

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**CABINET****DATE: 31 OCTOBER 2023****REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: MARISA HEATH, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT****LEAD OFFICER: CAROLYN MCKENZIE, DIRECTOR FOR ENVIRONMENT****SUBJECT: SURREY CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE STRATEGY****ORGANISATION STRATEGY PRIORITY AREA: ENABLING A GREENER FUTURE****Purpose of the Report:**

The Surrey Climate Change Strategy (2020) identified the need to develop actions to increase Surrey's resilience to Climate Change. Surrey will need to adapt to significant changes in our climate that are already impacting on our infrastructure, services, communities and ecosystems. The strategy presented in this report, 'the Surrey Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Strategy (Surrey Adapt)', was developed with partners, and helps Surrey County Council and those partners to manage climate impacts and risks in a more efficient and coordinated manner. The Strategy delivers on the council's priority of enabling a greener future, but will also contribute towards a safer, more secure and resilient county across multiple sectors and services. This Cabinet report introduces the Strategy for approval by Council.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approve the Surrey Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Strategy.

Reason for Recommendations:

The impacts of climate change are already being felt across Surrey and will worsen in the coming years. The Surrey Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Strategy "Surrey Adapt" sets out Surrey's collective approach to avoiding, reducing and adapting to these increasing risks. This includes planning for and adapting to: floods; droughts and water insecurity; heatwaves and prolonged changes in temperature extremes; wildfires; and other potential knock-on impacts of climate change on human health, disease burden, impacts on infrastructure and the natural environment.

Background and context

1. On 9 July 2019, Surrey County Council declared a 'climate emergency' and committed to work with partners to agree Surrey's collective response. We are already tackling carbon reduction through Surrey's Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan and associated net zero targets. However, alongside mitigating further climate change, there is a real imperative to prepare and adapt to the considerable climate change impacts that we are already experiencing. The strategy presented in this report, "Surrey Adapt," sets out Surrey's response to the hazards, risks, vulnerabilities, and opportunities posed by the impacts of climate change.
2. Climate change adaptation is about responding to the climate impacts and risks that we are already facing and that will amplify in coming years. Responding to these impacts effectively goes beyond the capacity of reactive emergency management alone and require long term resilience in all that residents, businesses and authorities do.
3. The past few decades have brought increasing climate risks and extreme weather events to Surrey, with impacts felt most strongly by the most vulnerable. This includes one of the most severe heatwaves reaching over 40°C for the first time ever, along with record-breaking fire seasons as well as simultaneously contending with regular flood events. These extreme weather events have seen infrastructure and services severely impacted, as well as residents, businesses and wider communities feeling the effects.
4. The County Council and partners have already seen an increase in demand for services at particular times of the year, whether from increased need for highway maintenance in the face of increased road defects arising from extreme heat in the summer to extreme cold in the winter, to increased demand for community facilities in cold temperatures – and the resulting warm hubs programme launched last year. Therefore, on one level, there is a need for the Council and its partners to ensure that their services are ready to respond to this increased demand and ensure resilience to the impact of changing weather patterns.
5. On another level, however, regions that adapt more effectively and earlier than others will become increasingly attractive from an investment perspective (from both businesses but also relevant financing bodies – banks, insurance etc.) and well-adapted areas will be able to benefit economically both from being resilient but also from opportunities presented from the changing climate (e.g., diversification in agricultural sectors, tourism etc).
6. Finally, a strong well-coordinated response by Surrey County Council and partners (as presented by this strategy) is essential to maximise Surrey's

chances of accessing the additional investment needed in our infrastructure, transport, and flood risk management. In addition, well-designed adaptation responses have multiple benefits for nature, communities, health and wellbeing as well as reducing the need for disaster response and mitigating higher insurance premiums into the future. In doing so, the Strategy helps us achieve the community Vision for Surrey 2030 by addressing a key corporate risk to all our services.

The Strategy

7. The proposed Strategy sets out a vision and 9 priority programmes that will support our ability to manage the climate risks that we are already facing.

The **vision** sets out an ambition for a “***Surrey adapted to a changed climate - resilient and prepared across communities, ecosystem, infrastructure and the economy***”.

8. The 9 priority programmes are set out below, alongside an additional cross cutting programme:

1. Climate Resilient Organisations
2. Partnerships for Resilience
3. Climate Resilient Biodiversity and Natural Resources
4. Climate Resilient land use, Agriculture and Food System
5. Climate Resilient and Healthy Communities
6. Climate Resilient Buildings and Planning
7. Climate Resilient Transport, Energy and Infrastructure
8. Climate Resilient Water Resources
9. Climate Resilient Economy

Cross cutting - Enabling Change (Governance, Finance and Communications)

9. The strategy also includes a set of underlying principles guiding how Surrey will approach adaptation and resilience in a changing climate. It is based on national and international best practice and a growing evidence base including from impacts already being experienced in Surrey.

10. The Strategy, produced in collaboration with key partner organisations, presents a ‘direction’ for both Surrey and Surrey County Council. A more detailed action plan will be developed in the next 6 months, with specific actions per directorate over the next 18 months (taking us into early 2025) being developed as more is known about our risks and issues and the most appropriate ways of responding.

11. The following are some key areas of focus from the Strategy:

- Undertaking climate risk and vulnerability assessments for key priority locations and sectors for example key towns
- Integration of climate risk into policy, planning and infrastructure design alongside work already on going with partners covering climate change mitigation and nature recovery

- Strengthening of partnerships with major stakeholders such as utilities and government agencies such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Forestry Commission to enable joint delivery
- Developing a targeted approach to support more vulnerable groups to adapt such as schools and care homes, as well as specific geographical areas ensuring a just approach and that no one is left behind
- Incorporation of climate resilience in the Council's and partners' engagement with the business sector
- Developing a collective approach, with partners, to engagement and communication to communities that raises awareness of the risks but also what action can be taken to adapt.

More details can be found in the full strategy in **Annex 1**.

Consultation:

12. Public consultation was undertaken in the development of the Climate Change Strategy in 2021 which also covered aspects of climate change risks, impacts and adaptation. In the development of this strategy, there has been extensive engagement within Surrey County Council and with Borough and District councils - via officers, and the Greener Futures Boards. Multiple sessions and member seminars have taken place with members over the past year.
13. Once Cabinet have considered the report, the intention is to publish the strategy and as part of the strategy, will engage with communities as appropriate to specific projects or workstreams.
14. See **Annex 2** for further details of consultation and engagement that has taken place.

Risk Management and Implications:

15. Although this paper doesn't commit the Council to any expenditure, adapting to climate change may require additional costs in the future. These can be minimised by early consideration of measures for adaptation in the design of infrastructure and services and by scheduling improvements into planned maintenance cycles which reduces both disruption and costs.
16. Any additional investment by the Council would be subject to normal decision making governance, and further analysis will be undertaken during the development of business cases for such decisions. Ultimately, the actions identified within the strategy enable the Council and partners to manage risk better, and avoid and reduce impacts, with our communities, businesses and partners.
17. In addition, updated climate science projections indicate that climate change may be happening faster than originally predicted. The Strategy, and the subsequent action plans will continue to be responsive to changes in evidence and inform decision-making. Corporate and Directorate risk

registers will provide the vehicle for highlighting the need for accelerated action if impacts affect services more quickly than projected.

18. The above risks will be monitored through the Greener Futures Steering Group internally and the Greener Futures Board externally, and where decisions on changes to service or policies is required, they will be taken through appropriate governance.

Financial and Value for Money Implications:

19. Revenue resource requirements within ETI for the implementation phase of the strategy are reflected in the Council's updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This resource will support the other directorates in implementing strategy requirements using their existing staff and budgets. Any future additional resources would be considered as part of the wider budget through the usual governance processes.
20. No additional capital expenditure is requested at this time with actions contained within existing MTFS budgets. In some service areas, future adaptation may require investment – for instance, in some cases, adapting the Council's estate may require investment to ensure design and construction are climate proofed. In all cases, any additional investment identified will be subject to the usual governance processes, and in this case, normal governance for capital investment. However, in most cases, up-front investment in climate adaptation should save money in the medium to long term and therefore be self-funding, although each project will be subject to its own value for money assessment. Any future potential additional investment identified over and above current MTFS levels will be subject to it being affordable within the council's capital programme.
21. The strategy sets out how the Council will ensure all services are assessing cost increases due to climate risks and considering the opportunity to mitigate these through their own decision-making and investment.

Section 151 Officer Commentary:

22. Significant progress has been made in recent years to improve the Council's financial resilience and the financial management capabilities across the organisation. Whilst this has built a stronger financial base from which to deliver our services, the increased cost of living, global financial uncertainty, high inflation and government policy changes mean we continue to face challenges to our financial position. This requires an increased focus on financial management to protect service delivery, a continuation of the need to be forward looking in the medium term, as well as the delivery of the efficiencies to achieve a balanced budget position each year.
23. In addition to these immediate challenges, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2023/24 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 the stable provision of services in the medium term.

24. The costs of implementing this strategy are covered within existing MTFS budgets. As such, the S151 Officer supports the approval of this strategy.

Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer:

25. The Climate Change Adaptation Strategy has evolved from the Climate Change Delivery Plan approved by the Cabinet in October 2021. There are no further legal implications.

Equalities and Diversity:

26. As stated in the Equalities Impact Assessment, climate impacts tend to amplify existing factors driving inequality in our communities and are therefore likely to place additional pressure on those already the most vulnerable, further exacerbating inequalities in our communities. As such, because this strategy seeks to mitigate the impact of climate change, its development should serve to reduce the detrimental impacts of climate change in terms of equalities and diversity.

27. There is no foreseen negative impact on residents with protected characteristics arising from the specific interventions identified by the strategy, but in some areas, further information is needed as more detailed work is carried out with the directorates and partner organisations to develop the action plan to follow.

Other Implications:

28. 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	Not applicable
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	Not applicable
Environmental sustainability	Directly responds to positive co-benefits for this area.
Compliance against net-zero emissions target and future climate compatibility/resilience	Directly responds to positive co-benefits for this area, and develops the strategy for this area on resilience for the County.
Public Health	Directly responds to positive co-benefits for this area.

What Happens Next:

29. Next steps, provided the strategy is approved, will include, as set out in the strategy:

- A “Surrey Adapt” launch event is being planned for winter 2023;
- Further support and collaboration with the districts and boroughs of Surrey;
- More detailed risk assessments and action plan development with the Surrey County Council Directorates over the next 18 months;
- A plan for resourcing will need to be developed and agreed with the Cabinet Member for Environment, Executive Director for ETI and CLT as this is a corporate issue.

30. The Strategy will be hosted as an accessible HTML set of pages on the Surrey County Council website (with a short PDF summary for download or print purposes). Engagement opportunities will be sought in partnership with district and boroughs climate change officers and teams working on resilience, climate change or sustainability issues.

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Consulted:

See Annex 2 for details of consultation.

Annexes:

Annex 1. Surrey Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Strategy

Annex 2. List of Consultation and Engagement activities

Sources/background papers:

Surrey Climate Change Risk and Opportunities Assessment Report 2021

Surrey Climate Change Strategy¹

¹ [Surrey's climate change strategy - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk)

Annex 1. Surrey Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Strategy

The strategy can be found at the following link:

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/community/climate-change/what-are-we-doing/adaptation-strategy/ nocache>

Annex 2. Surrey Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Strategy – List of consultations

1 November 2022	Strategy Sector Workshop: Nature Based Solutions, Countryside and Agriculture (SCC Countryside and Environment staff; Surrey Wildlife Trust, SE Rivers Trust, Surrey Hills AONB, D&Bs)
4 November 2022	Strategy Sector Workshop: Planning and Place-Making (SCC Planning staff, D&Bs)
9 November 2022	Strategy Sector Workshop: Health and Wellbeing (SCC Public Health, NHS)
11 November 2022	Strategy Sector Workshop: Critical Infrastructure, Housing and Built Environment (SCC low carbon, spatial planning, transport, historic environment, asset planning staff, D&Bs)
15 October 2022	Surrey Adapt Workshop (included both SCC, and D&B staff, as well as invitees from: National Trust; Thames Water; SES Water; Affinity Water; DEFRA; MET Office; NHS; Network Rail; Surrey Wildlife Trust; Surrey Hills AONB.
6 October 2022	Surrey Local Resilience Forum SLRF (Working Day focussed on climate change impacts, risks and adaptation needs, linked to the emergency services and resilience responses)
17 October 2022	Corporate Leadership Team presentation on climate change impacts and heatwaves in collaboration with emergency services
28 November 2022	Members seminar (Joint seminar with wildfire response from summer heatwaves, and introduction of climate change adaptation and need for strategy)
27 February 2023	Members seminar (Introduce adaptation strategy concepts and outline for awareness)
2 March 2023	SCC Districts & Boroughs Climate Change Officers Forum (presentation on high level strategy)
9 March 2023	Greener Future Member Reference Group (Introduce high level strategy, inputs, and advice on scrutiny and process)
22 March 2023	Greener Futures Partnership Steering Group Draft document and adaptation high level strategy presented
April 2023 – by email	Adaptation Working Group and Climate Change Officers reps Draft strategy for technical comments
17 April 2023	Surrey Flood Risk Partnership Board Draft document and adaptation strategy presented

26 April 2023	SCC Greener Futures Steering Group (Presented Draft Strategy for Scrutiny)
17 May 2023	GF Member Reference Group (Presented high level summary of strategy)
June 2023 – by email	Draft document distributed for comment to the “Surrey Adapt” group of subject experts who attended the broader Surrey Adapt Workshop in winter of 2022.
June-July 2023	Flood Risk Partnership Board (Presented a summary of the strategy to all the one-one Flood Risk Catchment Management Priority Setting meetings with all the District and Borough in Surrey, and sent the draft document to these groups for comments)
3 July 2023	Informal Cabinet – ICAB (Briefing note on the strategy presented for noting)
10 July 2023	Greener Futures Partnership Board Special Workshop on the Adaptation Strategy
July 2023 – by email	GF Partnership Board – Final Draft strategy distributed for final comment
12 September 2023	Corporate Leadership Team - CLT (Briefing note on the strategy presented)
19 September 2023	Informal Cabinet – ICAB (Briefing note on the strategy presented)
October	Present Cabinet Report and full document for Cabinet Approval .