

FRIDAY, 19 MARCH 2021

## A New Rail Strategy for Surrey 2021

Purpose of report:

To present to the Committee the 'New Rail Strategy for Surrey'.

To seek the views and comments of the Committee on the strategy so they may be communicated to and considered by the County Council's Cabinet when it considers the New Rail Strategy for Surrey on 30 March 2021.

<b>Introduction:</b>
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1. The 'New Rail Strategy for Surrey' sets out our future ambition and priorities for rail across the county.
2. Our original Rail Strategy was published in 2013, with a partial update in 2016. The original strategy was well received and has been hugely valuable in lobbying Government and the rail industry. It secured improvements and investment to rail services and infrastructure in Surrey, helping us to reduce the number of car journeys and support the needs of residents and businesses.
3. However, the original strategy was becoming dated. It no longer fully reflected the current operation of the rail network or Government investment programmes, nor did it fully reflect the objectives of the council as articulated through our 2030 Community Vision and our 2050 Place Ambition.
4. A New Rail Strategy for Surrey has therefore been produced. It has a strong and supporting evidence base and a clear set of strategic aims, strategic responses and future priorities. The council will be able to use the New Rail Strategy for Surrey as an advocacy document to support local economic and spatial development decisions to maximise the potential impact of improvements and investments in the county, alongside partnership work and leveraging future investment from the rail industry and others.
5. The New Rail Strategy for Surrey is one strand of our emerging Local Transport Plan (4), which itself will be subject to wide ranging consultation in 2021. Together they provide the opportunity to radically rethink transport in Surrey so that it is

future-ready and forward-thinking, helping us to set out a pathway to zero carbon. The New Rail Strategy for Surrey is also aligned to the refresh of our Surrey Infrastructure Plan, work that is prioritising projects over the short, medium and long term to help drive delivery of homes and economic prosperity.

6. Rail is clearly an important aspect of the county's infrastructure and is a key mode of travel that can support growth and prosperity with associated focus and investment. The New Rail Strategy for Surrey supports the council's priority objective of growing a sustainable economy. It sets out our rail infrastructure priorities and considers future scenarios so that we may help residents and businesses respond to changing demands. The New Rail Strategy for Surrey also supports the council's priority objective of enabling a greener future with net zero carbon being a strong feature throughout the new strategy.

<b>Cabinet Report 30 March 2021</b>
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7. A report introducing the New Rail Strategy for Surrey is to be presented to the County Council's Cabinet on 30 March 2021. This is appended (Annex 1). The Cabinet report explains the background as to how the New Rail Strategy for Surrey has been created, including the establishment of a baseline, strategic aims and responses, a summary of relevant changes since 2013 and scenario planning, proposed improvements and interventions, along with the stakeholder engagement undertaken. The New Rail Strategy for Surrey is appended in full to this report (Annex 1). A flow chart explaining this process followed has been extracted from the full strategy and appended for ease of reference (Annex 3).
8. Whilst the council has no statutory role in planning or delivering rail services or projects, it must continue to actively engage with the rail industry and Government to ensure that our priorities are reflected in rail service delivery, infrastructure investment and in planning for the future. The council therefore has a clear role in lobbying for and securing infrastructure improvements and service enhancements on the rail network. This includes our work on access for all improvements, such as at Stoneleigh Station, which often require partnership contributions to lever in substantial rail sector investment. It also includes our partnership work with the rail industry to improve public transport and active travel to, from and at railway stations, such as at Haslemere Station. In addition, the council needs to work with the rail industry to plan for and deliver improvements that mitigate the impact of new development, such as at Longcross Station. Finally, in terms of the council's strategic planning role, it is vital that we continue to consider and assess the strategic implications of projects such as airport expansion, which have clear linkages to our rail strategy and our priorities, requiring collaboration with a wide range of rail industry partners, peer councils and government.

9. The views of the Select Committee are sought on the New Rail Strategy for Surrey and the proposition to Cabinet as set out in the Cabinet report.

<b>Recommendations:</b>
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10. It is recommended that the Community, Environment and Infrastructure Select Committee:
- a) Welcomes the development of the New Rail Strategy for Surrey
  - b) Agrees that the views and comments of the Committee are provided to aid consideration of the New Rail Strategy for Surrey when Cabinet meets on 30 March 2021
  - c) Supports the proposal for the adoption of this New Rail Strategy for Surrey as set out in the Cabinet paper

<b>Next steps:</b>
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The New Rail Strategy for Surrey will be reported to Cabinet on 30 March 2021.

Subject to the agreement of Cabinet the New Rail Strategy for Surrey will be published on the council's web site accompanied by media and communications messaging and key stakeholders will also be informed of the publication.

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**Sources/background papers**

A New Strategy for Surrey 2021

**Annexes**

Annex 1 - Cabinet Report

Annex 2 - New Rail Strategy for Surrey

Annex 3 – Flow chart summarising the process followed

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