

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****DATE:** 27 APRIL 2021**REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER:** MR MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS**LEAD OFFICER:** KATIE STEWART, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**SUBJECT:** SURREY STREET DESIGN GUIDE: HEALTHY STREETS FOR SURREY**ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA:** TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITY/ENABLING A GREENER FUTURE**Purpose of the Report:**

Surrey County Council has commissioned Create Streets to refresh and update the Council's street design guidance. The existing guidance is incorporated as one of the chapters and Technical Appendix of 'Surrey Design', which was produced to promote the high-quality design of new developments in the County. It was published in January 2002 and is now out of date in many respects. This new guidance will primarily be used to notify the Council's street design expectations in respect of new developments; however, it will also be used to guide works on existing highway infrastructure, where relevant.

This report consists of a progress update in respect of the ongoing work and also seeks permission from the Cabinet to undertake stakeholder engagement. The Guidance will return to Cabinet in the future, following this engagement, for endorsement.

The refreshed approach to street design will support active travel and movement, seek to enrich the County's biodiversity and to support happy, healthy and sustainable lives. In doing so, this work will help to deliver the 'tackling health inequality' and 'enabling a greener future' dial up areas.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Notes the work undertaken by Create Streets - the latest draft of 'Healthy Streets for Surrey' is included at **Annex 1**;
2. Supports the aims and objectives of the draft guidance; and
3. Authorises stakeholder engagement.

Reason for Recommendations:

Surrey County Council has a significant role in the design and implementation of new development, particularly in respect of streets specifically and transportation in general. As such, the County Council as the local Highway Authority advises the county's Boroughs and Districts on the transportation implications of applications for planning permission. The Surrey Street Design Guide, 'Healthy Streets for Surrey,' is being produced in order to assist

developers, the Boroughs and Districts and the community to understand what the County Council will be seeking when considering proposals. The aim is to deliver high quality, attractive, safe, accessible and sustainable development.

Before the County Council finalises this approach, it wishes to share it with stakeholders to give them the opportunity to comment on and to influence the guide, with the ultimate aim of achieving well-designed places.

Executive Summary:

Introduction

1. Surrey County Council's existing design guidance 'Surrey Design' was published in January 2002. It is out-of-date and no longer complies with national guidance (see para 2). The County Council has therefore appointed Create Streets to review and refresh the Council's street design guidance so that it accords with current guidance and thinking. A consultation draft of the guidance 'Healthy Streets for Surrey' is at **Annex 1**.

National Policy Background

2. The Government published a National Design Guide in October 2019 including a number of movement characteristics that were considered to be priorities for well-designed places. These include integrated networks of routes for all modes of transport; clear structure and hierarchy of connected streets; and well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users.
3. The need for high quality design was reiterated in the Planning White Paper in 2020, along with a proposal for a fast track planning route for schemes that meet a high standard of design, and it continues to be a high Government priority.
4. Subsequently, the Government published its National Model Design Code in February 2021. It sets out the design considerations and the quality baseline that planning authorities will be expected to take into account when devising their own local design codes/guides and when determining planning applications. There is an expectation that Local Planning Authorities will develop their own design codes or guides.
5. The National Model Design Code sets design considerations which include:
 - The layout of new development, including street pattern;
 - How landscaping should be approached including the importance of streets being tree-lined;
 - The environmental performance of place and buildings to ensure they contribute to net zero carbon targets; and
 - That development should clearly take account of local vernacular and heritage, architecture and materials.

Aims of the Surrey Street Guidance

6. The 'Healthy Streets for Surrey' guide will establish the over-arching standards that the County Council would expect newly designed streets to meet. It will build on national guidance but will be Surrey-specific. It will ultimately be an on-line 'live' guide, although the draft for consultation is currently in traditional document form. It is proposed that there will then be further work, following the stakeholder engagement

and the endorsement of the 'Healthy Streets for Surrey' guide by Cabinet, to develop supporting detailed design and technical specifications for design, planning, transport and engineering professionals (subject to funding).

7. The document aims to result in places that improve Surrey residents' physical and mental health and reduce their environmental footprint by encouraging cycling and walking more often; create streets in which children can safely play; improve air quality; re-green streets and public spaces; reduce residents' transport carbon footprint and create beautiful, resilient and popular streets that will require less long-term maintenance.
8. The overarching principles of the guide are that streets should:
 - **Facilitate movement with a clear hierarchy of users** – designing firstly for pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and then private vehicles;
 - **Be safe, enjoyable and efficient to walk on** – streets that have direct routes, pleasant pavements and safe cycle paths, not drive to cul-de-sacs (where space allow for this approach. Cul-de-sacs are often the only workable design in single plot infill development in existing urban areas);
 - **Enrich Surrey's biodiversity** - streets with regularly spaced trees and green public spaces, not deserted lines of asphalt;
 - **Connect seamlessly to existing places to allow natural movement** – streets that link to existing roads and don't turn their back on neighbours;
 - **Be beautiful** – streets in which people want to raise their children and grow old, not streets that people avoid;
 - **Support happy, healthy and sustainable lives** – places with tight, finely grained streets not large winding bends.
9. The guide acknowledges the need for planners and highway professionals to work together as an integrated team. With the majority of planning decisions made by the Boroughs and Districts but with the County Council having responsibility for highways, partnership working is essential for successful place-making and to deliver high quality, integrated design.
10. Critically, and aligned to the Council's focus on empowering communities, the guide also stresses the importance of community engagement and the need to involve the local community in the design of places. By establishing the overall highway design principles, the guide should assist Boroughs and Districts and local communities when developing their own area of site-specific design codes.
11. Embracing this approach will benefit the residents of the County and contribute positively towards a number of the County Council's priorities such as the Climate Change Strategy, the Surrey Urban Strategy, and quality placemaking.

Good Street Design

12. The guide identifies the key components of good street design as street trees, slower traffic, high quality paving materials, design for active travel, streets with multiple uses and a local identity that give streets a sense of place. In combination, these contribute to better air quality, reduced casualties, increased walking and cycling and better mental and physical health.

13. The design elements addressed in the guide include carriageway and junction design; pedestrian and footway design; trees, street furniture and sustainable drainage; parking strategies; cycle facilities; integrated public transport; and connectivity.
14. The expectation would be that, following stakeholder engagement, completion of the final draft and Cabinet endorsement of the guide, all development schemes will be assessed against its principles and design elements.

Consultation:

15. A number of Cabinet Member briefings have taken place over the course of the Create Streets commission, including a Place Cabinet briefing on 15th June 2020 and full cabinet briefings on 13th October 2020 and 30th March 2021.
16. It is envisaged that stakeholder consultation will commence following Cabinet consideration latest draft of 'Healthy Streets for Surrey' guide. This will include internal County Council stakeholders and the Borough and District Councils.

Risk Management and Implications:

17. As Highway Authority, the County Council is a Statutory Consultee in the planning process in respect of highways and transportation matters. The design of streets is an integral part of this and therefore the County Council has a crucial role in the evolution of new development and place-making. Whilst the County Council can advise in respect of good highway design, it is not the final decision maker and cannot insist that the Boroughs and Districts accept that advice. There is a risk that County and Borough and District aspirations will not align. Through engagement with the Boroughs and Districts in respect of the contents of 'Healthy Streets for Surrey', it is hoped that any concerns they may have can be addressed prior to Cabinet endorsement.

Financial and Value for Money Implications:

18. There are no immediate additional costs associated with the production of this guide, which has already been resourced.
19. In terms of the content of the guide, the enhanced designs that the guide refers to will not necessarily lead to higher scheme costs. Street layouts in new developments that provide greater facilities for pedestrians and cyclists can be factored in at the design stage. With schemes that SCC are delivering, the guide can be used to influence designs to create better streets that prioritise people over vehicles.
20. Where higher quality materials are sought, the additional cost including the maintenance regime, has to be considered and the Council will continue to explore opportunities to pool together funding from a variety of sources to create better places (external funding and grants, SCC capital schemes, planning obligations, local committee/member allocations etc).

Section 151 Officer Commentary:

21. Although significant progress has been made over the last twelve months to improve the Council's financial position, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2021/22 remains uncertain. The public health crisis has resulted in increased costs which may

not be fully funded. With uncertainty about the ongoing impact of this and no clarity on the extent to which both central and local funding sources might be affected in the medium term, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority in order to ensure stable provision of services in the medium term. Although the Surrey Street Design is primarily intended to set out the Council's expectations for new developments (e.g. new housing provision) there may also be cost implications for future highway schemes, which will be considered as schemes are developed and within available funding envelopes.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer:

- 22. The County Council as Highway Authority and Planning Authority solely for minerals, waste and its own development, cannot formally adopt the 'Healthy Streets for Surrey' guide as a supplementary planning document, although it can be endorsed as good practice and strongly recommended to the Borough and District planning authorities.
- 23. As Highway Authority, however, the County Council can stipulate the circumstances under which it would be prepared to adopt streets under Section 38 of the Highways Act 1980. There would therefore be a significant incentive on those developers seeking to have their roads adopted to comply with the guidance.

Equalities and Diversity:

- 24. Streets designed with the primary focus on pedestrians and cyclists should result in more inclusive and safer spaces for all users, including those with protected characteristics.
- 25. In order to properly inform the Cabinet prior to the endorsement of the guide, an Equalities Impact Assessment will be carried out in parallel with the stakeholder engagement.

Other Implications:

- 26. The potential implications for the following council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this draft guidance.
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this draft guidance.
Environmental sustainability	The approach to street design in the guidance will increase trees and biodiversity, promote active travel and sustainable urban drainage systems which should all contribute towards net zero and mitigating climate change.

Public Health	There are a number of potential public health benefits that may result from this approach including increasing active travel resulting in better mental and physical health and fewer cars resulting in improved air quality.
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What Happens Next:

- 27. It is proposed that following this meeting, the draft 'Healthy Streets for Surrey Guide' will be shared with stakeholders to give them the opportunity to comment on the approach. A final draft will then be produced and returned to Cabinet for endorsement.
- 28. It is anticipated that the final draft will be available towards the end of April and therefore the aim is to commence stakeholder engagement w/b 10th May, after the election.
- 29. It is proposed that stakeholders are given at least 21 days to respond. The responses will then need to be collated and addressed, and any necessary changes made to the guide. The earliest the guide will return to the Cabinet will be June, potentially later, depending on the outcome of the engagement.

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Annexes:

Annex 1: Healthy Streets for Surrey draft for consultation

Sources/background papers:

Surrey Design 2002 [Design Guide II \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](http://surreycc.gov.uk)

National Design Guide 2019 [National design guide.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Planning For The Future White Paper 2020 [Planning for the future \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)

National Model Design Code 2021 [National Model Design Code \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](http://publishing.service.gov.uk)
