

CABINET – 21 DECEMBER 2021

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Public Questions**Question (1): John Oliver**

Around 25% of land in Surrey falls within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Surrey County Council and the five other local authorities in which the AONB is situated adopted the 2020-2025 AONB Management Plan in 2019. Surprisingly, there is no mention of this Plan in the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan agreed by the Cabinet at its last meeting.

The 44-page Management Plan has only around 70 words mentioning climate change, one sentence addressing flooding and no mention whatsoever of global warming (i.e. the human contribution to climate change), greenhouse gases, carbon sequestration and adaptation. Very surprisingly, there is also no mention of the Council's strategy to plant 1.2 million trees, despite the fact that the tree planting strategy was launched two months before the Management Plan.

The Management Plan is completely out of touch with the threat of climate change/global warming and the Council's drive to combat this in Surrey.

Does the Council agree that, because of the existential crisis that is facing us, instead of the AONB Board sticking, as it is, rigidly and pedantically, to reviewing the Plan only once every five years, the constituent authorities should require the AONB Board to conduct an urgent review of the current Plan and draw up a new one for adoption within, say, 12 months to fully address:

- climate change;
- global warming;
- biodiversity loss;
- adaptation;
- the SCC tree strategy;
- the actions that will need to be taken to “conserve and enhance” its natural beauty as the crisis unfolds; and

if not, why not?”

Reply:

There is a statutory duty under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act for local authorities to adopt a Management Plan for their respective Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) on a no less than 5 year basis. The AONB Management Plans set out a vision and policy framework for the designated National Landscape. The current AONB Management Plan was formally adopted by all the constituent local authorities for the period (2020 – 2025).

The periodic reviews of the AONB Management Plan will always need to take account of changes in national legislation as well as local plans and strategies that happen during the Plan period including the Surrey Climate Change Delivery Plan. Furthermore, it is anticipated that Defra guidance on AONB Management Plans in England will be provided following Government's response to the Glover report which is expected in January 2022.

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Within the framework of the AONB Management Plan, the AONB Board does undertake an ongoing review of the Delivery Strategy. Given the scale of the crisis that is being faced, I will be proposing to the AONB Unit and the AONB Board that they work with the Greener Futures Team to develop an AONB Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan that can draw from the priorities and evidence base as set out in the Greener Futures Climate Change Strategy and Delivery Plan. The Greener Futures Team can support this. The relevant AONB local authorities have all expressed support for the direction of the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan at a recent Surrey Leaders and Surrey Chief Execs meeting and therefore using this as a basis for the AONB would complement the current local authority approach to climate change.

This Plan can be completed in 12 months and integrated into the new AONB Management Plan and monitored as part of the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan. In the meantime the Surrey Hills AONB Board is taking forward many activities that help to address Climate Change including the following recent activity:

- Recently publishing Making Space for Nature – a landowner and land manager-led approach to nature recovery
- Investing in regenerative farming and coordinating the planting of over 35,000 hedgerow trees this planting season
- Organising a Climate and Biodiversity Symposium with Surrey University in November and the Sustainable Business Conference, Towards Net Zero, at Pennyhill Park in October

Please do get in touch with Rob Fairbanks, the Surrey Hills AONB Director, if you would like any more information on the work of the Surrey Hills AONB.

Marisa Heath
Cabinet Member for Environment
21 December 2021

Question (2): Sus Lopez-Garcia

Does Item 12 on the agenda prevent any improvements/amendments for land acquisition in connection to planning application <https://planning.surreycc.gov.uk/planappdisp.aspx?AppNo=SCC%20Ref%202021/0185> ? because the residents of Murray Road have collectively got together and suggested improvements as referenced in our letter dated 19 November 2021 version 1.3. These improvements were made before the application went live on the 3rd December 2021. We are conscious that the deadline for the planning application is 31st December 2021 and this meeting is being held shortly before, on 21st December 2021.

Reply:

Thank-you for your question relating to planning matters for the A320 HIF scheme and in particular, to Otter Roundabout. The Cabinet meeting on the 21st December is intended to provide an update to Cabinet in relation to Statutory Provisions and provide for Side Road Orders (SRO) for the A320 HIF scheme. It should be noted that the approval to proceed with the statutory compulsory purchase orders (CPO) process was made in the July 2021 Cabinet meeting. The reason for duplication regarding CPO in the December 21st meeting is that the CPO and SRO applications are made simultaneously (January 2022).

With respect to the 'FINAL letter' you sent to SCC ahead of the planning process, the contents are currently being considered by the project team. A copy of our response to this letter will

be sent to the planning officer and considered during the determination of the planning application.

The planning application will be determined by the Planning and Regulatory Committee independent of any discussions about this matter at Cabinet. If you wish to make specific comments in respect of the planning application, please make these by letter, the on-line form or via email to mwcd@surreycc.gov.uk. Although the closing date for representations is 31st December, we will endeavour to ensure all relevant comments are made available to decision makers if received by 12 noon the day before the relevant planning and regulatory committee or up to the point of a delegated decision being made.

Matt Furniss
Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure
21 December 2021

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