

Surrey 2050: Place Ambition consultation – draft response

Planning Policy Committee Thursday, 10 March 2022

Report of: Interim Chief Planning Officer

Purpose: For decision

Publication status: Unrestricted

Wards affected: All

Executive summary

Surrey Futures, working in partnership with Surrey County Council, Surrey districts, boroughs and other key stakeholders are consulting on the Surrey 2050: Place Ambition. The consultation closed on 4 March 2022.

The Surrey 2050: Place Ambition sets out what Surrey's strategic partners want to collectively achieve over the next 30 years in terms of 'good growth'. To achieve this, it sets out four strategic priorities, and identifies eight Strategic Opportunity Areas (SOAs) across the County. Of relevance to the District are Strategic Opportunity Area 7 (SOA7): M23- Gatwick Corridor, which straddles both TDC and Reigate and Banstead; and Strategic Opportunity Area 8 (SOA8): M25 J6/A22 South Godstone.

The Place Ambition does not replace any local proposals and priorities but is intended to promote a long term, co-ordinated and cross boundary approach to planning and managing the impacts of growth. The Place Ambition will be used to help shape projects as well as seek the support of the county's wider sub-national partners and Government, particularly in relation to accessing additional funding and investment opportunities for infrastructure and to support a zero-carbon future.

Officers have submitted the draft comments before the Committee, included at Appendix A, as a holding response to accord with the closing date but will submit final comments following the Committee meeting. The Council's response sets out the fundamental need for the document to be more emphatic around infrastructure and to reassert our main challenges around the A22/A264 and M25. The response also captures the need to place more onus on Surrey County Council as the upper tier authority with responsibility for infrastructure. The response requests that the document highlight the need for Surrey County Council to be more proactive in their engagement with neighbouring authorities with Tandridge and Surrey, to defend against border developments which further exhaust our struggling infrastructure.

This report supports the Council's priority of:

- Creating the homes, infrastructure and environment we need – both now and in the future.
- Supporting economic recovery in Tandridge – from lockdown to growth that everyone benefits from.
- Becoming a greener, more sustainable District – tackling climate change.

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Recommendation to Committee:

That in accordance with its delegated powers, the Committee agrees the response to the Surrey 2050: Place Ambition consultation, as set out at Appendix A.

Reason for recommendation:

It is the intention of the Surrey Futures, for all Surrey Authorities to adopt the document once it is finalised.

The significance of the proposals contained within the draft Surrey 2050: Place Ambition, the relationship to the Council's own Local Plan and strategic approach to development and infrastructure, require a response from the Council. Our involvement ensures that we have made every effort to make the document beneficial and reflective of the Councils strategic ambitions and challenges.

Introduction and background

1. Surrey Futures, working in partnership with Surrey County Council, Surrey districts, boroughs and other key stakeholders are consulting on the Surrey 2050: Place Ambition. For context, a briefing note regarding the role, purpose and membership of Surrey Futures, is included at Appendix B.
2. The Surrey Place Ambition has been developed by the Surrey Future partnership and is informed by and will be implemented through various local and countywide plans and strategies including district and borough local plans, climate change strategies, economic strategies, and the local transport plans. It does not replace any local proposals and priorities but is intended to promote a long term, co-ordinated and cross boundary approach to planning and managing the impacts of growth. The Place Ambition will be used to help shape projects as well as seek the support of the county's wider sub-national partners and Government, particularly in relation to accessing additional funding and investment opportunities for infrastructure and to support a zero-carbon future.
3. The preparation of the Surrey 2050: Place Ambition has evolved over time with input from Surrey districts and boroughs including Officers and Members of Tandridge District Council. The Surrey 2050: Place Ambition sets out what Surrey's strategic partners want to collectively achieve over the next 30 years in terms of 'good growth'. By working collaboratively and in partnership, there is the likely prospect to achieve a long term and coordinated approach to growth, in Surrey that is well aligned to infrastructure planning and delivery. The Surrey Place Ambition is not intended to replace or conflict with district and borough local plans, but to complement them and to provide a framework to align plans with infrastructure priorities of the County Council and other infrastructure providers.
4. Whilst Surrey is an important contributor to the United Kingdom's economy, there is a need to address the existing and future infrastructure deficit which places constraint on investment opportunities and development potential. The Surrey 2050: Place Ambition seeks to provide the necessary partnership framework for this to be achieved in an integrated and coordinated manner. The delivery of the Surrey 2050: Place Ambition will require continuous commitment from districts and boroughs.

Purpose

5. The Surrey 2050: Place Ambition sets out a vision – a county of well-functioning and connected communities and a high-quality life. It also sets out four strategic priorities, which are:
 - 1: Improve connectivity both within Surrey and between strategic hubs
 - 2: Enhance the place offer of Surrey's towns
 - 3: Maximise the potential of our Strategic Opportunity Areas; and
 - 4: Invest in natural capital and deliver nature recovery

6. Regarding the third priority, eight Strategic Opportunity Areas (SOAs) have been identified across the County as areas to support long term prosperity. This includes investment in new strategic infrastructure and to address existing infrastructure deficiencies and improving connectivity both within Surrey and between other strategically important economic areas. In some cases, the SOA's straddle county, district and borough boundaries to reflect the more strategic aspects of infrastructure and planning, which are not spatially constrained by administrative boundaries and can readily benefit from crossing multiple areas.

7. Of particular relevance to the District are Strategic Opportunity Area 7 (SOA7): M23- Gatwick Corridor, which straddles both TDC and Reigate and Banstead; and Strategic Opportunity Area 8 (SOA8): M25 J6/A22 South Godstone.

SOA7: M23- Gatwick Corridor

8. The London-Gatwick-Brighton Corridor is considered nationally as a key economic corridor. It is highlighted in both the London Mayor's Transport Strategy and London Plan as a priority for investment. It is also identified as a high priority strategic investment corridor by Transport for the South East. While this SOA does overlap the boundary of two authorities, much of the intention around this area is to reflect the growth, economic status and regeneration around Redhill, Horley and Gatwick.

SOA8: J6/A22 South Godstone

9. This SOA resides wholly in the District and was originally intended to capture the significance of South Godstone Garden Community, along with infrastructure challenges along the M25/A22 corridor. Due to the challenges of the Local Plan, wording and focus on the SOA has been amended and further amendment is requested by the Council through its response to the consultation to emphasise the wider road network which feeds into and through the spatial area of SOA8.

10. The authors of the document have been kept apprised of the Council's draft Local Plan. Officers have been keen to ensure that these uncertainties have not resulted in the removal of SOA but instead refocused its remit to place more emphasis on infrastructure which needs to be addressed, regardless of the Local Plan. The inclusion of SOA8 ensures a 'strategic hook' which is intended to support bids for funding, lobbying opportunities and reemphasise the District is not 'forgotten' as part of Surrey when opportunities for funding and improvements are considered. Such inclusion in a strategic plan has not occurred since the abolition of County Structure Plans and has been missed as a level of support for the Council.

Draft response

11. The Council's draft response is included at Appendix A and sets out that while the purpose of the document is generally supported and is a positive step towards cross boundary strategic planning, the Council's fundamental concerns relate to the challenges around infrastructure.
12. For Tandridge, our district and its residents have been underprovided for, for a significant period. 'Good Growth' for the district is that which must be underpinned by guaranteed new and improved infrastructure of all types, only then is the option of future development something that can be looked on favourably.
13. As such, while the Place Ambition has highlighted a number of infrastructure challenges, the response has been sure to raise this further and request more detail on local infrastructure challenges, particularly around:
 - Flooding, where the Place Ambition has included little detail for Tandridge or anywhere in Surrey; and
 - The road network in Tandridge, including; the A22, junction 6 of the M25, the B269 through Warlingham, A25 and A264 Felbridge Junction.
14. In addition, the response highlights the role of the County Council as a key infrastructure provider/facilitator and their significance in enabling successful implementation of the Place Ambition and 'good growth'. SCC contribution to the delivery of the Place Ambition is multifaceted and therefore the response requests that the document include more detail on this and highlight the need for Surrey County Council to more proactively exercise its duty to cooperate with regard to Local Plans and other strategies, including with areas bordering Tandridge, including London and wider Surrey authorities. This will seek to ensure that residents are not adversely impacted by developments on our borders which put extra strain on an already exhausted infrastructure. This action by Surrey is necessary if the four strategic priorities of the Place Ambition are to be achieved.

15. Other comments made relate to the need to better define 'good growth' as something more than just housebuilding and to include further detail on how rural communities can benefit from the Place Ambition, as there is currently limited detail on this.

Next Steps

16. The Surrey 2050: Place Ambition concluded consultation on 4 March 2022. All relevant papers were published [online](#). Due to the significance of the Place Ambition, officers have liaised with the authors and co-ordinators of the document to discuss submitting comments later so the draft comments could be considered and agreed by the Planning Policy Committee. As such, and in order to accord with the Surrey Future timescales, draft comments were submitted as a holding response, and a final response will be submitted following the Committee meeting.
17. Surrey Futures will be considering comments and working to finalise the document with the intention that each authority will be asked to adopt it formally. Dates for this are forthcoming. It is anticipated that members and officers will be updated via Surrey Leaders, Surrey Chief Executives, Surrey Future Meetings, Surrey Planning Officers Association and other relevant meetings, as relevant.

Finance

18. There are no direct financial implications to the Council for the preparation of the Surrey 2050: Place Ambition, at this stage.

Consultation

The draft comments were shared with and discussed by Group Leaders at their meeting on 24 February 2022.

Key implications

Comments of the Chief Finance Officer

Although significant progress has been made over the last twelve months to improve the Council's financial position, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2021/22 remains uncertain. The public health crisis has resulted in increased costs which may not be fully funded.

With uncertainty about the ongoing impact of this and no clarity on the extent to which both central and local funding sources might be affected 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 stable provision of services in the medium term.

The S151 Officer confirms that there are no direct financial implications that affect the Medium-Term Financial Strategy arising from Tandridge District Councils response to the Surrey 2050: Place Ambition consultation.

Comments of the Head of Legal Services

Although the Surrey 2050: Place Ambition is a non-statutory document, if adopted it could be considered as material consideration just as other evidence-based documents are. Its purpose is to help shape joint projects across all Surrey local authorities and access additional funding and investment opportunities.

Consideration must be given to the best value duty contained in s3 of the Local Government Act 1999 as a result of which the Council is under a duty to decide to secure continuous improvement in the way in which functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The relevant guidance states that councils should consider overall value, including economic, environmental and social value when reviewing service provision. The recommendations to be engaged in the consultation process lend itself to satisfying this duty. The final version will need to be agreed and endorsed by all Surrey local authorities and strategic partners making up the Surrey Future partnership. It is understood that all Councils (boroughs, districts and the county) will then need to decide for themselves whether or not to formally adopt this non-statutory document.

It is important that the Council makes a detailed representation of any concerns it may have through the draft consultation process.

Equality

The draft Surrey 2050: Place Ambition seeks to support and facilitate the delivery of development for all areas of our community. As such, the decisions regarding the Place Ambition and the plans and strategies that underpin it have had regard to equalities implications and have been considered comprehensively.

Climate change

The draft Surrey 2050: Place Ambition has regard to the significance of Climate Change and the need for net zero. The successful implementation of the Place Ambition would contribute to the mitigation of Climate Change.

Appendices:

Appendix A - Tandridge District Council's draft response – Surrey 2050: Place Ambition

Appendix B - Surrey Future Briefing Note

Background papers

None

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