

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****DATE: 25 OCTOBER 2022****REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMY****LEAD OFFICER: KATIE STEWART, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT, TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE****SUBJECT: HEALTHY STREETS FOR SURREY DESIGN GUIDE****ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA: GROWING A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY SO EVERYONE CAN BENEFIT/ TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITY/ENABLING A GREENER FUTURE/ EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES****Purpose of the Report:**

This report seeks to give an update on the development of the Healthy Streets for Surrey design guide and to seek the Cabinet's endorsement of the guidance and its adoption as County Council policy.

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. Endorses the Healthy Streets for Surrey guide;
2. Recommends adoption of the guide as County Council policy for the design of streets in all new developments in the County;
3. Agrees to apply the approach to all County Council public realm schemes;
4. Strongly recommends the guidance to the Boroughs and Districts; and
5. Delegates any amendments to the policy to the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth and the Executive Director for Environment, Transport and Infrastructure.

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 standards the County Council will be seeking when considering proposals. The aim is to deliver high quality, attractive, safe, accessible and sustainable development and well-designed places.

Executive Summary:

Introduction

1. Following a two-year review of the County Council's design standards for new streets, new guidance has been produced. The new guidance, the Healthy Streets for Surrey Design Guide, is at **Annex 1**. The Guide has been produced to assist developers; Borough and District officers and councillors; and local communities understand what the County Council will be seeking when considering the highways and transportation elements of proposals for development. The aim is to deliver high quality, attractive, safe, accessible and sustainable developments. All development schemes will be assessed against the Guides' principles and design elements.

National Policy Background

2. The Healthy Streets guide has been produced is against a backdrop of increased Government support and interest in high quality design and beautiful places. This can be seen in a number of national policy documents including the National Design Guide (October 2019), the National Model Design Code (February 2021) and the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill 2020.
3. 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 take account of local vernacular and heritage, architecture and materials.
4. In addition, the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill contains a requirement for local planning authorities to adopt a design code for the whole of their areas. The Healthy Streets guide is designed to assist the boroughs and districts in addressing the highways and movement issues in their own design codes.

Aims of the Healthy Streets Design Guide

5. The Healthy Streets for Surrey guide establishes the standards that the County Council would expect newly designed streets to meet. It builds on national guidance but is more detailed and takes into account the existing policies of the County Council. It will ultimately be presented as a 'live' digital design code, although it is currently in traditional static document form.
6. The aim of the updated guidance is to enable the creation of places that improve Surrey residents' physical and mental health and reduce their environmental footprint by encouraging cycling and walking more often; streets in which children can play

safely; improved air quality; re-greened streets and public spaces; a reduction in residents' transport carbon footprint; and the creation of beautiful, resilient and popular streets that will ultimately require less long-term maintenance.

7. 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;
 - Car dependent cul-de-sacs that restrict pedestrian and cycle accessibility should be avoided 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 unbroken lines of asphalt;
 - Connect seamlessly to existing places to allow natural movement – streets that link to existing roads rather than appearing separate and disconnected;
 - 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 – streets that are about much more than accommodating the private car.

8. The guide is clear about the need for planners, highways and other professionals involved in the design and delivery of new developments working together as an integrated team. The majority of planning decisions are made by the Boroughs and Districts but the County Council has responsibility for highways, such that partnership working is essential for successful place-making and to deliver high quality, integrated design.

9. 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 overall highway design principles, the guide should assist Boroughs and Districts and local communities when developing their own area or site-specific design codes.

10. 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.

11. The design elements addressed in the guide include carriageway and junction design; pedestrian and footway design; trees, street furniture and sustainable drainage; parking strategies; electric vehicle charging; cycle facilities; integrated public transport; and connectivity.

Healthy Streets Guide Implementation and the development of the digital Design Code

12. Following adoption of the Healthy Streets Guide, the County Council as Highway Authority will assess all development proposals on which it is consulted against the requirements of the guidance.

13. In order to give the guidance additional weight in the planning process, the County Council will strongly recommend it to the Borough and District planning authorities and support them to adopt it as a supplementary planning document or to incorporate it into their own design guidance/design codes.
14. The County Council offers transportation development planning training to Borough and District planning committee members and this will be expanded to include training on the Healthy Streets guidance and approach. This will be proactively promoted when the County Council has adopted the guidance.
15. As Highway Authority, the County Council can stipulate the circumstances under which it would be prepared to adopt streets under Section 38 of the Highways Act 1980. The current County Council policy states that the authority will only adopt roads that have been constructed to a satisfactory standard. Therefore there would be a significant incentive on those developers seeking to have their roads adopted to comply with the guidance.
16. The County Council's Transport Development Planning team will work with developers at the pre-application stage of developments to embed the guidance in new proposals. A major housebuilder has already indicated their willingness to be a pilot project.
17. It was always the intention that the guidance would be converted to a 'live' web-based version once it had been approved. In September 2021, the County Council submitted a successful expression of interest to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to be a Design Pathfinder. This has provided funding and DLUHC support for the production of a digital design code, based on the Healthy Streets guidance. A draft is due to be produced by March 2023.
18. The current round of 28 DLUHC pathfinders is aimed at developing new ways to empower communities to have their say on the development of new homes, buildings and amenities, such as shops and workspace, in their area and help restore people's pride in the places they live. Since SCC is a Highway Authority and not a local planning authority, the design code focuses on movement and public realm characteristics.
19. The SCC Placemaking Group will lead the pathfinder project. Local communities and the Surrey Boroughs and Districts will be able to use Surrey's digital guidance to help develop the highways and transportation elements of their own more detailed, place specific Design Codes or simply 'plug it in'. Reigate and Banstead Borough Council is currently developing a design code for the Redhill to Horley Corridor through the same DLUHC funding stream and this presents an early opportunity to explore how it might happen in practice. This collaborative working should produce a blueprint which can be replicated across the other boroughs and districts.

| |
|----------------------|
| Consultation: |
|----------------------|

20. A number of Cabinet Member briefings took place during the initial stages of the work, including a Place Cabinet briefing on 15th June 2020 and full Cabinet briefings

on 13th October 2020 and 30th March 2021. The initial stakeholder consultation draft was considered by Cabinet on 27th April 2021 when support for the aims and objectives was confirmed. Member Development Sessions were held on 2nd September 2021 and 23rd May 2022 (in conjunction with LTP4 Liveable Neighbourhoods initiative). All Members were notified and invited to respond to the latest stakeholder consultation. The Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee considered the guidance at their meeting on 6th October 2022.

21. Initial stakeholder engagement took place in May and June 2021 in order to establish the principles of the guidance. At that point, the framework and high-level concepts for the guidance had been produced and this formed the basis of the engagement. The responses received were then used to inform the development of the detailed guidance.
22. The draft detailed guidance was completed in early July 2022. Further Stakeholder Engagement commenced on 15th July for two months, ending on 15th September 2022. Following the assessment of the responses, changes will be made to the final version of the guidance where necessary. The principles of the guidance however were established in 2021 so these have not changed.
23. The stakeholders engaged in both rounds of engagement include all eleven districts and boroughs in the County; the Surrey Association of Local Councils; the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People; Surrey Police; the Surrey Development Forum; and a range of developers and consultants active in Surrey. Key internal stakeholders were also consulted in respect of the contents of the guidance.

Risk Management and Implications:

24. 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 residential schemes and therefore the County Council has a crucial role in the evolution of new development and place-making. However, whilst the County Council can advise in respect of good highway design, it is not the final decision maker on planning applications that are outside of its own planning remit, and therefore, it 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 the stakeholder engagement with the Boroughs and Districts, it is hoped that any concerns have been addressed.

Financial and Value for Money Implications:

25. There are no immediate additional costs associated with the production of the guide, which has already been resourced. A £120,000 DLUHC grant will cover the cost of the development of the digital design code.
26. 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. In any case, the costs will be borne by the developers. With schemes that SCC are delivering, the guide can be used to influence designs to create better streets that prioritise people over vehicles.

27. Where high 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, CIL etc.) Commuted sums will continue to be sought from developers to cover the ongoing maintenance costs associated with the adoption of new streets.

Section 151 Officer Commentary:

28. Although significant progress has been made to improve the Council's financial position, the financial environment remains challenging. The UK is experiencing the highest levels of inflation for decades, putting significant pressure on the cost of delivering our services. Coupled with continued increasing demand and fixed Government funding this requires an increased focus on financial management to ensure we can continue to deliver services within available funding. In addition to these immediate challenges, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2022/23 remains uncertain. With no clarity on central government funding 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.
29. There are no direct financial implications of the proposal to adopt the guidance as County Council policy. Possible financial implications of the approach on County Council promoted schemes would be dealt with on a project-by-project basis as per usual governance and budget processes.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer:

30. 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.
31. Under the County Council's Policy for Adopting Roads and Streets, the County Council stipulates the circumstances under which it would be prepared to adopt streets under Section 38 of the Highways Act 1980.

Equalities and Diversity:

32. Streets designed with the primary focus on access and use by pedestrians and cyclists should result in more inclusive and safer spaces for all users, including those with protected characteristics.
33. An initial Equalities and Diversity screening was undertaken to determine whether a full assessment was required for the Healthy Streets guide. The guidance is considered to be neutral in respect of the protected and other groups and is unlikely to reduce or improve conditions specifically for those groups.

34. This is an overarching policy document. Individual development proposals should seek to ensure that any perceived or actual inequalities are eliminated through up-to-date design standards which address disabled access and social inclusivity.

Other Implications:

35. 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 guidance. |
| Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults | No significant implications arising from this 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. |
| Compliance against net-zero emissions target and future climate compatibility/resilience | The guidance in itself will not lead to an increase in carbon emissions, indeed the impact is likely to be broadly positive with developments that facilitate access on foot and by bicycle and encourage a shift away from the private car inevitably leading to a reduction in transport-based emissions. Individual developments will need to satisfy the relevant planning authorities that they are climate compatible and resilient and meet the relevant emissions targets. |
| 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. |

What Happens Next:

36. Following Cabinet endorsement, the County Council will be asked to ratify the approach. The guidance will be finalised to take account of the outcomes of the stakeholder engagement with any amendments to the policy approved by the

Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth and the Executive Director for Environment, Transport and Infrastructure prior to Council consideration.

37. Following ratification the County Council as highway authority will use the guidance to assess the suitability of applications for planning permission and to determine whether to adopt new residential streets or not.

38. The digital design code version of the guidance will be developed with the first draft due to be available in March 2023, in line with the DLUHC Design Pathfinder programme.

Report Author: Caroline Smith; Planning Group Manager; Infrastructure, Planning and Major Projects (07968 832700 / carolinedrinkwater@surreycc.gov.uk)

Deborah Fox; Placemaking Group Manager, Infrastructure, Planning and Major Projects (07977 060977 / Deborah.fox@surreycc.gov.uk)

Consulted:

Detailed in the report above.

Annexes:

Annex 1: Healthy Streets for Surrey Consultation Draft (July 2022)

Sources/background papers:

Cabinet Report 23rd September 2014 – Policy for adopting roads and streets as Highways maintainable at public expense [Issue details - Policy for adopting roads and streets as Highways maintainable at public expense - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

Cabinet Report 27th April 2021 – Surrey Street Design Guide: Healthy Streets for Surrey [Cabinet Report-Surrey Street Design.pdf \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

Surrey Design 2002 [Design Guide II \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

National Design Guide 2019

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/962113/National_design_guide.pdf

National Model Design Code 2021

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/957205/National_Model_Design_Code.pdf

Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill 2022 [Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill \(parliament.uk\)](#)
