

Climate Emergency Delivery Plan – top priority for Surrey County Council’s budget

Recommendations:

1. The creation of a new team within Surrey County Council to lead the Climate Emergency Plan delivery.
2. Senior officers to be tasked with ensuring that account is taken of the carbon footprint of every activity across all departments of the council.
3. The Climate Emergency Plan to be fully costed and funds secured through a Climate Contract between Government, local authorities and private and public sector partners.

Goals

Surrey County Council (SCC) has recognised the climate emergency and agreed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050, as has the UK government through binding legal targets. Much of the reduction needs to happen quicker than that – by 2030 – to avoid the tipping point into climate chaos. The Council’s budgets – starting right now – need to reflect the urgency and the investment needed to address this climate emergency. Every paper produced by officers of the council should provide details of the impact of any proposed actions on the net carbon footprint of the council.

Only a system-wide, integrated approach can enable SCC to help deliver the change of pace required to deliver net-zero carbon, starting with SCC leading the way by achieving this for its own operations in the next five years; this will encourage and enable a more rapid transition for businesses and communities throughout the county. Partnerships should be developed to facilitate borough and district councils within the county achieving their own targets established in relation to the climate emergency. Guildford, Mole Valley, Surrey Heath and Waverley councils have for example, all declared climate emergencies and set net-zero carbon by 2030 targets.

Surrey County Council set up a Greener Future Task Group which found that 46% of Surrey’s directly emitted emissions come from the transport sector, 28% from housing, 15% from public and commercial buildings and 11% from industry. This indicates the importance of tackling emissions from transport and buildings in Surrey as a priority.

There are economic and social implications for all in the county and potential longer-term benefits for local residents to be gained through addressing the climate crisis. Surrey County Council must lead the way in securing and delivering a Climate Contract with Government - to provide the necessary funds - and with delivery partners in the public and private sectors and local communities. This will provide the basis for enabling and enacting the necessary change for Surrey to effectively tackle climate change, whilst delivering enhanced value to its resident communities and businesses.

Although this will require significant expenditure now and in the next ten years, Surrey will then have moved to a low carbon thriving economy with significant benefits for all.

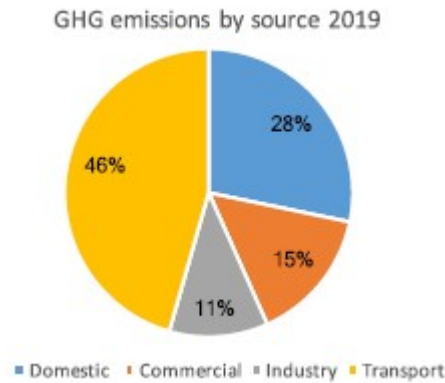
Priorities

The immediate priorities, offering the biggest gains, require Surrey County Council to focus on the decarbonisation of:

- **Transport** – by working with private enterprise and communities to radically improve local public transport services in a coordinated way, along with better road safety and cycle-paths, and by reducing demand for travel (e.g, facilitating local working).

- **Properties and Planning** – by ensuring that SCC and borough and district council-owned properties are refurbished and built to high environmental and sustainability standards and that borough and district councils’ development plans require best-practice zero-carbon standards for all buildings and enable the deployment of renewable energy.

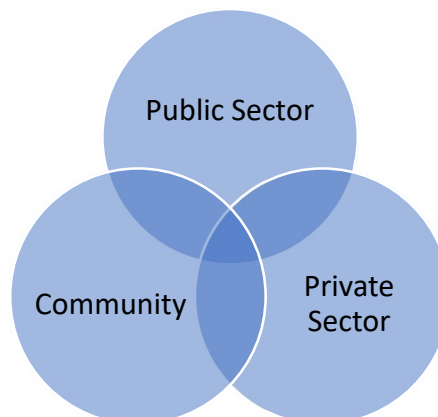
By addressing this over the next ten years, Surrey can be a leader in making significant progress towards net zero carbon.



Above: Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Source (Source: Leeds University research completed for the Greener Future Task Group, Report to Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee, 22 November 2019)

Surrey County Council cannot achieve this without recognising the complexity of the task. We therefore propose the formation of a **Net Zero Finance, Procurement and Infrastructure Team** to ensure an integrated approach that is scalable and pragmatic. This team will be at the core of the Climate Emergency Delivery Plan for Surrey.

An Integrated, Best Practice Approach



To deliver an ambitious set of net zero goals, SCC will need to coordinate various council strategies and departments as well as garnering support from local businesses and the resident communities of Surrey.

A dedicated and accountable team should be created to deliver a plan and its associated goals. We envisage that the Net Zero Finance, Procurement and Infrastructure Team will work across various council portfolios and departments as well as coordinate with all Surrey’s district and borough

councils, the wider public sector (including health and social housing providers) and collaborate with local businesses and communities to deliver a best practice approach that is robust and scalable, delivered across public and private sectors, with measurable benefits to Surrey residents and the wider environment.

Changes to procurement and sufficient finance are central to the delivery of this programme. All contractors seeking procurement from SCC should provide an assessment of the indicative impact on the carbon footprint of the relevant contract. These assessments will be evaluated by the procurement team to ensure a joined-up approach throughout the council's operations.

New roles required

Delivering this requires additional capacity and expertise, to plan new ways of working, standards and programmes of investment, to integrate these into the council's annual budgets and to revise long-term investment plans to ensure that they deliver the scale and pace of carbon reductions required. This will require a dedicated team as well as a change of priorities and focus for existing teams across Surrey. These roles should include at least the following:

1. Net Zero Finance, Procurement and Infrastructure Team

Acknowledges complexity of integrated planning and delivery of a zero-carbon SCC. These will be subject-matter experts who will work with the Council's Finance and Treasury functions to ensure that there is a joined-up approach to delivery of a robust and value-centric strategy, budgets, timetables and ROI.

- **Finance Executive** to set up renewables/Green Investment Bank for Surrey and make the case for climate-oriented divestment and investment for the Council and its pension fund.
- **Procurement Specialist:** a second, in-house officer to complement the existing position in Orbit to produce a 'Surrey Model' – adapting the 'Preston model'¹ of intervention in the local economy to deliver genuine outcomes for local residents, in this case in the climate arena.
- **Green Initiatives Officers:**
 - 1 for Transport leadership
 - 1 for joined-up grants (LEP, etc.) and funding coordination across SCC departments, local businesses and communities.

2. Transport

- **Bus Initiatives Manager** to work on expansion of the bus network
- **Electric Vehicle Roll-out lead** (bus and public sector fleet electrification, charging points)
- Dedicated **Cycle Planners** (equivalent – could be delivered on a part-time basis by the borough and district councils or on an East Surrey/West Surrey split)
- **Strengthened Road Safety team** and budget
- **Strengthened School Transport team** and budget
- Additional **Rights of Way Team capacity** focused on walking routes and pedestrianisation.

These roles can be phased but should be established as soon as possible to assist the Council to develop detailed plans for action and to secure the needed investment to deliver the scale of transformation needed across Surrey.

¹ <https://cles.org.uk/blog/reflecting-and-celebrating-eight-years-of-community-wealth-building-in-preston/>

3. Properties & Planning

- Additional **Energy Manager** to lead on retrofit for public buildings, including energy efficiency and integrated renewables before occupation of the new Council HQ in Woking
- Additional **Energy Manager** and team to plan a street-by-street retrofit (insulation, alternative heating sources etc.) of homes across Surrey, proposed to be co-funded by all boroughs and districts, co-ordinated through the Surrey Environment Partnership.

4. Waste:

- **Additional Officer(s)** to deliver (specify and contract the provision of) a council-owned recycling facility that generates revenue for SCC by segregation of recycling.
- **Additional Officer(s)** to facilitate and support the scaling up of reuse across Surrey.

5. Renewables/Energy Generation:

- **Renewables Initiatives Manager and Team** to 1) lead on SCC-led schemes (and those delivered in partnership with other public sector (including health, local councils, housing providers); and 2) facilitate and support expansion of community renewables, including through existing and new energy co-ops.

6. Food & Farming:

- **Food & Farming Initiatives Officer** to lead on zero-carbon food and farming initiatives including community farms across Surrey, on publicly owned land and with major landowners.
- **Capacity** to develop a land-use strategy for Surrey aligned to the climate emergency.

Total proposed new roles: 20+

Benefits

- Significant contribution to climate security
- Financial return on investment (Council, other delivery bodies, residents)
- Strengthen local economy and provide new job opportunities across Surrey
- Community and equality outcomes – including addressing fuel poverty

Timing

A traffic-light approach is suggested to allow SCC to manage phasing and deliverables. The emphasis should be on the highest priorities for carbon reduction, which are easiest to achieve by 2025, so that the biggest gains are secured swiftly.

Financial implications

- The staff revenue cost (if all new staff) is estimated at a minimum of £800,000.
- Return on investment both direct (on capital investment) and indirect, such as quality-of-life and health outcomes, some of which will be long-term and felt in other parts of the public sector, such as the NHS. This suggests a joint approach – with some funding direct from Surrey County Council and across the local public sector delivery partners, matched by funding from government (including via the LEPs).