

## Surrey Transport Plan – Environmental Sustainability Statement

### Introduction

The new Surrey Transport Plan is designed to support achievement of the councils four key outcomes: net zero carbon, sustainable growth, well-connected communities, and clean air & excellent quality of life. Our approach to each of these outcomes is described in a separate impact strategy and embedded within a wider sustainability framework. All four outcomes are important; however, the Council and stakeholders have identified net zero carbon as the highest-priority outcome as there is an urgent need for action to respond to the climate emergency. This plan sets out the councils Transport sector response to tackle the climate emergency.

In the first instance, we will always seek to reduce or avoid adverse environmental, economic or social impact where possible and this will be a key consideration at the very earliest stages of the development of any transport intervention, or in developing any maintenance protocols.

### Reducing carbon

By setting a route map (Reducing Emissions Pathway) to significantly reducing carbon emissions from transport, this LTP is both unique and ground-breaking. In combination with our Climate Change Strategy, this LTP will mean that Surrey's transport systems will be carbon-neutral by 2050. Where we cannot remove carbon emissions altogether through the LTP, the Climate Change Strategy will set out how the remaining carbon will be offset, through methods such as carbon sequestration.

The Net Zero Carbon Impact Strategy describes how we will significantly reduce carbon emissions from transport use through the nine policy areas adopted by avoiding the need to travel, shifting journeys to non-motorised modes and improving the efficiency of travel.

But we plan to go further still across all transport infrastructure and service delivery by proactively taking every opportunity to:

- minimise the amount of embodied carbon 'designed in' to new infrastructure and reducing the waste generated in its construction;
- minimise the amount of operational carbon 'designed in' to service delivery, including for example minimising energy use in traffic signals and street lighting;
- use the transport estate to generate low carbon energy;
- help to transition to a 'circular economy'; and
- remove residual carbon emissions from the atmosphere, including by enhancing green infrastructure.

Our approach to proactive low-carbon design will be described in our new Design Guide.

### Air quality

Our Clean Air & Excellent Quality of Life Impact Strategy describes how we will improve air quality by reducing emissions from transport use through the nine policy areas adopted by avoiding the need to travel, shifting journeys to non-motorised modes and improving the efficiency of travel.

But as with carbon, we plan to go further by improving air quality through the way we design and deliver infrastructure. We will proactively take every opportunity to 'design in' green features to transport infrastructure which will increase absorption and dissipation of nitrogen dioxide and other pollutants, as well as reduce noise and light pollution. We will also work with and support partner organisations, such as our Districts and Boroughs, to address issues

noted in Air Quality Action Plans where Air Quality Management Areas have been declared due to transport emissions.

### **Climate change and resilience**

It is to be recognised that a changing climate is a reality that is happening now. We therefore want our transport network to be as resilient to the challenges this will bring as possible. This will include implementing measures where possible in new infrastructure (and existing infrastructure as opportunities arise) such as Natural Flood Management or Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) that will incorporate green roofs, swales, rain gardens and ponds. Not only will this help to mitigate flood risk but will also have benefits to water quality. In addition to flood risk, climate change resilience will also require a transport network that can withstand extremes of temperature, with adequate heating or cooling systems on transport vehicles and in stations.

### **Protecting our best areas, as well as our natural and built assets**

We will also seek to avoid and protect those areas within Surrey that are recognised at the very highest levels for their importance to nature conservation and biodiversity. Prime amongst these sites are those areas designated at the International level – Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites, as well as those areas that could be designated as such. These sites provide essential core breeding and resting sites for a range of rare and threatened species, along with rare natural habitat types and it is vital that these areas are protected from both direct and indirect effects of the transport network.

Similarly, there are a large number of other sites designated for nature conservation, of importance nationally, as well as more locally. These sites also deserve protection as much as possible and as with the International sites, it should be the goal to avoid these areas for transport provision.

For all sites designated for nature conservation, or for other reasons such as geodiversity or mineral protection, any potential direct or indirect impact on these sites that may arise from new and / or upgraded transport interventions will be appropriately assessed, mitigated and / or compensated for, in-line with existing best practice and relevant legislation across the life span of the Plan. This would include Habitats Regulation Assessment (or equivalent) when necessary. Where possible, opportunities should be taken to enhance these sites – through for example, planting of species that will act to increase habitat, or through measures to reduce air pollution and therefore reduce deposition of pollutants on these areas.

We will also work with partner organisations such as Natural England to support their work on the Green Transport Corridors and Green Infrastructure Agreements, as well as their recommendations of the Linear Infrastructure Network, ensuring that within or adjacent to the rail network and Major Road Network, green infrastructure can deliver biodiversity net gains, ecological connectivity and ecosystem services. Similarly, we will take opportunities as they arise to maximise the contribution transport interventions can make to developing Nature Recovery Networks through initiatives such as woodland, wetland or meadow creation.

Through protecting sites designated for nature conservation and encouraging Biodiversity Net Gain through developing Green Infrastructure, these measures will also have the benefit of helping to respect the landscape of Surrey which is recognised for its strength particularly those areas designated for their Outstanding Natural Beauty. We will ensure that design, construction or maintenance of any new or refurbished transport infrastructure considers and respects both the landscape and townscape of where it is located and seeks to ensure it enhances these where possible. This will include screening of infrastructure, both on site, or off site if appropriate.

Townscapes will also be protected and enhanced through addressing vehicle congestion through the measures to avoid travel and shift to more efficient modes outlined in our nine policy areas. Townscape will also be enhanced through removing unnecessary street furniture and signage, or by providing these, or other transport facilities such as stations in a style in keeping with the area.

In addition to protecting and enhancing townscapes, it is recognised that there is a need to protect our cultural heritage. As such, as well as with regard to townscape, we will work with partners and other bodies such as Historic England to minimise the impact of transport on heritage assets and protect and enhance the quality of buildings, structures and archaeological remains and their settings and ensure that due regard is given to the need to undertake archaeological investigations. Where appropriate, we will seek opportunities to protect and restore those features of note from our transport heritage such as old stations or bridges.

In addition to protecting and enhancing landscape, the design and implementation of any new or refurbished transport infrastructure will seek to protect soil and agricultural resources, including those of the highest value, as well as seek to make best use of previously developed land.

Opportunities will be taken to remediate land previously contaminated and it will be a default approach for any pollution incidents during construction or operation of our transport network to be addressed immediately and comprehensively. Addressing pollution from transport infrastructure at both construction and operation will also help to ensure water quality can be protected or enhanced. Similarly, developing a transport network that is as safe as possible will reduce the risk of accidents that, as well as protecting health, will protect the water environment. We will not promote any transport intervention that have unacceptable adverse impacts on water availability or quality.

As well as protecting health and water quality, a safe transport network will also encourage access to natural, cultural or educational assets. This will include through measures such as taking opportunities to connect these assets to active travel routes such as cycle and footpaths

We recognise that building and operating a transport network comes at a cost in terms of natural resources. Therefore, design consideration for new and upgraded infrastructure will be focused on reducing the amount of material required, as well as recycling and use of secondary or more sustainable materials in construction and operation of transport projects, encouraging whenever possible local suppliers that use sustainably-sourced and locally produced materials. Promotion of increasingly more sustainable waste management practices with transport-related infrastructure projects in line with the waste hierarchy will also be made.

### **Ensuring sustainability is embedded**

Prior to construction of any transport intervention, all schemes will be subject to the most appropriate level of assessment, in order to fully understand potential impacts and how these can be best avoided or mitigated, or enhanced where beneficial. This assessment will include Environmental Impact Assessment, as well as Habitats Regulation Assessment as appropriate and all schemes will be guided by HM Treasury Green Book and DfT WebTAG programme (or equivalents prevailing at that time) throughout the life of LTP4.

All schemes will require the development of Environmental Management Plans that will consider resource use, as well as wider environmental issues and how these will be addressed. Development of robust Environmental Management Plans will be a requirement of all construction, refurbishment and maintenance contracts.

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