

**Surrey
Youth
Climate
Change
Strategy**



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About us



Surrey Youth Council

We are a group of dedicated 11- to 25-year-olds who represent the views of young people of Surrey at Council and Parliamentary levels about issues that affect them. We have seven elected Members of Youth Parliament a Young Mayor team, and Portfolio Holders who take our ideas to a wider audience.

Young people highlighted Climate Change as a priority in both the 2024 Make Your Mark vote, and the 2025 Our Voice Matters survey. We listened.

Foreword

Scientists across the world study how our planet is changing, and what we can all do to look after it. They have told us that we must limit the rise of global temperatures to 1.5°C, in order to keep people safe and healthy, with enough clean water, food, and safe temperatures for all.

Whilst it might seem like a big issue for young people to tackle, we must take the initiative to show adults and world leaders that we want a healthier, more sustainable environment. After all, we will be the ones living in the world that is being shaped right now. What that looks like is for us to decide.

The actions needed for environmental change also have other benefits: building habits that improve our physical and mental health; saving us money on bills and make us less reliant on oil and gas from abroad; and making the world a fairer place.

By working together, we can create real change and move towards a Surrey, and world, that is greener, healthier and fairer for everyone.



Shirley

Surrey Youth Cabinet Member for the Environment

Introduction

People in Surrey overwhelmingly care about climate action. Almost **70% of residents say it's very important**, while only a tiny 5% think it's not important. This is great news, as in July 2019, Surrey County Council declared a climate emergency, and we need everyone's help to take on this challenge. The council wants Surrey to be a carbon neutral county by 2050, and we would urge the new East and West Surrey councils to take up these goals from 2027.

Carbon neutral

- balancing the amount of carbon we put into the atmosphere by taking the same amount back out

Net-zero

- reducing the emission of greenhouse gases, ideally to 0 one day

This Youth Climate Change Strategy aims to empower young people to take individual and collective action to:

- protect the planet
- reduce living costs
- improve the quality of life and housing
- create a healthier society

Will you join us on our journey to net-zero?

Emissions

Emissions

- things being released into the atmosphere, like carbon or other gases

Youth targets

- Commit to 3 permanent behaviour changes by 2030
- Surrey Youth Council to reduce their carbon footprint by 2027

What can young people do?

- Turn down the heating and put on a jumper or blanket
- Lower your carbon footprint using the WWF calculator
- Encourage your school to become an Eco or Green Flag School
- Ask your parents/carers/school to improve the building's energy efficiency if possible - e.g. insulation, heat pumps, double glazing, etc. There are grants for schools and homes available!

What can the council do?

- **Work to increase the number of Eco Schools** from 175 to 250, and Green Flag Schools from 101 to 150 by 2030
- **Offer incentives for young people** to make changes at home and at school
- Decarbonise Surrey schools by supporting funding for solar panels and renewable heat sources



Transport

Youth targets

- Increase use of sustainable travel methods by 25% by 2030
- Increase the number of School Streets from 1 to 10 by 2030

What can young people do?

- Swap 1 in every 4 car journeys for public or active transport - walking, cycling, bus, train, etc.
- Introduce a cycle or walk to school club, or arrange to car share with friends
- Run a social media campaign promoting active travel
- Ask your school to apply for a School Street, to cut air pollution and safety risks outside school, and for free cycle and walking training

What can the council do?

- **Financial support for greener transport:** widening the Link card scheme, financial support for bikes, etc.
- **Invest in initiatives and infrastructure** to increase walking, cycling and public transport, and reduce car reliance; such as incentives, School Streets, pedestrianisation, and more bus stops



Energy

Off-peak hours

- when fewer people are using electricity (e.g. overnight), so there's less demand and it's cheaper

Youth target

- Commit to 3 permanent behaviour changes by 2030

What can young people do?

- Turn off lights and appliances when not in use and use energy efficient lightbulbs
- Get a smart meter and monitor energy use - reduce the use of inefficient appliances, or use them during 'off-peak' hours and save money!
- Ask your parents/carers to get a free home energy survey from the Home Energy Advice Team. They might be entitled to free upgrades through the Warm Homes Local Grant
- Ask your parents/carers/school to use a green energy supplier and consider solar panels, and switch to a green energy supplier

What can the council do?

- **Financial support for schools and colleges** to use renewable energy, and improve insulation and heating systems
- **Incentives** to encourage young people and schools to reduce their energy usage



Housing

Biodiversity

- the variety of plants and animals in an area

Youth targets

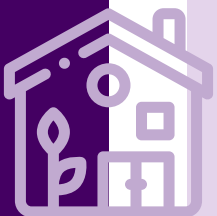
- Attend the annual Surrey Development Forum to share youth priorities
- One day be able to live in homes that reduce emissions, have lower running costs and improve the wellbeing of our community

What can young people do?

- Support wildlife in your garden by putting up a bird box or make a pot pond. If you don't have a garden, try a window box!
- Encourage the council to build affordable, energy-efficient homes near to sustainable transport, and support local biodiversity
- Lobby construction companies to build energy-efficient homes
- Encourage the council to build more social housing

What can the council do?

- **Involve young people in conversations** about their future homes and workplaces
- **Careful planning and development** to provide environmentally friendly affordable homes for young people's futures



Waste

Fast fashion

- cheaply-made, low-quality clothes that don't last and need replacing often

Youth targets

- Reduce food waste by at least 50% by 2030
- Increase reusing or recycling packaging by at least 75% by 2030
- Develop heritage skills to repair damaged items

What can young people do?

- Shop and eat carefully to reduce food waste, get a compost bin if you have a garden
- Shop sustainably, avoiding fast fashion when possible
- Learn to sew to fix clothes or buy second-hand
- Run a social media campaign to raise awareness
- Reuse or recycle all packaging you can
- Turn off taps when not in use and have short showers
- Visit a repair café and learn how to fix objects

What can the council do?

- **Encourage development of heritage skills** so that young people can live sustainably
- **Provide incentives to reduce waste** and make schools and homes more sustainable



Land and Food

Youth targets

- Eat more sustainably
- Plant our own trees, as part of Surrey's plan to plant a tree for every resident by 2030
- Protect and promote green spaces and woodland

What can young people do?

- Reduce how much meat you eat
- Eat more locally-produced and seasonal food, and check eco labels on packaging
- Set up a school gardening club
- Grow your own vegetables
- Promote biodiversity at school and home by growing wildflowers or lavender, more plants, less concrete!
- Encourage nature recovery and the protection of green spaces and woods
- Plant a tree

What can the council do?

- **Provide food education and incentives** for residents and schools to grow their own food and buy local, seasonal food, such as competitions with prizes
- **Include young people in environmental projects** such as tree planting



Green Skills

Green skills

- the knowledge, attitude, and skills needed to live in an eco-friendly society
 - technical skills, e.g. engineering or science
 - 'soft' skills, e.g. creativity and adaptability

Youth targets

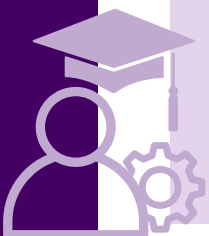
- Develop green skills to prepare for future jobs
- Promote green skills and services
- Collaborate with partners on projects

What can young people do?

- Learn about the environment and ways to protect it
- Develop technical and/or 'soft' green skills for green careers, such as through a Skills Bootcamp
- Do work experience or volunteer with a 'green' organisation - check out our webpage for more info!

What can the council do?

- **Develop green skills in young people**, through workshops and courses, or through the school curriculum, and offer green apprenticeships
- **Offer opportunities to gain work experience** in this area



Call to action!



Time is running out, but our goals are still 100% possible.

Young people need to come together to protect our future. We hope to inspire others and lead the way, supported by the Council.

Will you join us?

Email your pledge to us, or invite us to visit and celebrate your projects:

youthcabinet@surreycc.gov.uk

Visit our
webpage:



Acknowledgements

The Surrey Youth Climate Change Strategy was coproduced and driven by the Surrey Youth Council. I want to thank the whole Youth Council, and especially the Youth Cabinet of 2024-2026 for their work.

Their passion for protecting the beautiful county of Surrey and the world beyond drove this project alongside other environmental projects and campaigns.



Cammie Evans

Participation Lead for Surrey Youth Council and Cabinet

Our partners

We are delighted to have the endorsement of the following organisations:



Surrey Hills
National
Landscape



Butterfly
Conservation



Surrey Nature Partnership

Healthy Environment | Healthy People | Healthy Economy

Planting the seeds of change.

