

THURSDAY, 6 OCTOBER 2022

WHOLE PROGRAMME ASSESSMENT OF THE GREENER FUTURES CLIMATE CHANGE DELIVERY PLAN

Purpose of report:

To assess the progress of Surrey in meeting its net-zero carbon targets for the county and to assess the progress of local authorities in Surrey, including Surrey County Council, in meeting organisational net zero targets, in accordance with the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan (2021 – 2025).

Introduction:

1. In response to the climate emergency Surrey County Council, working with partners, produced a Climate Change Strategy in 2020 which included the commitments that Surrey would be a net-zero carbon emissions county by 2050 and a net-zero organisation by 2030. One year on from the launch of Surrey's Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan 2021-2025 [1], the assessment will provide an important update on the progress made against net-zero targets, against the actions committed to by local authorities and set out in the Delivery Plan, and how we are seeking to shape the programme in the coming years.
2. The whole programme assessment outlines progress to date towards achievement of the net zero carbon targets with a wide range of national and project level data that indicates progress. Engagement with Borough and Districts, partners, senior officers and the Environment and Highways Select Committee Greener Futures Reference Group Committee members on the recommendations and actions is still in progress, and there are a few key gaps in the data, so the full content of the final report is not yet available. This report sets out as much information and analysis as is available, as well as interim findings, to enable all Committee Members to comment ahead of the full report being prepared for Cabinet in November.
3. This report includes the key points from the assessment of the Climate Change Delivery Plan, including a summary of the highlights and achievements. The report also includes lessons learnt and recommendations for the Plan in 2023/24 and beyond. Further detail is included in the slides included in **Annex**

1. These slides set out the key findings from the analysis undertaken so far, to assess the extent to which we are on track to meet net-zero targets. Progress against key actions have been highlighted, and an explanation is provided on how engagement, lobbying, innovation and governance is and will be used to reduce key risks. The slides also set out the ways in which we are seeking to steer the programme moving forward. Gaps in data or key findings are clearly indicated.

Climate Change Delivery Plan whole programme assessment key points:

Surrey 2050 net-zero target data review

4. The latest available data for Surrey shows that ***annual emissions have reduced by over 1 million tonnes (17 per cent) per year, in line with a trajectory to meet 2050 net-zero targets, but this result is being treated with caution.*** Covid may have caused an anomalous “on track” rating and it is too early to consider the impact of the Climate Change Delivery Plan due to a data time-lag¹. Furthermore, examining trends in energy use have shown that installation of low carbon measures (such as solar PV and heat pumps) fall far short of what is needed, and trends in road transport show that measures have so far not succeeded in reducing reliance on motor-vehicle use, or resulted in a sustained increase in active and sustainable travel.
5. The data also revealed that despite a reduction in emissions, overall ***energy use in homes had increased, exposing residents to higher energy bills.*** As a result of the cost of living crisis the proportion of fuel-poor homes is increasing, making our target to support 20 per cent of fuel poor homes harder to meet.

Public Sector net-zero targets – data review

6. A 24 per cent reduction in emissions puts ***Local Authorities, including Surrey County Council (SCC), on track to meet a 40 per cent emission reduction by the end of the Delivery Plan period, but performance varies between different boroughs and districts.*** Maintaining a trajectory to net-zero by 2030 will be extremely challenging as “quick wins” have generally been achieved and reduction in local authority activity through covid has temporarily reduced emissions. As building retrofit and fleet decarbonisation programmes are in their infancy, their impact cannot yet be measured.

¹ National data sets published by Government are used to identify trends in emissions. These data sets are published annually however there is a time lag on the data available due to the time taken to collate information from sources.

7. It has not been possible to collect local data to indicate progress of wider public sector organisations in Surrey such as the National Health Service (NHS), Police and academia.
8. The range of progress across local authority actions makes it difficult to accurately assess performance, but most Borough and Districts have strong political commitment and dedicated resource to deliver climate action. Most have plans to reduce emissions from their estate and fleet, which are largely dependent on external funding, Surrey's Local Authorities have collectively been awarded £7.8 million to decarbonise public buildings through Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. Most Local Authorities have some sustainable procurement and staff travel policies in place, but all activity needs to be developed and strengthened to meet ambitious climate change goals. Some Local Authorities actively encourage staff to be more sustainable and around 1000 staff across all Local Authorities have undertaken some form of carbon literacy training.

Climate Change Delivery Plan – highlights and achievements 2021-22:

9. ***Several of Surrey's decarbonisation programmes have out-performed expectations*** and have delivered significant carbon savings, bill savings and accelerated deployment in renewables. Priority will be given to supporting these schemes in future years and to overcome key risks such as the end of Low Carbon Across the South and East (LoCASE) funding next year. Outcomes include;
 - To date, 677 low income homes in the county have received free decarbonisation measures with an average cost of £10,000 through Surrey's Sustainable Warmth programme (funded by Government). The Council is currently working with partners to deliver a new tranche of £11.9 million Sustainable Warmth funding to enable a further 1,103 low income households to reduce energy bills and save carbon.
 - LoCASE is an European Union funded programme which offers grants of up to £20,000 to Small, Medium Enterprises (SME) businesses for energy efficiency and decarbonisation measures. To date 55 business have been supported with grants resulting in emission reductions of 288 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e) per year and £1.2 million investment in low carbon technologies.
 - Surrey launched a Solar Together scheme in 2021, offering residents the opportunity to purchase subsidised solar photovoltaic (PV) and battery storage. The scheme resulted in the installation of 5.6 megawatts (MW) solar on domestic rooftops across the county in just over a year, mobilising around

£8 million in private investment. This equates to approximately 50 per cent of Surrey's total domestic installed PV capacity

10. Actions to engage residents to reduce emissions have refocused to support the many residents who are being affected by the rise in energy and food prices. The **development of an energy bill campaign**, will provide new ways to access information and services and the creation of warm hubs around Surrey.
11. **Transport actions have prioritised the implementation of active travel and EV infrastructure, supported by an active travel campaign** due to launch this Autumn. Despite significant SCC investment, lack of national funding may impact on the scale of road and bus infrastructure improvements.
12. Early work has been undertaken to ensure that SCC-led infrastructure and new-build projects are in keeping with climate objectives, **and the first net-zero developments will deliver huge bill savings for vulnerable residents**.
13. **Tree planting to meet the 1.2 million trees is currently on track** and the delivery of Farming in protected Landscapes (FiPL) grants has enabled sustainable solutions for farming and land management.

Lessons learned and recommendations for 2023-24:

14. A sustained plan requires the successful mitigation of key programme-level risks and issues. **A step-change in reach and influence has been achieved through the formation of prioritised engagement campaigns, with significant scope to expand**. Current campaigns encourage active travel, reduce energy use, support eco schools, and support community-led climate projects. Our **emerging Greener Futures Lobby strategy seeks to influence national funding and policy gaps** that make it impossible to fully deliver climate goals.
15. To reduce the risks associated with delivering complex projects at pace, **pilots, best-practice and innovative elements formed part of many projects**, the learnings from these will be incorporated as they are scaled-up. This included a pilot to encourage landlords to invest in their properties and reduce bills for occupants. Governance and project management continues to be strengthened.

Proposed Climate Change Delivery Plan amendments

16. The following amendments are proposed to the Delivery Plan:
 - **There is further scope to collaborate more closely with Boroughs and Districts to improve efficiency and effectiveness of delivery**. This can be done by sharing expertise and resource for key delivery projects that are

common to all local authorities. Examples include procurement policy, shared engagement tools and the continuation of business focussed decarbonisation support schemes through the Shared Prosperity Fund. The County Deal provides an opportunity to clarify the role of SCC in supporting Climate Action across Surrey.

- **Engagement and lobbying continue to be a key priority**, which we are seeking to expand to next financial year. Lobby priorities include recognising and supporting the key role Local Government plays in meeting the targets alongside funding which enables sustained, long-term action, planning reform including prevention of further fossil fuel exploration in Surrey, and lobbying against the scrapping of “green taxes” on energy bills. Our engagement activity will ensure that communities and residents are central to, and embedded within, our approach.
- The cost of living crisis has meant that many more households are struggling to afford the energy required to heat and power their homes. We will work with partners to **continue to expand our offer and our reach to better support residents to save energy and to access more affordable, low carbon energy**. Our work to try to eliminate fuel poverty will see residents gaining access to warm hubs and personalised debt advice.
- The increase in energy prices is resulting in energy efficiency and renewable energy becoming a more attractive investment, which is an opportunity to further decouple the energy system from fossil fuels. **Priority will be given to developing new projects such as rent-a-roof PV schemes** on schools and commercial buildings that reduce the up-front costs; a key barrier to greater deployment. Income generated from commercial rent a roof schemes will be used to fund further decarbonisation measures in the county.
- **Further work is needed to fully align infrastructure and spatial plans** and make it possible to incorporate solutions to lower emissions and mitigate flooding, overheating, biodiversity loss and water use early into the design phase.
- Priority will be given to **supporting schemes which are demonstrating significant reductions in carbon emissions, including Sustainable Warmth, LoCASE and Solar Together**.
- A number of **pilot projects, if successful will be scaled up to support delivery**, including the roll out of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points and landlord engagement to reduce emissions and bills for occupants.
- A financial strategy is being developed to lessen the huge funding gap that prevents local authority projects from fully aligning with what needs to happen

to meet net-zero targets. This includes the ***development of new funding mechanisms to leverage private sector and community investment*** and projects that generate revenue that can be reinvested in climate projects, starting with an PV offer for schools. Temporary resource to create a step-change in climate action will need to be more fully embedded into business as usual for all local authority staff members to support the delivery of all actions.

Conclusion:

17. The delivery plan continues to be broadly sound, minor adjustments are needed to align with the latest analysis, political and economic climate as described above.

Recommendations for Communities, Environment and Highways (CEH) Select Committee:

18. Select Committee members are requested to:
 - note the programme amendments above (and on slide 30 in Annex 1) which fall within the scope of the plan and the supporting finance and engagement strategies
 - identify additional key risks and priorities
 - ask the Greener Futures Member Reference Group to support the amended programme and priorities.

Next steps:

19. A whole programme assessment of the Climate Change Delivery Plan will be completed on an annual basis.
20. The Greener Futures Finance Strategy will be developed by the end of the year and will be brought to the CEH Select Committee for review prior to Cabinet.

Report contact

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Annexes

Annex 1 – Climate Change Delivery Plan Assessment

Sources/background papers

[1] Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan 2021-2025, November 2021, [Final Climate Change Delivery Plan Full Document 2022.pdf](#)

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