

## UrbanLinks 2 Landscape

### Situation Report: Surrey County Council

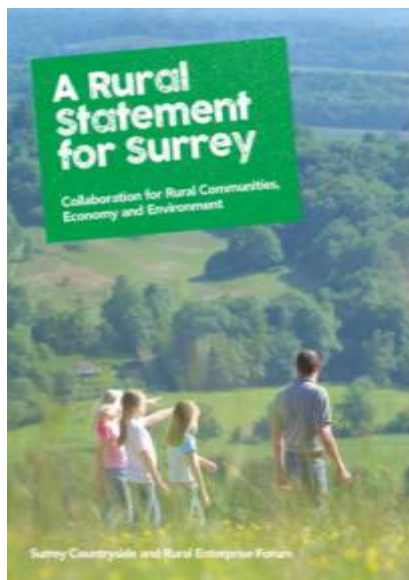
- The Region
- Policies
- Stakeholders
- Good Practice



## **Part 1: "Regional policies and related activities to be covered / addressed by UL2L"**

### **Surrey Rural Statement**

The Surrey Rural Statement provides a series of policy visions to ensure that rural Surrey has a dynamic economy, vibrant communities and a healthy natural environment. The Statement outlines challenges and opportunities, and provides a framework for stakeholders to collaborate on actions to deliver future improvements. A key theme throughout the statement is the creation of jobs and economic growth.



The landscape and habitats of Surrey provide critical benefits and ‘ecosystem services’ which underpin the economic success of Surrey and the wellbeing of its residents. There is currently a lack of understanding, appreciation and quantification of these ‘natural capital’ assets and this should be improved and more fully integrated into the Rural Statement to ensure that Surrey achieves the smart economic growth that provides a sustainable future.

The Rural Statement will need to be agile enough to take account of rapidly evolving areas such as natural capital. Policy Instruments of this nature are, by definition, evolutionary. They will need to be capable of adapting to change both positive and negative. Building in increased robustness, whilst at the same time retaining flexibility, will both be necessary if maximum value and benefit is to be gained.

To fully benefit from ‘natural capital’ and ‘ecosystem services’ there is a need for improved understanding, appreciation and quantification of their value. Policy Instruments such as the Rural Statement are opportunities to capture this understanding and harness their benefit if policy is updated and refined to take account of emerging learning from both within and without the project.

Current policies are often weak and as these are relatively new concepts, there are a lack of established processes, standards and approaches. New policies, processes, guidance and approaches can be drawn upon and used to inform a stronger, revised version of the Policy Instrument.

Approaches have potential to be developed around the following areas to inform the development of and maximise the benefits from 'natural capital' and 'ecosystem services':

- Green Infrastructure to help drive economic regeneration.
- Biodiversity offsetting to compensate biodiversity loss where development is unavoidable.
- Environment sector skills to increase employability.
- Access to green space enhancing physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- Local food production.
- Catchment based approaches and water resource management.
- New funding approaches and opportunities for these landscapes.

A number of partnerships deliver countryside management and access improvements around urban areas across Surrey. These have traditionally been funded by local authorities, however there is a need to identify the full range of benefits these partnerships provide and identify new funding approaches and opportunities.

It will be vital to consider, based on the idea and objectives of "UrbanLinks 2 Landscapes", how the Surrey landscape does and will link into urban areas, including the municipalities located in Surrey and Greater London.

Explicit account of the value, scale and potential of each of the above areas can be worked into an improved and expanded version of the Rural Statement which would include guidelines, good and best practice examples, as well as the results of work undertaken during Phase 1 of the project.

The development of the Rural Statement indicates that there is a strong connection and interrelationship between rural economic, social and environment factors. However there is a need to improve the understanding and recognition of 'natural capital' to ensure the economic, social and environmental future and success of Surrey.

There needs to be a greater focus on developing an understanding of the value of the county's natural assets which underpin the provision of ecosystem services from which we benefit. The majority of us are guilty of taking the natural environment and the services we derive from it for granted. We hope this will also inform ways of working and policy instruments not only in Surrey but in other regions.

The value, appreciation and consideration of 'natural capital' needs to be improved to:

- ensure that the natural environment continues to provide multiple benefits into the future.
- future-proof Surrey against current and future risks such as climate change and extreme weather events.

- help build a prosperous and secure future for everyone who lives and works in Surrey.
- demonstrate that an innovative approach to natural capital at the local level has positive benefits.
- Secure viable funding opportunities for the management of the countryside around urban areas.

A number of other policies are relevant to the UL2L project:

### **Planning Policy**

There have been considerable changes to planning in the UK in recent years. Regional Plans have been abolished and the Government now produces a National Planning Policy Framework. District and Borough Councils in Surrey produce Local Plans. Local people are able to produce Neighbourhood Plans.

The Localism Act 2011 removed the formal regional tier of planning in England, and in its place introduced the Duty to Cooperate. The Duty to Cooperate requires local councils to work together when preparing their local policies and plans, to ensure that 'bigger than local' issues which cross local boundaries are dealt with properly for the planning system. For example, most Green Belts are spread across a number of local council areas. It is important for those different councils to work together to ensure that the Green Belt continues to be protected.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/revised-national-planning-policy-framework>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-plans--2>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2>

### **Surrey County Council**

District and borough councils deal with planning applications for building, extending or converting homes, offices or shops. Surrey County Council deals with applications for minerals or waste related developments, and for developments to its own property, such as schools and libraries.

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/land-planning-and-development/planning/local-applications>

The Surrey Minerals Plan Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) forms part of the Surrey Minerals Plan and provides strategic policies and site specific proposals for the extraction of silica sand and clay for the period to 2026.

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/land-planning-and-development/minerals-and-waste-policies-and-plans/minerals-core-strategy-development-plan>

### **UK Government 25 Year Environment Plan**

The UK Government Environment Plan sets out goals for improving the environment, within a generation.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

### **Mayor of London/GLA**

The Mayor of London and Greater London Authority has recently published a London Environment Strategy. They also produce the London Plan and have a positive approach to Green Infrastructure.

<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/environment/london-environment-strategy>  
<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan>  
<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan/current-london-plan/london-plan-chapter-two-londons-places/policy-4>  
<https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/implementing-london-plan/planning-guidance-and-practice-notes/all-london-green-grid>

### **Coast to Capital and Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnerships**

Coast to Capital and Enterprise M3 are Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP), two of 38 LEPs across England. They are local business led partnerships between local authorities and businesses and play a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and the creation of local jobs.

<https://www.coast2capital.org.uk/strategy/>  
<https://www.enterprisem3.org.uk/intelligence>  
[https://www.coast2capital.org.uk/storage/downloads/rural\\_statement\\_2016-1476886718.pdf](https://www.coast2capital.org.uk/storage/downloads/rural_statement_2016-1476886718.pdf)

### **Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

Surrey has two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – the Surrey Hills and the High Weald. Each produce a Management Plan every 4 years to provide a framework for how the landscape will be protected and enhanced.

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/land-planning-and-development/countryside/landscape-and-habitats/areas-of-outstanding-natural-beauty>

### **Part 2: "Regional stakeholder groups (organisations represented, their obligations, objectives etc.)"**

During Semester 1 we have been identifying stakeholders to take part in the Regional Stakeholder Group. David Greenwood has presented the project at the Surrey Parks and Countryside Forum on 3 October 2018. A workshop took place on Friday 19 October 2018 where David facilitated a table workshop which introduced the UL2L project, identified potential stakeholders and some of the challenges and opportunities towards developing the Regional Action Plan. The first meeting of the Surrey Regional Stakeholder Group will take place in early 2019.

Surrey County Council will cooperate with stakeholders to support them in playing an important role in informing the evidence base, confirming policy conclusions, aligning issues with other policies and in the delivery of the actions in the policy instrument.

Surrey County Council is working across the county and through our stakeholders to engage and influence high-level decision makers. Other stakeholders play an important role in informing the evidence base, confirming policy conclusions, aligning issues with other policies and in the delivery of the actions.

This will enable Local Authorities, developers and businesses to work together and deliver improvements to this policy instrument, that benefits people and wildlife by protecting and enhancing our natural assets.

Stakeholders will be involved in the project and the interregional learning process through study visits, regional conferences and contributing to reports and action plans.

### **Part 3: "Possible good practice examples in your region"**

#### **Surrey Nature Partnership**

The Surrey Nature Partnership is one of several new Local Nature Partnerships, which after successful application by a group of local organisations, were recognised by DEFRA in August 2012. Local Nature Partnerships have been set up across the UK with the purpose of championing the value of the natural environment in decision making at all levels.

VISION - To enrich the future for all through a healthy natural environment in Surrey and beyond.

MISSION - To facilitate informed decision-making in Surrey in partnership with other like-minded groups to ensure that our natural environment can continue to contribute to the economy, health and well-being of our communities.

STRATEGY - Our strategy is to link a wide variety of organisations and groups in Surrey to form an influential partnership. We will help to make informed decisions about the natural environment by bringing together expertise from all sectors to ensure that decisions take the true costs and benefits of the environment into account.

#### **Biodiversity and Planning**

The Surrey Nature Partnership has produced a 'Biodiversity & Planning in Surrey' manual offering advice to those involved in planning to ensure that development within the county protects and enhances the biodiversity which underpins our Natural Capital.

<https://surreynaturepartnership.files.wordpress.com/2018/11/biodiversity-planning-in-surrey-revised-november-20181.pdf>

#### **Natural Capital Approach**

The Surrey Nature Partnership are developing a natural capital approach

<https://surreynaturepartnership.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/natural-capital-approach-in-surrey-2016.pdf>

#### **Natural Capital Investment Plan**

The Surrey Nature Partnership have published our Natural Capital Investment Plan for Surrey which sets out the actions required to achieve healthy natural assets in Surrey over the next 25 years.

<https://surreynaturepartnership.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/natural-capital-investment-plan-for-surrey.pdf>

### Surrey Catchment Partnerships

Two river catchment partnerships operate in Surrey. The Catchment-Based Approach (CaBA) is a community-led approach that engages people and groups from across society to help improve our precious water environments.

<https://surreynaturepartnership.org.uk/surreys-catchment-partnerships/>

### Biodiversity Opportunity Areas

Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs) are extensive areas where improved habitat management, as well as efforts to restore and re-create Priority habitats will be most effective in enhancing connectivity to benefit recovery of Priority species in a fragmented landscape.

[https://surreynaturepartnership.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/biodiversity-opportunity-areas\\_surrey-nature-partnership\\_20151.pdf](https://surreynaturepartnership.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/biodiversity-opportunity-areas_surrey-nature-partnership_20151.pdf)

### Nutfield Marshes Case Study

<https://surreynaturepartnership.org.uk/our-work/case-studies/>

### **State of Surrey's Nature**

The State of Surrey's Nature provides a current stock-take of the county's biodiversity. The report aims to quantify our most threatened wildlife but also celebrates why Surrey's biodiversity is so special. This will help clarify our responsibilities to both national and international conservation, and serve to further inform our priorities at the county level. It will also be a base-line from which to measure future biodiversity trends and changes.

[https://surreynaturepartnership.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/state-of-surreys-nature\\_web.pdf](https://surreynaturepartnership.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/state-of-surreys-nature_web.pdf)

### **Surrey Landscape Character Assessment**

The Surrey Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) is a comprehensive assessment of the landscape character of the county. It takes account of the framework of the National Character Areas recently reviewed by Natural England and describes variations in the landscape character at a county level.

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/land-planning-and-development/countryside/strategies-action-plans-and-guidance/landscape-character-assessment>

### **Countryside Management Partnerships**

There are a number of countryside management partnerships in Surrey involving many different partners, neighbouring districts and boroughs and various conservation organisations.

They all broadly have the same objective: to maintain and sustainably enhance our green spaces for future generations and for bio-diversity.

<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/land-planning-and-development/countryside/partnerships>

### **Natural England/Countryside Agency**

Natural England and their predecessor the Countryside Agency have produced a range of research and guidance related to the countryside around towns and green infrastructure.

<http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/35033>

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20150303073708/http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/36009?category=47004>

David Greenwood  
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