

Surrey Housing, Homes & Accommodation Strategy

Stage Two: Deliberative engagement programme – Workshops

As part of the move from evidence base to strategy, Inner Circle Consulting will facilitate four workshops focused on the eight common themes identified for further consideration and action. These workshops will be held through October, to allow for a cross-section of key partners and stakeholders to come together, digest the relevant data and feedback from the evidence base and to consider how, collectively, action could be taken to address these issues in two ways:

- 1) Exploring and developing the joint case to be made by Surrey councils, partners and stakeholders to central government, which would make it easier for partners in Surrey to achieve their housing ambitions; and
- 2) Considering, within the current policy environment (accepting that it is fluid), what partners could do collectively to better achieve their housing ambitions.

Workshop Focus

The evidence base identified eight common themes, of which the first, Partnership Working, underpins everything. It is proposed to group the remaining themes in the following way for the workshops reflecting areas of overlap and interdependencies:

Workshop One – Supporting Vulnerable Residents

This workshop will cover the support in place for homeless families, children, care leavers, and residents in need of additional support alongside their housing. The evidence base reported a feeling from some participants that there was a degree of siloed working and resource defensiveness across a system that relies on partnership to support some of the county's most vulnerable residents. This workshop will also explore the shape of Surrey's affordable housing provision, rent levels and what this means for families in low-pay or reliant on social security.

Workshop Two – Older People and Under occupation

This workshop will look at the supply, affordability, quality and range of older people's housing across Surrey and interrogate the high levels of under occupation of housing in the County, which dwarfs levels of overcrowding. This will include looking at the ways in which the market is, or could, respond to provide suitable down-sizing accommodation as well as the supporting infrastructure that is required to support older people to live a fulfilled life in their later years.

Workshop Three – Climate Crisis Response

This workshop will look at the three areas identified in the evidence base as of relevance in relation to the climate crisis:

- 1) The shift in funding priorities amongst housing providers from development to retrofit.
- 2) Responding to climate-based opposition to new housing supply in Surrey
- 3) What a 20-minute neighbourhood could/should look like in a Surrey context.

The workshop will include a consideration of the policy and funding context for home energy efficiency, particularly for the more vulnerable, as well as the role of the council, the housing provider and the private sector in responding to the joint crises of climate and cost-of-living.

Workshop Four – Land Supply and Housing Development Capacity

The long-term undersupply of housing in Surrey is at the root of many of the challenges identified by the evidence base, including the accelerating unaffordability of private housing for buyers in the county. This workshop will look at public sector land ownership, the process for release of that land for housing and the way in which it is marketed. It will also look at where the development capacity, either direct or in partnership, already exists in Surrey and how to avoid ‘delivery deserts’ which would further entrench the existing housing crisis.

The workshop will also consider the volume of private house-building taking place in the county and any real or perceived barriers to development land being brought forward.

Workshop Structure

ICC will produce evidence summary packs for each workshop, pulling the relevant (and sometimes overlapping) data from the full evidence base. These packs will be circulated in advance to give participants time to digest the data and to ask any points of clarification.

The packs will also include case studies from elsewhere in the country showing a range of approaches to tackling the issues from each workshop. These will be included as examples, rather than recommendations, to look at the different approaches that can be taken. This will be summarised in an intervention framework showing examples from low-intervention through to high-intervention in that area which again is provided to provoke debate and discussion. As part of the workshops partners’ appetites for closer joint working will be tested in an anonymous straw poll on the intervention framework.

These could be held online via teams or in person – but room size restrictions could limit participation for in-person meetings.

Example running order of workshop:

10:00	Welcome and Introductions
10:05	Recap of the Summary Evidence
10:20	Break into smaller groups to discuss lobbying asks of Central Government
10:45	Feedback from breakout groups
11:00	Recap of case studies and the intervention framework, with straw poll on approach
11:15	Break into smaller groups to discuss partnership approach in Surrey
11:45	Feedback from breakout Groups and reveal of straw poll result.
12:00	Close of session

Workshop Participants

As the Strategy is about how Surrey collectively responds to the housing crisis facing the county, we suggest that participants should be at senior/executive decision-making level. We will also need to ensure good geographic and service provision representation so that we continue to take a comprehensive and broad approach to the strategy. To date we have engaged with over 30 senior stakeholders across SCC, the district and boroughs, the wider public and private sectors, and housing providers. We will approach the original stakeholder list initially, allocating participants to relevant workshops, accepting that there will be a degree of overlap, as well as working with those representatives to identify further invitees who would be able to constructively contribute to the discussions.