s expect to get a house worth £400,000 with a 10% deposit? Can’t the Council build smaller, basic, cheaper houses for first-time buyers so they can get on the property ladder?”

Survey respondent

who struggled to be able to afford their own home.

3.21. Expense was not just reserved to the amount it cost to buy a property, but also to rent in the private sector. The impact of high costs meant people, in particular younger people, were being priced out of living in Surrey, and would have to move to another more affordable part of the country. They wanted to see greater supply of social housing and houses being built and made available at affordable prices.

3.22. Some reasons suggested were some developers were either not building enough “affordable” homes as part of new development, for example, building luxury five bedroom properties, or new development was being blocked by local residents who did not want it in their local area.

“My boyfriend and I are currently saving up to buy a house and are both earning just below the UK average salary, but we are struggling to get on the property ladder. We don’t have families which could provide us with any money towards a house, so we are having to work really hard to ensure we can get a house. I have friends who live in other parts of the country and they are all able to afford houses due to the costs of houses being a lot lower.”

Survey respondent

² www.surrey.gov.uk

3.23. Suggestions to remedy the lack of affordable housing included councils building more affordable homes, building homes on more brownfield sites, and development of “guardianship” properties or high rise flats with intermediate rent properties to support young people and families to get on the housing ladder.

3.24. Partner organisations also recognised affordable housing was a key challenge for some residents and developed some ideas for making housing in Surrey more affordable, including:

- Bringing in a more relaxed planning framework;
- Closer working between central government and local authorities to tackle the issue;
- Developing a better understanding of community need;
- Making cheap land available to social housing providers to increase supply; and
- Working closely with private developers to ensure construction of affordable homes were included in their plans

3.25. Increases to housing supply and development was a key concern for a number of residents. In particular, they were worried that more development would mean the loss of existing green spaces and more building on green belt land; the pressures on existing infrastructure and the lack of new infrastructure planned in parallel to the new development, such as roads, doctors surgeries and schools, to accommodate for a growing population; and the threat of urban sprawl, where residents were concerned that Surrey

“I am concerned about the de-commissioning of greenbelt land to hand over to developers. Our infrastructure has been at breaking point for a considerable time, yet it continues to be added to with more and more developments. People move/live in Surrey (and pay high house prices) to live in rural surroundings yet this is being decimated with ill thought out developments and no increase in the infrastructure.”

Survey respondent

would lose its character and identity and felt like it was becoming part of London.

3.26. Some stakeholders expressed a preference for the re-use of derelict buildings on brownfield sites (a point with which they agreed with housebuilding supporters on), instead of building further onto greenbelt land. There was some resentment expressed at central government imposing housing targets on local areas, without the implications for local communities being thought through properly. Residents also wanted more of a say in local planning decisions.

“Part of the West Byfleet recreation ground has been sold to the Marstons pub company so they can build a pub here. Not only that, it will go in a site currently occupied by a children’s playground, on a residential road, next to a pre-school and an infant school ... please listen to the local community when we say we do not want this!”

Survey respondent

3.27. There were differences of opinion on how development was built out. On one hand, some residents were concerned with “infilling” to existing towns and villages as they threatened to destroy their character, but on the other, some were concerned about development being too spread out, with the need to use greenbelt land to meet development goals.

3.28. **Inequality and deprivation** – Some residents mentioned they felt there was a widening of the wealth gap between the wealthiest and the poorest residents. The cost of living in Surrey was a factor in this, with levels of council tax and housing costs highlighted as particular concerns. Residents raised issues such as people in work having to use food banks, inequalities in educational outcomes, the problem with Surrey being perceived as being a wealthy county with residents experiencing few issues and neglect for more deprived areas of Surrey.

3.29. Some residents suggested that more could be done by more affluent residents to use their resources to support others who were not in as fortunate a position. Others were worried that not enough was being done to support residents who were likely to be impacted by changes in Government policy, for example, the roll-out of Universal Credit.

“There are a large number of incredibly wealthy people in Surrey which makes life for those in less fortunate situations much more difficult – the gap needs closing.”

Survey respondent

3.30. Other concerns raised included the lack of affordable housing (see pages 11-13), reductions in public transport, such as buses that some more vulnerable residents depend on, and lack of mental health service provision. There were also worries about the levels of homelessness, and the low levels of support for people who live in social housing.

3.31. In addition, children from deprived backgrounds, and their families, were identified as needing greater attention for their safety and wellbeing. The patchy nature of deprivation, and absence of support from a wider community who were “in a similar situation” meant these children and families were isolated and less able to manage.

3.32. Provision for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) was another area highlighted. This included concerns around access to services such as speech and language therapy and social opportunities for these children.

3.33. There were also worries that provision of social care for vulnerable adults would be reduced so much that the quality of care would be compromised and the safety of service users was at risk.

3.34. Issues were raised on the treatment of people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) backgrounds. Some residents felt that members of the GRT community were leaving mess or fly

tipping on common land, such as public parks, and that nothing was being done to address this. Other residents were conscious of the bad feeling this created with the wider community, and wanted to see more effort being put into building understanding between GRT residents and the wider community, and to resolve the issue of a lack of transit sites

“[Gypsy, Roma and Traveller residents] need somewhere to stay, but more needs to be done to prevent groups invading common land, causing waste and mess that has to be cleaned up. I am concerned that there is a lot of hate (and fear) in the settled community towards the traveller community.”

Survey respondent

for people from this community.

- 3.35. Partner organisations, particularly those that work in the voluntary, community and faith sector in Surrey, also highlighted the inequality faced by some residents. They suggested that more needed to be done to work with local communities so that more people in local neighbourhoods recognised their responsibility to support other people less fortunate than them.
- 3.36. Key to achieving this would be sustained community engagement, setting up local support networks, and helping communities to make the most of their local assets.
- 3.37. **Public services** – There was apprehension on the level of public service reductions and pressures on services in recent

years. Stakeholders made reference to the current financial situation of Surrey County Council and the potential impact this would have on the services they valued. They also challenged the current quality of some services that were provided.

- 3.38. Some stakeholders questioned whether the vision was deliverable given the uncertainties on finances and other external factors that could affect its achievability, such as Brexit.
- 3.39. The service stakeholders voiced the most concern about was social care for older people and younger adults that relied on the service. This included the difficulty in qualifying for services, lack of good quality care home provision in Surrey, rising costs and a decline in social care staffing levels, partly, they said, due to the rate of staff turnover. This was against the backdrop of a growing ageing population.
- 3.40. Reductions to social care services were putting increasing pressure on carers who were expected to contribute more hours to their caring role, to the detriment of carers' health and wellbeing. There were also concerns that care workers were not spending enough time with people that used services because of the pressures they had in looking after all the people they were responsible for.

3.41. Similar issues with health services were raised. Pressures on local health services were highlighted, partly because of demands from the local population, but also under-investment from Government in these services. For instance, some people mentioned the difficulties in organising a GP appointment because of oversubscribed services. They either had to arrangement an appointment far in advance, or they had challenges being able to talk with specific doctors.

“The GP surgery I attend has far too many patients which means that you cannot always get an appointment with a doctor of your choice.”

Survey respondent

3.42. Some people mentioned the pressures on local hospital services, and they were anxious about some hospitals being under threat of closure, for example, Epsom, East Surrey and Royal Surrey County hospitals. Some talked about the level of strain NHS staff were under, and the difficulties of registering with an NHS dentist.

3.43. People were keen to highlight issues with local mental health services. Some stakeholders talked about the long waiting times to get support for both Children’s and Adolescent Mental Health Services and adults’ services and the lack of empathy shown by some mental health professionals. Some said that they did not receive any support until they were at crisis point.

“I’m having an awful battle trying to get care for my disabled mother. There don’t seem to be enough care workers. In fact, there have been times when they didn’t turn up! A lot of elderly people I’ve spoken to have said there aren’t enough care workers out there to support them. Different people come and go, so they’re not able to build relationships with them. The Council doesn’t seem to be able to cope with the numbers of older people.”

Camberley resident audio interview

3.44. Services for children were another major topic stakeholders shared their views on. The ‘inadequate’ rating Surrey County Council received from their most recent Ofsted inspection was mentioned, and the potential closures of children’s centres.

“Surrey County Council’s decision to close children’s centres is difficult to comprehend, when all the research-based evidence has shown the absolute benefit to children and their parents/carers in supporting relationships, learning, health and wellbeing and safety of those in our community who may be more vulnerable than others.”

Survey respondent

3.45. They also registered concerns with changes to services for young people with SEND, and the experiences of looked after children in Surrey.

3.46. Increases in the county’s population meant some people were unsure if they would be able to get their child a good school

place because of the increased competition for places. This applied both to general and specialist places. There were also mentions of schools not getting the funding they needed, and the quality of education being diluted due to large classroom sizes. Stakeholders wanted to see more resource directed away from assessments and reporting towards direct support for each child.

- 3.47. Other parents discussed the difficulties in helping their child with SEND to access schools or colleges that could offer the specialist support they needed. They also mentioned the County Council appeared to have more of a say in where a child with SEND would be educated than the parents. They wanted more of a say in which school their child would attend. There were also concerns about the number of children with SEND being excluded from Surrey schools.
- 3.48. The availability of recycling facilities and recent proposals to close some of the Community Recycling Centres was raised. People were unhappy with reductions in the opening hours for some centres and charges for the disposal of certain types of waste. They argued that this was likely to result in increases in fly tipping.

“There are lots more people asking for cheap quotes on social media to remove rubbish since the reduction in opening hours and there seem to be many more instances of fly tipping as a result.”

Survey respondent

- 3.49. There were a few comments made on library services. Issues raised included reductions to library budgets, and the use of volunteers to run them instead of paid staff, additional strains placed on library service staff such as computer inquiries, bus passes and support with Universal Credit applications, in addition to their existing duties.
- 3.50. Some argued that they valued libraries for being free community spaces with access to education and learning for all ages, and could help tackle issues such as loneliness. Ways to support the sustainability of the service were suggested, such as hiring out the library buildings to community groups outside of library hours to make better use of space and generate income.
- 3.51. Other services mentioned including limited provision of adult education, and reductions in funding to emergency services, such as Fire and Rescue.
- 3.52. **Economy** – The strongest theme coming from the survey feedback was the current state of high streets. Concerns were raised about the decline of town centres, with many stakeholders referring to high business rates and rents threatening the ongoing viability of local businesses. Some said there did not appear to be a clear plan for what high streets should look like in future, and how to solve the current issues affecting them.

- 3.53. Ideas suggested for the future use of town centres included redeveloping existing buildings for additional housing, increasing the level of support available for smaller high street businesses, such as short-term rent holidays, and more effective traffic and parking management to make it easier for people to access town centres.

“Camberley town centre could do with an upgrade. I’ve seen this happen recently in Guildford and Bracknell, but I would much prefer to shop closer to where I live (Windlesham).”

Camberley resident video interview

- 3.54. Some residents wanted to see more of a focus on supporting smaller, local businesses to thrive. They mentioned the county’s thriving creative industries that could grow in importance, and there should be additional measures to support smaller businesses, such as loan schemes and starter packs for new shop ventures to support increased high street activity.
- 3.55. Some talked about issues for some people accessing job opportunities. This included increasing support for people with additional needs to access work, enabling younger people to be better positioned to get to work via public transport and by improving careers advice and guidance, including more signposting to apprenticeships as a career option and the need to create better conditions for local employers to offer

employment opportunities within the county.

- 3.56. **Community safety** – While some people said they thought Surrey was a county that was relatively safe and where crime was low, others expressed a view that they believed crime was going up. Stakeholders mentioned rural burglaries and acquisitive rural crime, vehicle crime, underfunding of domestic abuse services, theft, moped crime, violent crime and anti-social behaviour.

“I’m concerned about the lack of funding for community policing. There are clearly problems with anti-social behaviour and violent crime in the evenings that aren’t being addressed.”

Survey respondent

- 3.57. Some stakeholders believed that police services were underfunded, and that a lack of visible police presence enabled more crime to be committed than would be otherwise. Another issue raised was reduced operating times for streetlights, which meant people felt more unsafe and that crime was more likely to be committed under those circumstances.
- 3.58. **Environment** – In addition to concerns raised about the level of traffic congestion contributing to pollution levels (see page 10), stakeholders were also worried that projects, such as the proposed expansion of a third runway at Heathrow airport, would compromise air quality and cause additional noise

pollution, and the impact on local residents' health and wellbeing.

- 3.59. Other concerns were raised about oil drilling in certain parts of the county, such as Leith Hill and Brockham, and the knock-on effect on the surrounding environment, such as water contamination.
- 3.60. Building on concerns about the impact of new development on the local environment, some stakeholders said this could result in the destruction of habitats for some of the county's wildlife, and increases in emissions from new development would affect air quality. Some people also worried that some residents were burning waste in their gardens, further affecting air pollution levels, and there was a noticeable increase in fly tipping in certain parts of the county.
- 3.61. Residents also spoke about waste collection and disposal. They said the rules for waste disposal were complex, not enough was being done to support non-car users to access waste disposal facilities and some were unhappy with the frequency of waste collection in their local area.
- 3.62. **Local democracy and partnership** – Some residents said the level of council tax in Surrey was too high and that it could be a factor in forcing people to leave the county. They found it hard to understand why council tax was rising year-on-year when there was a narrative coming from councils about the need to make savings and proposals to reduce services. Some residents said they were worried about the impact increased council tax was having when their wages were not

rising at the same rate.

“...We have seen a large rise in council tax in Surrey this year, which concerns me. One thing I do not understand is that Surrey as a county is one of the most affluent in the country...you would suspect social and welfare bills associated with Surrey County Council to be relatively low as better off individuals tend to fund their own lifestyle/needs.”

Survey respondent

- 3.63. This led some stakeholders to question the financial competence of Surrey County Council, and others questioned the level of officer salaries and increases in Member allowances.
- 3.64. Some residents said they would welcome more transparency with how their council tax was being spent so they could see what they were getting back in services. Others mentioned that they did not think enough money was being prioritised in their part of the county, and that investment was skewed.

“Start spending some money in Waverley and not simply spending it in the east of the county or Guildford.”

Survey respondent

- 3.65. While some residents understood that reductions in central government funding played a role in decisions on Council

services, they also wanted the organisation to make sure that it was focusing on spending money on the most important services, and that non-essential spending was deprioritised and reductions made in those areas. However, there was little elaboration on what was meant by the term “non-essential services”.

3.66. Some stakeholders linked the Council’s current financial situation to the vision and questioned whether it had the capacity or capability to deliver elements of it. Some wanted more specific ideas about how the outcomes would be delivered, and wanted to know where the money would come from to deliver them.

3.67. Questions were asked about the ability of partners to join up and work together to deliver the outcomes in the vision. Specific concerns were raised about the ability of health services and local government to deliver strategies that made a tangible impact on outcomes for residents.

3.68. In early July, two major partner events were organised and facilitated by the County Council where a number of principles for partnership working were agreed including:

- Directing more resources into prevention and early intervention work for vulnerable children and adults;
- Collaborating to meet to county’s affordable housing challenge;
- Thinking collectively about developing long-term, sustainable infrastructure solutions for a growing population;

- Supporting communities to take more responsibility for themselves and for vulnerable people in their neighbourhoods;
- Working together in new and creative ways, through a culture of honesty and mutual respect; and
- Strengthening the financial sustainability of public and VCF sectors so they have stability to deliver services over the long term.

3.69. Political stakeholders, such as District and Borough and parish councillors, also discussed which services needed to be delivered at which level of local government, although there were reservations that their organisations would take on additional responsibilities without the required resources.

3.70. There were also discussions about how best to educate the public on which tier of local government delivered which services. Others argued that the structures of local government in Surrey needed to be looked at for possible savings.

3.71. Some residents also called for public organisations in Surrey to be better at listening to the needs and concerns of their residents. Their experiences were that consultation was a cynical exercise designed to get the answers they wanted, or that organisations were evasive when challenged to account for a decision. There was a call for more meaningful engagement with local communities in their decision-making processes.

“...The county has, in my experience, never been much good at listening to views of the taxpayers, and this exercise is...another cosmetic operation which will cost more and achieve less...”

Survey respondent

4. What are people’s hopes for Surrey in 2030?

- 4.1. Stakeholders were encouraged to picture what they wanted Surrey to look like in 2030. They also considered the draft outcomes in the vision, and identified which ones they thought were the most important to focus on to 2030 – the results are shown in Annex B (page a)
- 4.2. **Environment** – There is a strong desire to see the green spaces and natural environment of Surrey preserved and protected for now and future generations. Most people want Surrey to be a place that respects its woodlands, wildlife and areas of outstanding natural beauty.
- 4.3. Key to this is preventing over-development of rural areas and continued protection of greenbelt land. They hope that the countryside will remain accessible, meaning there is no cost attached to visiting these places, and that there will be more parks and open spaces for families to enjoy.

“[I hope] Surrey remains vibrant and green with lots of natural outdoors environments.”

Survey respondent

- 4.4. Some residents want Surrey to build a national reputation for green spaces that are well-maintained and looked after. Some fear that if this did not happen, parts of Surrey risk becoming an extension of London and communities would lose their identities.
- 4.5. Suggestions to achieve this include the need to manage development of new housing in Surrey, and to work with other partners, such as the National Trust, to improve and join up different countryside “hot spots” in the county.
- 4.6. Residents also want to see more action on other activities that would compromise the natural environment and risked increased pollution, for example, oil drilling and fracking.
- 4.7. **Housing** – Some people want to see an increase in the supply of affordable housing, including social housing, particularly for young people and residents on lower incomes. Some said they would not mind new housing being built, as long as the look of them was in keeping with the aesthetics of other buildings and the natural surrounding environment. There is also some appetite to see new forms of housing that minimises environmental impact, and is more reliant on green forms of energy, such as solar power.

“[Surrey should be] a place where ordinary working people can afford to and want to live.”

Survey respondent

“There needs to be a bit more creative thinking around the issue of housing. There should be cross-party consensus on house-building – it should not be a political battle!”

Working resident video interview

- 4.8. As highlighted in the previous chapter, this is at odds with the desire of some residents to see restrictions on the number of new homes being built. They are clear that any new housing needed the right infrastructure to accompany it, otherwise pressures on existing infrastructure will worsen. They also suggest that brownfield sites could be targeted, and there could be more developments built upwards rather than outwards, for example, apartments in tower blocks.
- 4.9. It is recognised that there need to be more honest conversations with residents about the scale of development required and the best ways to achieve this to meet the wider needs of Surrey’s community, while being sensitive to the concerns of local residents.
- 4.10. Residents want no-one that lives in Surrey to be homeless. They want to make sure there is sufficient provision of services for people who are either currently homeless or at risk of homelessness, such as shelters and more services provided by District and Borough councils. They also want

services in place to support homeless people who are addicted to alcohol or abuse other substances.

- 4.11. **Transport and travel** – Most stakeholders are hopeful that there will be less traffic, with the benefits of quicker journey times and improvements in air quality. In addition, there is consensus among stakeholders that they want to see the quality of roads improved, and for the overall transport network in Surrey to be operating more smoothly and efficiently.
- 4.12. Some stakeholders want more policy solutions to reduce reliance on using cars to get around Surrey so congestion is alleviated and environmental impacts minimised. Suggestions include greater investment in public transport to make it more affordable and reliable, and to be powered by green technologies. For example, some people want to see more bus lanes in the county to remove some cars off the road.
- 4.13. Some residents want greater investment in facilities and infrastructure for cyclists as the comment overleaf demonstrates:

“I hope Surrey could become the leading cycling county in the country by introducing cycle highways up, down and across the county to enable a more sustainable transport network that is second to none.”

Survey respondent

- 4.14. Cyclists want to see more infrastructure that would help them feel safer – some mentioned they are worried about having to use the same roads as cars and lorries. Some said it could be helpful to have regulations to improve cycle safety, such as in Belgium, where cyclists had a right of way. Some residents aspire for Surrey to become a place where it would be common to see families and young children using bicycles to get to work and school each day.
- 4.15. Some alternative views were expressed by some car users. They want to be able to park and not pay high costs to do so. They also want to see more parking spaces created, and for roads to be expanded so to cope with increased traffic flows. This suggests there are choices to be made about the direction local organisations take to develop an efficient and high performing transport network.
- 4.16. **Inequality and deprivation** – Some people hoped that Surrey would become a county with a more diverse population and more inclusive communities between different generations and income status. They also want the county to be known for the care and support that its residents provide

for more vulnerable people in Surrey. This includes all residents being able to access services, no matter their background or their wealth. They also want to see stronger locally-based community support networks in place so residents have the means and capacity to help each other.

- 4.17. Some stakeholders also mentioned they want Surrey to be a county where everyone has the same opportunities to be able to afford a home of their own and the cost of living is more manageable, where children and young people from all backgrounds and of all abilities are able to get the best education and opportunities, and elderly and vulnerable residents received the care and support they needed.
- 4.18. **Public services** – Stakeholders were keen to see improvements to public services although they recognised the constraints on resources. They want more assurance that their money was invested well in the services that mattered to them and that the right level of funding was in place to accommodate all people that needed them.
- 4.19. People want health and social care services for adults that are both good quality and affordable. This includes improved access to GPs and hospitals, ‘outstanding’ ratings for the county’s health and care services by external bodies, sufficient residential care places for older and vulnerable people, social care services providing accurate and timely assessments and advice while remaining independent at home, and appropriate staffing and technologies that enabled

a high performing health and social care system.

“[I hope for] better care services for older people and ensuring where possible they live in their own homes and both without older people having to use their life savings or funding through the sale of their homes...”

Survey respondent

- 4.20. People also want to be able to continue accessing services that supported improved health and wellbeing, such as local council-provided health and fitness centres, country walks or parks. They also want more of a proactive push towards getting people to live healthier lifestyles so that pressures on the health service are reduced, for example, encouraging healthier eating.
- 4.21. Some stakeholders mentioned they want to see improvements in people’s mental health. This would include mental health services that intervene early, and priority given to resourcing the services that support people who were vulnerable and more at risk of mental health issues, for example, homelessness services.
- 4.22. People also want to see more joined up working between health and care service providers to ensure residents’ care needs are met efficiently and effectively, and are hopeful that they will see pressures reducing to give them more assurance

about the future of NHS services.

- 4.23. For Surrey’s children and young people, some stakeholders want more schools that are more inclusive and able to cater to people for all abilities. They want children to access the best possible education, with the majority of schools having been given an ‘Outstanding’ rating by Ofsted, and that these schools have sufficient numbers of places for all children. They also want to be able to exercise more choice as parents in their child’s education. One example mentioned was for summer born children to have the option to start school in Reception class instead of Year One, and for this not to be actively discouraged.
- 4.24. Parents of children with SEND want access to high quality education for their child to be easier, and for them to feel supported within mainstream education. They also want SEND services to have the right level of funding so that schools are able to cope with increasing numbers of pupils with SEND entering the school system. They want to see an increase in the number of places available at specialist schools in Surrey, should some children require them, to prevent them having to travel long distances for their education.
- 4.25. Stakeholders also want to see rapid improvements to children’s social care provision to give them greater assurance that they feel their children will be protected and will get the support they need. They want more families to get

the help they needed before they require more intensive support.

- 4.26. Young people, partners and residents all commented on the importance of local services for children and families, such as children’s centres, in supporting the most vulnerable families in Surrey. They mentioned their role in mitigating the risk of young people feeling left behind and engaging in criminal activity. They also want a broader range of opportunities to be available such as more access to parks and leisure services, and improved access to mental health support services for young people.
- 4.27. Having an effective and efficient system for recycling and waste is another outcome residents want to see. They want to see further efforts to increase the county’s recycling rate. To support this, they want to retain free access to waste disposal sites and improved waste collection services.
- 4.28. There were also calls from some stakeholders to maintain accessibility of libraries and for them to receive full funding. They want them to remain open community spaces and some were open to the idea of libraries evolving into community hubs or centres for learning to access information and support on services as well as their traditional role for lending books.
- 4.29. Residents also want to make sure leisure opportunities, such as parks and leisure centres, remain accessible and are open to people on lower incomes, as this quote suggests:

“Exercise facilities should be more accessible – many people cannot afford to attend a gym. Even swimming is expensive now at nearly £5 to enter a swimming pool...we are constantly told to exercise more to prevent obesity but all most of us are able to do is walk or run in the streets or green spaces.”

Survey respondent

- 4.30. People also want to make sure the county remains resilient and prepared in the event of an emergency. This included the right levels of funding for emergency services, such as police and fire and rescue, and more to be done to protect communities from flood risk.

4.31. **Economy** – Stakeholders want to see more businesses

“I hope it is...a rich cultural bed that inspires and creates community businesses for social good that also delivers locally and are sustaining the local economy and working with councils to deliver social and economic gain and long-term training plans.”

Survey respondent

thriving in Surrey. Some want more businesses who were conscious of their environmental footprint, and encouragement of a more diverse and unique range of independent shops and restaurants. They want to see more done to reinvigorate high streets by reducing business rates and rents for local businesses. A few stakeholders commented that they want to see more businesses in Surrey that contribute to the wider benefit of the community.

4.32. A further measure suggested to strengthen Surrey’s economy is having strong digital infrastructure to support efficiencies and innovation across businesses, and to ensure businesses in the rural economy are not left behind. Stakeholders also suggested that addressing physical infrastructure issues, such as with highway maintenance and parking (pages 9-10), would support increased access to town centres to encourage more businesses to set up and grow, and incentivise consumers to spend more locally to support their local economy.

4.33. People also said they want to encourage more businesses to thrive in Surrey to create more local employment opportunities. They also want these opportunities to be able to pay wages that kept pace with the cost of living in Surrey, so that local people did not have to commute to London to do this. Some were mindful about the changing nature of the job market, for example, increasing automation in some sectors, and the need to equip people with the skills for the job market of the future.

4.34. **Community safety** – Stakeholders want Surrey to remain a safe place to live. They want it to be crime-free, and see more done to improve security in the county. They want to see more action to address anti-social behaviour, violent crime and dangerous driving. They want to see street lights operating for longer hours at night to feel safer, and more of a police presence in the community, enabled by an increase in police numbers.

4.35. **Local democracy and partnerships** – Some stakeholders want Surrey County Council to have a sustainable long-term plan for the future, and to see courage to take brave decisions that would mean achievement of the vision was more likely. They want assurance that any strategies or plans put residents at the centre of their thinking.

4.36. Stakeholders want to see services working in a joined-up way and that decision-making is based on evidence and taken with a long-term view over short-term gain. They also want to see

a system of local government in Surrey where organisations operated within their existing budgets, and council tax is made more affordable. Some argued for a rethink of the structure of local government in Surrey.

- 4.37. Residents want to see more evidence that public service organisations are listening to them and their concerns. They want to see what changes are being made from sharing their views, and more honest conversations between organisations and residents. They also want more visibility from councillors and Members of Parliament in their local communities so they can make their views known and feel that their views would be represented and well-articulated. Some residents mentioned they want to see more proactive work in pressing Surrey's case to Government for fairer funding for the county's services.
- 4.38. Some stakeholders said they were hopeful that the vision would become a reality, but others were sceptical it could be delivered in the context of the need to make further savings in public services. Some people asked for detailed, specific plans on how the vision would be delivered.

5. What happens next?

- 5.1. This report should help the people that live and work in Surrey to gain a broad understanding of what the key challenges are facing the county over the next 12 years. They are complex, and in some cases consensus will need to be built to agree how to tackle some of these challenges.
- 5.2. Based on the ideas in this report, the vision will be updated. To be a vision that is truly shared by everyone, it will reflect what people have said and focus on the areas that need to be prioritised so the Surrey that they want to see can be delivered.
- 5.3. Partner organisations across Surrey will also continue discussing how best to tackle the challenges that residents have raised, and will have honest conversations with residents about the role they can play to help deliver the vision. To achieve the aspirations set in the vision, working in partnership across organisations from the public, private and voluntary, community and faith (VCF) sectors will be key. Partners sharing their skills, insights and experiences will be crucial in enabling the changes needed to make the vision a reality.

Annex A – Engagement Programme Summary

a. Surrey County Council undertook a number of different engagement activities to gather the key themes for this report. The methods used to gather this feedback included:

- Web-based and hard copies of a survey for residents and organisations across Surrey³ that asked:
 - The extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the ambitions for “People” and “Place”;
 - Which top three outcomes for both “People” and “Place” were most important to them;
 - What they valued about living in Surrey, if anything;
 - What concerned them as a resident of Surrey, if anything; and
 - What their hopes were for Surrey as a place in 2030.

The survey ran from 6 June 2018 to 3 September 2018. 2,193 people responded online and over 200 hard copy and Easy Read surveys were completed.

- 203 video and audio interviews carried out with stakeholders at over 30 public events and High Streets across the county, for example, Ewhurst Carnival and Cheese and Chilli Festival in Guildford.
- Social media activity across a range of well-known platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.) using the hashtags #vision2030 and #mysurrey.
- Over 40 face-to-face meetings with over 500 stakeholders including:
 - Two engagement events in early July with partners from the statutory and voluntary, community and faith sector including NHS, school governors, housing associations and charities for disabled and young people;
 - Engagement event with young people, including looked after children, young carers, young people with mental health issues and the Youth Cabinet in July;
 - Phase Councils for schools;
 - Members and officers from the District and Borough councils, local county Members and parish councils;
 - South East Valuing People Group;

³ Note – Respondents completing the survey were self-selecting, so responses do not reflect a statistically representative sample of Surrey’s population.

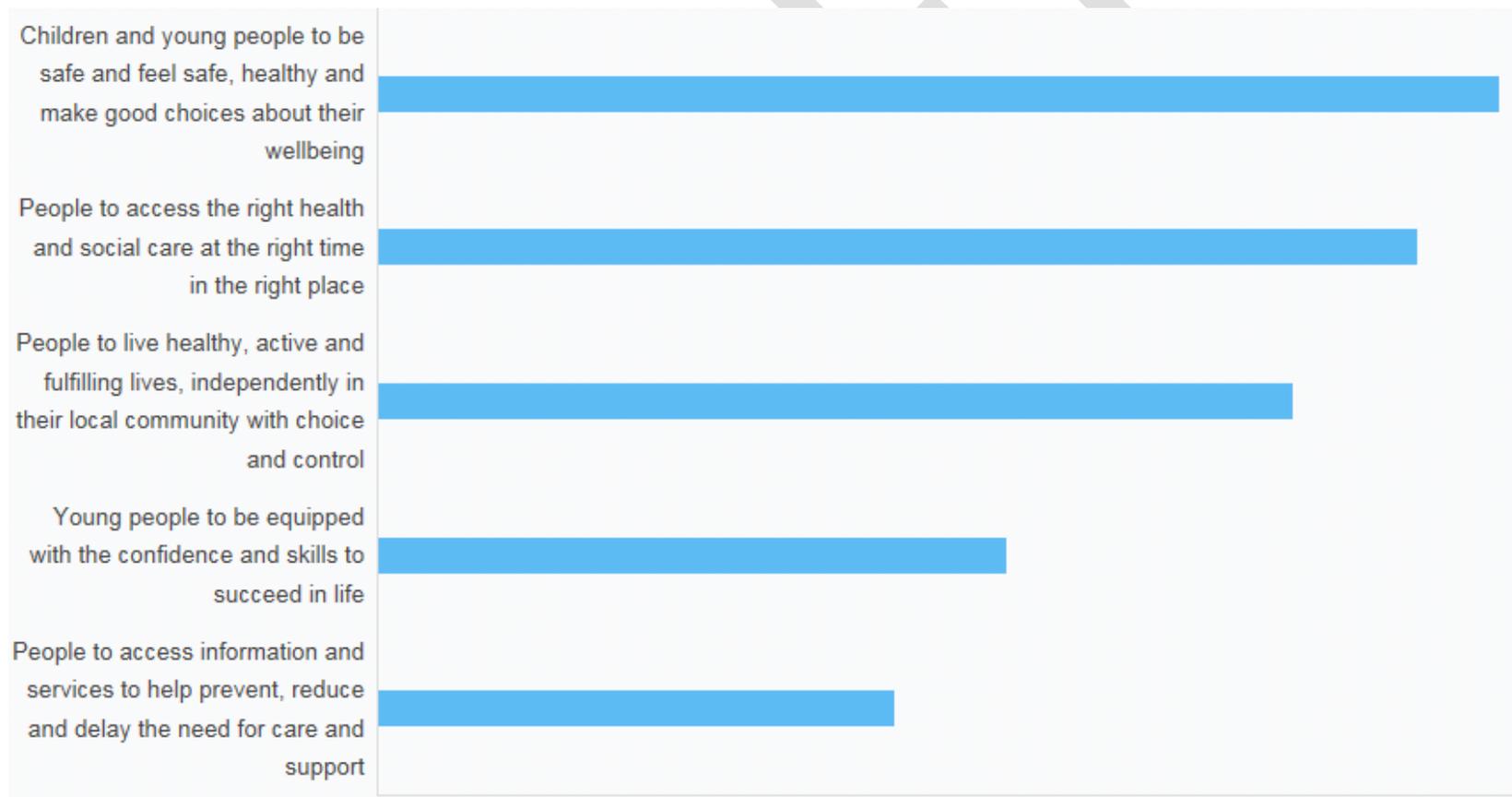
- Surrey Equality Group;
 - Care Council Juniors Residential;
 - Surrey Countryside and Rural Enterprise Forum;
- Correspondence was also received via letters or emails from residents and partner organisations. Representative groups for a wide range of communities were also contacted, such as organisations who represented homeless or lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) residents, to raise awareness of the vision survey and to ask them to send a formal response to the engagement.

Annex B – “People” and “Place” Outcome Rankings

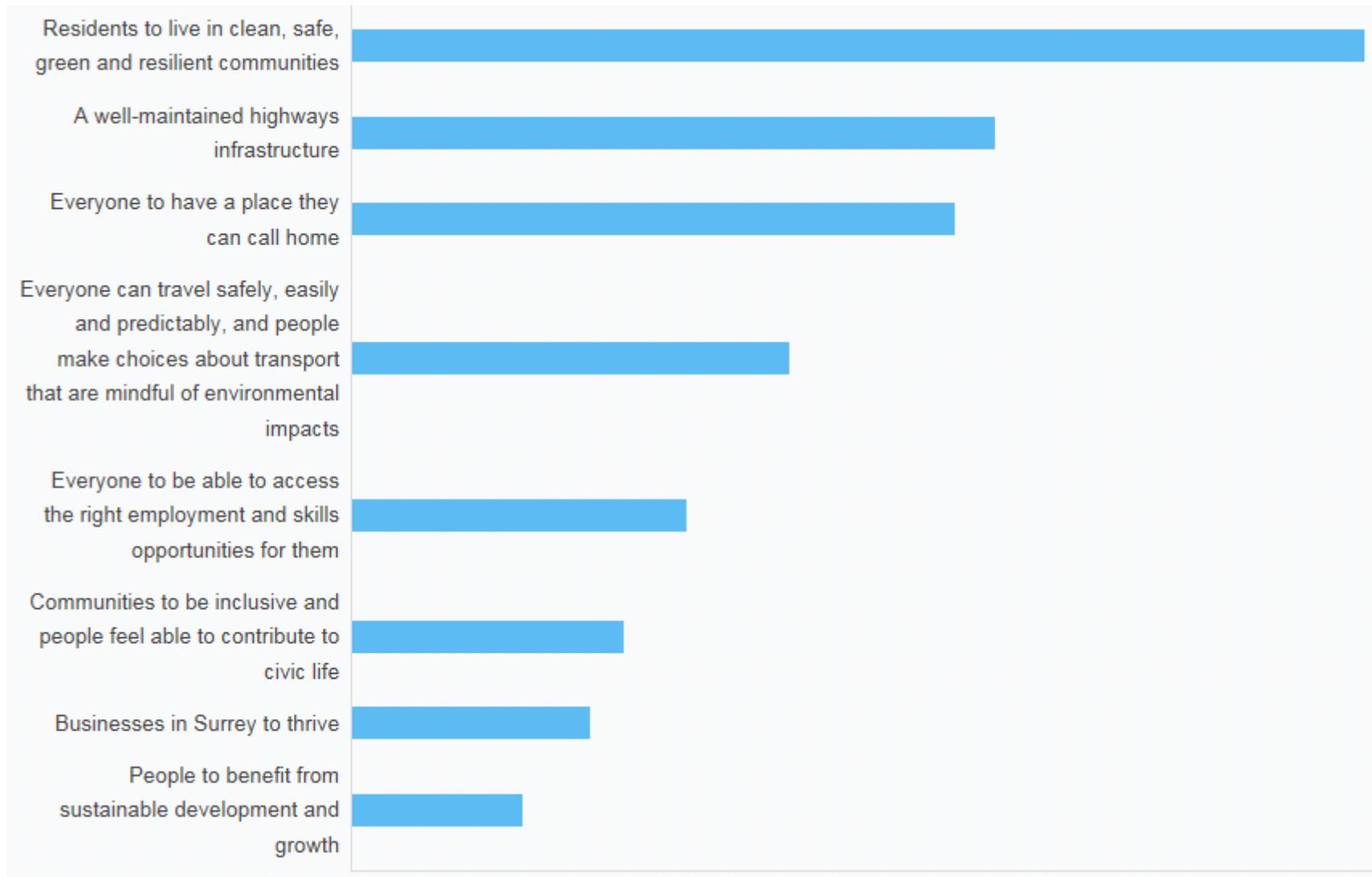
The charts below indicate which outcomes for “People” and “Place” were most and least likely to be in stakeholders’ top three list.

For “People”, keeping children safe, healthy and well was most likely to make stakeholders’ top three, whereas access to information and support was least likely. For “Place”, clean, safe, green and resilient communities was most likely to make the top three list, whereas sustainable development and growth was least likely to be chosen.

People



Place



Annex C – Survey Respondent Postcode Map

The map below represents the home postcodes that were provided voluntarily by survey respondents. It shows responses were received from stakeholders across all of Surrey's Districts and Boroughs and demonstrates that people from all over the county had participated to share their experiences.

