

CABINET- 28 MARCH 2023

CABINET RESPONSE TO THE : SURREY STRATEGY FOR ACCOMMODATION, HOUSING AND HOMES

RESOLVED (Stephen Cooksey and John Furey abstained):

The Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee:

1. Recognises that the County Council can make a positive contribution to the many and diverse challenges relating to housing and therefore supports the principle of establishing a comprehensive Surrey-wide housing strategy founded on mutual respect and common interests of all partners.
2. Is concerned that, while no individual prospective partner should wield a 'veto' in the process, the County's 11 District and Borough Council Leaders have expressed serious concerns and therefore welcomes the Cabinet Member's i) pledge to reflect on and take further into account the views of the District and Borough Council Leaders, as expressed by Councillor Cooksey, and ii) offer to continue to engage with those Councils.
3. Urges the early development of key performance indicators to determine whether the high ambitions and expectations arising from the Strategy as listed in paragraph 14 of the report are realistic.
4. Requests that recommendation bullet points 2 & 3 above are addressed before a final strategy to Cabinet is presented.

John O'Reilly
Chairman of the Community, Environment & Highways Select Committee

Cabinet Response:

I welcome the Select Committee's general stance to the Surrey-wide housing strategy. The case for preparing and engaging widely on a county-wide strategy for housing, accommodation and homes is well-made and the recognition of this and support of the CEH Select Committee is very much welcomed.

The baseline assessment of the Surrey housing ecosystem can leave no-one in any doubt about the scale of the challenge, described by our advisors as a 'crisis'. The Select Committee's view that the County Council can make a positive contribution to the many and diverse challenges relating to housing and support for the principle of establishing a comprehensive Surrey-wide housing strategy founded on mutual respect and common interests of all partners, is welcomed.

This is a strategy not just for the County Council, but for all those agencies, organisations, bodies and communities that have a role in and opportunity to make a difference to housing in Surrey. That most certainly includes all of Surrey's 11 District and Borough Councils, in view of their statutory responsibilities for Housing and Planning, democratic sovereignty, and place-leadership and place-shaping roles.

We have engaged directly with District and Borough Council Housing and Planning officers, Chief Executives and Leaders and in response to concerns raised by the Select Committee, have extended this further to include public consultation. In addition, I deferred the item from the February Cabinet meeting to allow more time for feedback to be captured and reflected in the strategy. I have also reached out to those that have requested to discuss the strategy further, one meeting offer has not been responded to, the other is to be rescheduled.

Work is underway to develop a range of indicators, metrics and measures of success, that will enable the progress made in the multi-agency delivery of the strategy to be tracked, monitored, reported and demonstrated over time.

Sinead Mooney

Cabinet Member for Children and Families

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