

THURSDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2022

## HEALTHY STREETS FOR SURREY DESIGN GUIDE

Purpose of report: To update members about the development of the Healthy Streets for Surrey design guide and future implementation.

### Introduction:

1. Surrey County Council (SCC) in its role as Highway Authority plays a significant part in the planning for new developments. The County Council has produced a number of highway design guides for new developments, most recently in 2002. This guidance was incorporated as one of the chapters and Technical Appendix of 'Surrey Design'. This guidance is still the formal policy of the County Council however, whilst some elements remain current, it is out of date in many respects.
2. Create Streets were commissioned in 2020 to undertake a review of the street design and layout of recent residential developments in the County. They were then subsequently commissioned to refresh and update the County Council's street design guidance so that it accords with current thinking. The Healthy Streets for Surrey design guide is the result. This guidance will primarily be used to inform the County Council's street design expectations in respect of new developments; however, it will also be used to guide works on existing highway infrastructure, where relevant.
3. The framework for the guidance, including high level concepts, was produced in March 2021 with initial Stakeholder Engagement undertaken in May and June 2021 to establish the principles. The responses received were then used to inform the development of the detailed guidance. Further Stakeholder Engagement commenced on 15 July 2022 for two months.
4. The County Council's refreshed approach to street design will support healthy lifestyles and the implementation of the Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4 also known as the Surrey Transport Plan) through its emphasis on active travel and movement; will seek to enhance biodiversity through street trees and other forms of street planting; and will seek to ensure resilience to climate change through the provision of sustainable urban drainage systems.

## Healthy Streets Context and Background:

5. The County Council as the local Highway Authority advises the Boroughs and Districts on the transportation implications of applications for planning permission. The Healthy Streets for Surrey Design 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 proposals. The aim is to deliver high quality, attractive, safe, accessible and sustainable development. All development schemes will be assessed against the guides' principles and design elements.

### National Policy Background

6. The Government published a National Design Guide in October 2019 including a number of movement characteristics that were considered to be priorities for well-designed places. These included integrated networks of routes for all modes of transport; clear structure and hierarchy of connected streets; and well-considered parking, servicing and utilities infrastructure for all users.
7. Subsequently, the Government published its National Model Design Code in February 2021. This sets out the design considerations and the quality baseline that planning authorities will be expected to take into account when devising their own local design codes/guides, which will then be used when determining planning applications.
8. 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 clearly take account of local vernacular and heritage, architecture and materials.
9. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill 2020 is proposing a requirement for local planning authorities to adopt a design code for the whole of their areas. This does not need to include all types of development or all aspects of design however as street design is such a fundamental part of overall design, it is difficult to envisage a scenario where it wouldn't be included. 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 Guidance**

10. 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 the draft for stakeholder engagement is currently in traditional pdf document form. It is proposed that the Cabinet will endorse the 'Healthy Streets for Surrey' guidance at the October meeting.
11. The document aims to result in places that improve Surrey residents' physical and mental health and reduce their environmental footprint by encouraging cycling and walking more often; create streets in which children can safely play; improve air quality; re-green streets and public spaces; reduce residents' transport carbon footprint and create beautiful, resilient and popular streets that will require less long-term maintenance.
12. 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, not drive to cul-de-sacs (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 deserted lines of asphalt;
  - Connect seamlessly to existing places to allow natural movement – streets that link to existing roads and don't turn their back on neighbours;
  - 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 – places with tight, finely grained streets not large winding bends.
13. The guide acknowledges the need for planners and highway professionals to work together as an integrated team. With the majority of planning decisions made by the Boroughs and Districts but with the County Council having responsibility for highways, partnership working is essential for successful place-making and to deliver high quality, integrated design.
14. 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 the overall highway design principles, the guide should assist Boroughs and Districts and

local communities when developing their own area or site-specific design codes.

15. 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.
16. 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.
17. The Healthy Streets guide will help support the delivery of both the Local Transport Plan and the Greener Futures agenda. As the Boroughs and Districts develop and adopt local plans and design codes, the aim is that the Healthy Streets guide will help inform the street design elements of these.

<b>Engagement:</b>
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### **Stakeholder Engagement**

18. 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.
19. Officers presented to the Surrey Development Forum on 28 March 2022 and have kept the Development Forum, the Surrey Planning Officers Association and the Surrey Planning Working Group updated on progress.
20. The draft detailed guidance was completed in early July 2022. Further Stakeholder Engagement commenced on 15 July for two months, ending on 15 September 2022. The responses will be assessed and changes made to the final version of the guidance where necessary. The principles of the guidance were established in 2021 so it is not envisaged that there will be any amendments to these.
21. The stakeholders approached 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. All county members have been informed and asked to contribute to the latest round of

stakeholder engagement. Given the timings for production of this report and the need to analyse the stakeholder responses, the outcome of the engagement will be reported verbally to the meeting.

### **Member Engagement**

22. A number of Cabinet Member briefings took place during the initial stages of the Create Streets commission, including a Place Cabinet briefing on 15 June 2020 and full Cabinet briefings on 13 October 2020 and 30 March 2021. The initial stakeholder engagement consultation draft was considered by Cabinet on 27 April 2021 when support for the aims and objectives was confirmed.
23. Member Development Sessions were held on 2 September 2021 and 23 May 2022 (in conjunction with LTP4 Liveable Neighbourhoods initiative). All Members were notified and invited to respond to the current stakeholder consultation.
24. The final version of the guidance is due to be reported to Cabinet on 25 October 2022, following the end of the stakeholder engagement and consideration by this Committee. It is envisaged that the report to Cabinet will include a recommendation for adoption of the guidance as County Council policy.

### **Implementation**

25. Following adoption of the guidance, the County Council will assess all development proposals that it is consulted on as Highway Authority against its requirements. Transport Development Planning colleagues when engaging in pre-application discussions, or when advising the Boroughs and Districts on the suitability of planning applications for new streets, will use this guidance as the basis for their advice.
26. The advice will be available to residents and community groups so that they will be able to see the design considerations that the County Highway Authority will be taking into account when they review planning applications.
27. The County Council as 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 adopted as County Council policy and endorsed as good practice and strongly recommended to the Borough and District planning authorities. The County Council would support Boroughs and Districts adapting the guidance as required or incorporating it into their own design guidance/design codes.
28. 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. Not all Boroughs and Districts have accepted the offer of training, however it is an open offer and can be taken up at any time.

29. 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. There would therefore be a significant incentive on those developers seeking to have their roads adopted to comply with the guidance.

<b>Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Pathfinder and Digital Design Code</b>
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30. It was always the intention that the pdf 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.
31. The current round of 28 DLUHC pathfinders is about 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.
32. The SCC Placemaking Group will lead the pathfinder. Local communities and the Surrey Boroughs and Districts will be able to use Surrey's guidance digital code 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.

<b>Conclusions:</b>
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33. Surrey County Council is the Highway Authority and advises the Boroughs and Districts in respect of applications for planning permission.
34. The Healthy Streets guide has been under development for the last two years and will become County Council policy with which new developments will be expected to comply.

35. The draft guide will be amended as required to take account of the outcome of the stakeholder engagement and then reported to Cabinet.
36. Local residents and their elected representatives will be able to see the Highway Authority's street design requirements and have a greater understanding of their considerations.
37. The Healthy Streets guidance will be transformed into a digital design code which will make it more accessible and easier to navigate for a wide range of users.

#### **Recommendations:**

38. To note the work that has been undertaken to produce the Healthy Streets for Surrey guide so far.
39. To seek the views of members about the approach, content and future implementation of the guide.

#### **Next steps:**

40. Cabinet will be asked to endorse the guide and for it be adopted as County Council policy.
41. Work will continue on the development of the digital design code, with a draft due in March 2023.
42. A training offer will be made to the Boroughs and Districts for planning committee members to make them aware of the County Council's approach.

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#### **Annexes:**

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

**Sources/background papers:**

Cabinet Report 27<sup>th</sup> 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](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](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 \(parliament.uk\)](#)