Responding to the East Surrey Council strategy consultation

Introduction

We welcome East Surrey Council's consultation on its draft 2027-2032 strategy, but we believe it needs stronger climate action and a more collaborative approach.

- **Process concern:** The strategy was fully written before consultation began, which sits uneasily with the council's own commitments to co-produce decisions with communities. We want the vision and priorities revisited, not just the delivery plan.
- **Strengths acknowledged:** The strategy commits to joined-up planning of homes, transport, to flood and heat resilience, and to planning sustainable travel with residents.
- **Gaps identified:** Climate is treated mainly as something to limit the impacts of. The strategy omits energy bills, insulation and retrofit, renewable energy, emissions cuts, air quality and buses, and gives little detail on nature, waste reduction or community influence beyond consultation.
- **Survey vs strategy:** The consultation survey is more ambitious than the strategy itself, asking about energy-efficient buildings, renewables and insulation advice, which suggests there is appetite for going further.
- **Climate as foundation:** We argue that climate action should underpin all the council's ambitions, since it supports health, resilience, lower living costs, innovation and jobs: none of these can be secured without a healthy climate.
- **Emergency declaration:** We ask council leaders to declare a Climate and Nature Emergency.
- **Partnership proposal:** Regular East Surrey gatherings of council, businesses, academic and community partners to review progress and set annual goals.

How to respond

The stakeholder engagement survey link:

https://engage.zencity.io/surrey-county-council/en-GB/engagements/6e35be5d-7ba4-4d1f-a018-76e52d0f1921

Please answer honestly

These are suggestions, not a script. Please tick only what reflects your organisation's view, and use your own words and local examples. Responses in different voices carry more weight than identical text. There is one general free-text question at the end, so it is worth using well. Everything else is mostly tick-boxes with some "Other" boxes presenting opportunities to add points.

Practical tips

- Use local examples from your own work, such as a flooded road, a bus route that does not run, or a retrofit scheme that worked.
- Tick the contact option at the end if you are happy to be involved further.
- Some questions are optional. Our guidance below only includes suggested answers for key questions.
- The survey closes on 15 November 2026 at 11:59pm.

Responses to multiple-choice questions

Question	Suggested approach, if it reflects your view
You are completing this survey as:	Choose the option that fits, for example “Non-profit organisation in East Surrey”.
Key areas of focus. What do you think are the most significant challenges facing East Surrey over the next 5-10 years?	Consider including: Climate change and environmental pressures; Transport, congestion and connectivity; Health and wellbeing.
East Surrey Council has identified a number of priorities…..	Consider: Stronger communities; Public transport and connections; Climate resilience; Nature and biodiversity; Waste and recycling. Swap in any local priority that matters more to you, such as affordable housing.
What matters most to you in how East Surrey Council will work?	Consider: Consult local people before big decisions; Make services work well together; Keep people updated; Explain hard choices honestly; Tell people what work has been done.
How would you describe the East Surrey you’d like to see in the long term?	Consider: A place where people feel heard; Communities are strong and connected; Local places are cleaner, greener and well cared for.
What do you see as the three greatest barriers	Consider: Lack of joined-up working; Difficulty engaging communities; Lack of funding.
Which housing issues should East Surrey Council focus on most?	Consider: Other. Suggested text to type in: *“Retrofitting existing homes; New developments built to net zero standards”*
How should East Surrey Council support jobs and the local economy?	Consider: Plan new homes close to existing and future employment opportunities; Support training, skills and access to local employment opportunities;. Use “Other” to add text “*Support green jobs and skills in retrofit, renewable energy and nature restoration*”.
What should East Surrey Council do to help respond to climate change?	Consider ticking all boxes, **but beware:** one option “Invest in active cooling, including air conditioning….) bundles air conditioning with heat pumps and green shading. You may prefer to leave it unticked, and say in “Other” *“Invest in heat pumps and green shading, which are preferable to air conditioning*.” Also, consider adding to “Other” “*Support community-led energy and local retrofit schemes”.*
How your organisation can be involved & informed. **How could your organisation work with East Surrey Council to help achieve its ambitions?**	Consider: Help shape future policy and strategy; Develop joint projects; Support community initiatives; Participate in partnership boards or forums. Use “Other” to name the regular gathering (see below).
What should East Surrey Council tell people about?	Consider: Work to protect the environment; How decisions are made and who is responsible; How the council uses feedback to improve services.

Question	Suggested approach, if it reflects your view
What should East Surrey Council do to make its services fair and inclusive?	Consider including: Involve different communities when services are planned; Check how decisions may affect different groups.
To what extent do you agree or disagree that you personally can influence decisions affecting your local area?	Answer honestly. The council appears to be tracking this over time. Note: this appears to be asking about your ***personal*** influence decisions - not your organisation's influence

Themes for the free-text answers

500 characters max. It seems you cannot copy and paste.

1. **Make climate action a clear commitment.**
   (a) Ask the Council to go beyond minimising impacts and make climate action a foundation for its priorities, covering emissions as well as flooding and heat.
   (b) Ask the council to declare a Climate and Nature Emergency.

2. **Cut energy bills.** Ask for support for home insulation and retrofit, framed as help with the cost of living and health, and as a source of local jobs and training.
3. **Affordable, healthy travel.** Ask that "active and sustainable travel" includes buses, safer routes for children and cleaner air, not only well-maintained roads.
4. **Protecting and restoring nature, with access for all.** Ask for action to restore and protect green spaces, and improve water quality, and support access for all, to support health and wellbeing.
5. **Work *with* communities, not just listen to them.** Ask for lasting ways for residents to shape decisions, such as community panels or citizen assemblies, and for a wide partnership of the council, businesses, academia and community groups, with a regular East Surrey gathering to review progress.

Suggested wording to adapt

Starting points for the free-text boxes. Please adapt them, add your own examples, and delete anything that does not reflect your organisation. Square brackets mark where to add your own detail.

Anything else to consider when putting priorities into action (500 characters)

> Make climate action a core priority, covering emissions reduction as well as adaptation.
>
> Declare a Climate and Nature Emergency.
>
> Back home insulation and retrofit to cut bills, improve health and create local jobs.
>
> Make active travel mean buses, safe routes for children and cleaner air.
>
> Restore green spaces and water quality with access for all.
>
> Give residents lasting influence through community panels or citizen assemblies, and hold a regular East Surrey partnership gathering to review progress.