

19 Proposals to review and extend the boundary of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty will be strongly supported. Projects and programmes to enhance the **landscape** will be actively promoted, including opening views and decluttering the landscape.

20 Biodiversity is important to Surrey, particularly as Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance cover some 15% of the area of the County. Positive conservation management will be promoted. Surrey is fortunate to have large areas of public open access land and an extensive public rights of way network for **recreation and access**. New facilities will be developed, where there is local support, for horse riding and mountain biking, and website information on Surrey Walks made readily available.

The Surrey Rural Partnership was established in May 2007 to promote Surrey's rural interests.

Its main aims are to:

- Provide a focal point and leadership for rural matters through an active forum of organisations that represent Surrey's diverse rural interests;
- To champion Surrey's rural interests by influencing and monitoring strategies and programmes which impact upon rural Surrey;
- To attract inward investment from regional and national programmes to strengthen Surrey's rural communities, economy and countryside.

The Partnership draws its membership from public sector and private sector organisations which provide rural services and/or represent the interests of particular sectors of rural Surrey.

The Surrey Rural Partnership gratefully acknowledges the help of Surrey County Council in the production of the Surrey Rural Strategy 2010-2015.



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Surrey Rural Strategy

summary

2010-2015



The Surrey Rural Strategy and the Action Plan can be downloaded from the Surrey Rural Partnership's website www.RuralSurrey.org.uk

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Words in bold are the main topics covered in the Surrey Rural Strategy 2010 – 2015.

- 1** The Surrey Rural Strategy 2010 – 2015 has been produced by the **Surrey Rural Partnership**. The Partnership brings together organisations with a concern for the future of rural Surrey. The **Surrey Rural Strategy** sets out a number of strategic objectives and action programmes over five years to address these objectives and work towards the achievement of a more sustainable future, whether social, economic or environmental for Surrey's rural areas.
- 2** The Surrey Rural Partnership's **vision** is for the rural areas of Surrey to have:
 - equality in policy and investment with the urban areas
 - empowered and self-sufficient communities
 - thriving rural economy and land-based sector
 - bio-diverse and well-managed countryside
 - adequate and dependable infrastructure – including roads, water and housing
 - resilience to adverse impact – including climate change, flooding, disease and energy costs.
- 3 What is rural Surrey?** It includes the open countryside, villages and market towns and open areas extending from the urban edge into built up areas. According to Government definitions one in four of Surrey's population lives in rural areas (261,000 out of a total population of 1,085,000 in mid 2006).
- 4** The Surrey Rural Partnership understands the very real constraints on public spending and that **resources** will have to be targeted at priority needs. Rural communities and rural interest groups can achieve much for themselves through self-help and voluntary action.
- 5 Implementation** of the Rural Strategy will involve the active participation of all those concerned. Programmes and projects are set out in an Action Plan. **Rural proofing** is one way of ensuring rural issues are not overlooked. The Surrey Rural Partnership will be an active and engaged partner in the Surrey Strategic Partnership and the Local Strategic Partnerships, and work with them to rural-proof their Community Strategies. Projects and programmes on rural **equality and diversity** issues will be instituted.

- 6** Self-reliance, security and good access to high quality public services will be promoted in **rural communities. Parish and town councils and community organisations** have an important role to play. Parish and town councils will be encouraged to actively use the opportunities presented by the Power of Well-being.
- 7 Community-led planning** has been very successful in Surrey. To date 32 parish plans and 8 rural town healthchecks have been completed. Continuity of the associated advice and support provided by Surrey Community Action is a priority.
- 8** Rural Surrey has suffered a decline in **access to services**, including shops, post offices, health and social facilities. Support will be promoted for social enterprises and community hubs, including **village and community halls**, which play such a vital role in rural life.
- 9** Reviews of **schools** admissions and transport policy will ensure the needs of children living in rural areas are considered. New facilities and activities for **young people** will be promoted and supported. Policies on **health, well-being and social care** will take account of up-to-date information on rural needs.
- 10 Policing** in rural Surrey will be targeted at priority areas through Country Watch and active citizen programmes. The Surrey Fire and Rescue Service will develop active links with rural communities to address **fire and emergencies** including flooding risk.
- 11** Parish surveys have been successful in indicating local **affordable housing** needs, in identifying potential sites and encouraging schemes to be built. A priority is to ensure the advice and support provided by the Surrey Rural Housing Group and the Rural Housing Enabler continues on a long-term basis.
- 12** High levels of **traffic** are endemic to Surrey. In a period of public finance restraint, road maintenance should be targeted at well-used rural roads. The County Council's road safety and bus reviews consider rural issues. Support for community **transport**, good neighbour and car sharing schemes is a priority, particularly if rural bus services are withdrawn.

- 13** A diverse and vibrant **rural economy** will be encouraged to support stable levels of employment. There is a high level of interdependence between **rural towns** and their surrounding countryside and villages. The Surrey Rural Towns Programme has been successful in promoting healthchecks and supporting follow-up action. A priority is for the work of the Surrey Rural Towns Partnership and the Rural Towns Co-ordinator to continue.
- 14** The Surrey Rural Partnership will encourage campaigns to promote and support **rural businesses** and to ensure the roll out of high speed **broadband** to rural communities..
- 15** The Visit Surrey Partnership has become established as the focus for promoting **tourism** in Surrey. Marketing campaigns to promote sustainable rural tourism will be mounted and appropriate new facilities developed.
- 16** Over the last ten years **farming and horticulture** has experienced business volatility. A priority is to implement the recommendations of Surrey Farm Study 3 published in 2009. The Surrey Rural Partnership will support a campaign to promote local food and **forestry and wood products**, including woodfuel, which has great potential to stimulate economic activity in England's most wooded county.
- 17** The **rural environment** will be conserved in sustainable ways, biodiversity maintained and improved leisure and recreation facilities enjoyed by local people and visitors. A priority is for rural Surrey to prepare for the impacts of **climate change** and to be able to play its part in reducing carbon emissions.
- 18** Much of Surrey's countryside is in the Metropolitan Green Belt and its protection against inappropriate development is essential. This must be complemented by active management. **Planning and green infrastructure** proposals will be prepared to channel developer funding into conservation and improvement of the countryside. Awareness of legal responsibilities, advice and information about rural Surrey's **historic environment** will be promoted.