

Today is World No Smoking Day - Surrey steps up



Surrey unveils inspiring stop smoking stories: boosts free support and offers exclusive app access

This Saturday 31st May is World No Smoking Day and Surrey County Council is stepping up its mission to help residents quit smoking with the launch of a compelling new series of video case studies, a significant funding boost, and free access to the popular Smoke Free App.

The video case studies, produced in partnership with One You Surrey, feature Tara and Tobias who have successfully quit smoking. These powerful testimonials aim to inspire others to take the first step toward a healthier, smoke-free life. Watch the videos below:

This initiative is backed by new government funding, part of a national drive to create a Smokefree Generation. The additional resources will allow residents to have even more choice when finding the right free, personalised support to quit smoking.

One You Surrey is the healthy lifestyle service for Surrey residents including a comprehensive stop smoking programme, which includes FREE:

One-to-one support with trained mentors

Nicotine replacement therapies and e-cigarettes delivered to your door

The choice of telephone or face-to-face weekly appointments. See where your nearest location is via: [How can I quit smoking? | Healthy Surrey](#)

New Digital Support: Free Access to the Smoke Free App

Surrey residents can now access six months of free premium features on the highly rated Smoke Free App, offering residents 24/7 support to help you when your cravings hit. Plus, you will receive up to 12 weeks supply of free first choice stop smoking aids, including patches, chewing gum, e-cigarettes and more. The app offers:

Daily missions and motivational messages

Progress tracking (money saved, health improvements)

Craving management tools

Access to expert advice and community support

To activate your free subscription, visit: [smoke free app](#)

Whether it's your first time trying to quit, or you've tried before, it's never too late to ditch the cigarettes.

Mark Nuti, Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing and Public Health said: "As an ex-smoker, I know it's not easy to quit on your own, so I am proud that Surrey County Council is offering even more tools to help people quit smoking. With inspiring local stories, expert support, and now a free app, there's never been a better time to go smoke-free."

To start your journey, visit [oneyousurrey.org.uk](#).

Your Councillor Community Fund now open for applications



Surrey residents can once again apply for cash grants to improve their local area through the Your Councillor Community Fund.

Surrey County Council is committed to making a difference in communities across the county. The Your Councillor Community Fund has benefitted communities in towns and villages from North to South and East to West.

Last year, the Fund supported over 371 community projects via Surrey County Councillors, totalling £403,344.

The Your Councillor Community Fund is designed to flexibly support a variety of costs, from purchasing sports equipment for local clubs to creating websites. It provides financial assistance to community groups and projects that enhance the quality of life for residents across Surrey on their doorsteps.

Each year, Surrey County Council's 81 councillors allocate £5,000 of funding within their local communities. With their deep understanding of the needs and priorities of their towns and villages, they can ensure that the funding is targeted to areas where it is most needed and where it can make the biggest impact. It can be used across a variety of projects that help promote the social, economic, and environmental wellbeing of their communities.

Examples of projects funded last year include:

£2,000 towards equipment for the 2024 Ottershaw Village Fete, including hiring a generator, printing programmes and purchasing walkie talkies to be used at the event.

£240 towards replacing old wooden bollards that were no longer fit for purpose at Churt Recreation Ground, making it more visually appealing and welcoming for the community.

£1,000 to provide Horsell Community Gardening Project with new planters, bulbs and perennials, helping to bring together residents of all ages to cultivate and maintain green spaces in the local area.

£3,000 to the Weybridge Society towards equipment for the 2024 Weybridge Festival.

Surrey County Council Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities Denise Turner-Stewart said: *"The Your Councillor Community Fund has been incredibly successful in supporting a wide range of community projects on residents' doorsteps. We are thrilled to see the positive impact it has had across Surrey and I am delighted it is open again for another year."*

This fund has played a crucial role in enabling councillors to address local needs and serve our residents effectively. By backing initiatives driven by the passion and dedication of our residents, we aim to build vibrant, inclusive communities where everyone can thrive and No One is Left Behind."

The Your Councillor Community Fund is open now and closes at the end of January 2026. A new grant management system is now in place, making the application process even easier for residents.

To apply for money from this year's Your Councillor Community Fund you should contact your **local county councillor**.

More information can be found here **Your Councillor Community Fund - Surrey County Council ([surreycc.gov.uk](#))**.

Surrey's partner organisations support county council plans for local government reorganisation

Epsom and Ewell Times is bringing you all positions being taken on local government reorganisation. We believe in providing you as much information as possible, even if statements are repeated across the stream of reports and press releases. Here is the latest unedited press release from Surrey County Council that favours two unitary authorities to replace itself.

Yesterday, Surrey County Council's Cabinet approved a plan for local government reorganisation in the county. The plan will be sent to government on 9 May, and proposes two councils, East and West Surrey, to replace the existing 12 councils. The creation of the two councils will unlock further devolution through the election of a Mayor for Surrey.

The plan will be jointly submitted with Elmbridge Borough Council and Mole Valley District Council, and includes letters of support from key local partners, including health, police, fire, business and community leaders.

Ian Smith, Chair of NHS Surrey Heartlands ICB said: *"As a key partner, NHS Surrey Heartlands is supportive of Surrey County Council's proposal to move to two unitary authorities for Surrey. Recognising the value and importance of strong community engagement – particularly as the NHS looks to focus more on neighbourhood health with local partners – we very much support the proposed creation of community-level boards across Surrey to help strengthen engagement at local level."*

Police and Crime Commissioner Lisa Townsend said: *"I believe a two unitary structure is the right model for Surrey that will unlock the exciting opportunities that exist through devolution."*

"The most important part of my role is to represent our residents and ensure we provide value for money and the very best policing service to keep our communities safe. In any future model of governance, it is crucial that links to the Surrey public at a very local level are retained."

"By getting this right, we can ensure that we continue to deliver an effective and resilient service that will fight crime and protect our county for the next decade."

Dan Quin, Chief Fire Officer, said: *"I am pleased that the proposal to move Surrey Fire and Rescue Service to the Mayoral Strategic Authority aligns to the national Fire Reform White Paper in terms of governance for our service. However, in addition to this, this could also allow better collaboration, greater control over funding and regulatory requirements and closer integration with local health and safety initiatives – ensuring a holistic approach to community safety."*

The Chair to the Board of Trustees at Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum said: *"We fully support the proposed local government reorganisation in Surrey, specifically the recommendation consisting of two unitary authorities. This proposal provides the best opportunity for greater efficiencies in the delivery of services, with reduced duplication and clearer accountability as well as improved financial sustainability. It would allow for more coherent planning and integrated service delivery while preserving the distinctiveness of Surrey's diverse communities. This is a once in lifetime opportunity to strengthen and align public services in the county and we welcome the inclusion of police and health partners in developing this proposal. The inclusion of community boards in the proposal will help to strengthen connectivity with local communities, and SMEF can play a vital role in connecting local diverse communities into these boards."*

Councillor Stephen Cooksey, Leader of Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) said: *"Making the right decision is not always easy, but as elected representatives, our responsibility is to act in the best interests of our residents and businesses. This is especially important during a process as significant as local government reorganisation."*

"Initially, we felt that more time and information were needed to determine whether two or three unitary authorities would best serve Mole Valley. However, following a thorough review of both proposals and a full Council debate, we have voted to support the proposal for two unitary authorities and look forward to having further detailed discussions with our partners, Ministers and others regarding how this can best be implemented."

"We believe this approach offers the best opportunity to establish a new authority that is financially sustainable, supports economic growth, protects our environment, and meets the needs of both our rural and urban communities."

Cllr Mike Rollings, Leader of Elmbridge Borough Council, believes that financial stability and protecting the interests of residents are best achieved by a 2 unitary approach.

"Although we didn't ask for government to reorganise the structure of councils in Surrey, we are none-the-less committed to ensuring long-term financial sustainability and delivering value for our residents. I believe these priorities can be achieved through the establishment of two unitary authorities, one for East Surrey and one for West Surrey. Throughout this process we will maintain accountability and actively engage with our residents to ensure successful local government reorganisation in Surrey."

Tim Oliver, Leader of Surrey County Council said: *"Our analysis shows that two unitary councils would bring the greatest benefit to Surrey's residents, and we've received significant backing from key partners to support this. Two councils, in partnership with a Mayor for Surrey, would save money, strengthen and simplify local government and with an East and West arrangement both councils would be in a strong position to continue to deliver high quality services to all Surrey residents. Of course, consideration must be given to the differing levels of debt that the authorities would potentially inherit, and we're in talks with government about our request that the stranded debt be written off as well as providing financial support to those borough councils that need it."*

"Most importantly, this proposal strengthens local community engagement. We know that residents want high quality services that are easy to access, and they want a real say in services and decisions that affect them. That's why we're proposing the creation of community-level boards across Surrey."

"These community boards will be locally determined but we would expect them to include representation from health partners, Surrey Police, voluntary groups, councillors, council staff, local Town and Parish Councils and Residents Associations. We plan to pilot these boards over the coming months, and residents will have a say in how they are set up and delivered."

"We're in a strong position as a county council, with good quality services and an excellent track record of stable finances after years of successful transformation. And working together with our residents and partners, we are well placed to deliver this important reorganisation. Ultimately, this work will unlock further devolution, meaning Surrey can elect a mayor which will bring more power, flexibility and funding closer to communities."

The county council plan was also discussed with all county councillors at a Full Council meeting and a majority were in favour of submitting the final LGR plan.

Surrey tree planting initiative surpasses halfway mark with 768,832 trees



Surrey County Council has planted over 49,000 trees and hedgerows over the past year, bringing the Surrey wide total to 768,832 since 2019. This marks a significant milestone for the council, with over half of our planned 1.2 million trees by 2030 – one for every Surrey resident – now planted in the ground.

Trees provide numerous benefits including producing oxygen, absorbing carbon dioxide, regulating the water cycle, and offering habitats for wildlife. A range of community projects have also been undertaken to support our target, including:

- **Mullard Space Science Laboratory, Dorking:** Our team conducted a tree planting workshop for staff, resulting in the planting of 20 fruit trees and

three young oak trees in a new orchard area.

- **Broadwater School, Waverley:** Pupils on the school’s eco council learnt about the importance of trees. They planted 753 trees to create a reflection area and were supported by the community garden opposite the school.
- **Goldsworth Park Medical Centre, Woking:** As part of the NHS Forests scheme, which aims to transform green spaces within healthcare sites to improve health, wellbeing and biodiversity, 10 fruit trees were planted to create an orchard, with local community volunteers supporting.

Marisa Heath, Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Environment, said, *“I am delighted to be making significant progress towards our goal. Trees play a vital role in enhancing the appearance of Surrey’s green spaces, while also strengthening our climate resilience.*

“We couldn’t do this alone, so I thank all the partners, communities, and residents who support this initiative. I encourage you to continue to do so to achieve our target for the benefit of our communities and future generations to come.”

Community groups, charities, schools, parish councils, and businesses can register to be involved in the next planting season this winter. To find out more and to register your interest, visit our **tree planting website**.



County council set to propose two unitary councils for Surrey



Subject to Cabinet approval, Surrey County Council plans to submit to government a proposal for two unitary councils for local government reorganisation in the county. These two councils, arranged by East and West, would replace the existing 12 councils and unlock further devolution in Surrey.

In council papers published today, the county council outlines detailed analysis to evidence that two councils would be the most beneficial model for Surrey’s future. The proposal, which sets out a robust plan for local community engagement, also includes letters of support from key partners, business and community leaders, as well as Elmbridge Borough Council.

Tim Oliver, Leader of Surrey County Council said: “Our analysis shows that two unitary councils would bring the greatest benefit to Surrey’s residents. Two councils, in partnership with a Mayor for Surrey, would save money, strengthen and simplify local government and with an East and West arrangement both councils would be in a strong position to continue to deliver high quality services to all Surrey residents. Of course, consideration must be given to the differing levels of debt that the authorities would potentially inherit, and we’re in talks with government about our request that the stranded debt be written off as well as providing financial support to those borough councils that need it.

“Most importantly, this proposal strengthens local community engagement. We know that residents want high quality services that are easy to access, and they want a real say in services and decisions that affect them. That’s why we’re proposing the creation of community-level boards across Surrey.

“These community boards will be locally determined but we would expect them to include representation from health partners, Surrey Police, voluntary groups, councillors, council staff, local Town and Parish Councils and Residents Associations. We plan to pilot these boards over the coming months, and residents will have a say in how they are set up and delivered.

“We’re in a strong position as a county council, with good quality services and an excellent track record of stable finances after years of successful transformation. And working together with our residents and partners, we are well placed to deliver this important reorganisation. Ultimately, this work will unlock further devolution, meaning Surrey can elect a mayor which will bring more power, flexibility and funding closer to communities.”

Cllr Mike Rollings, Leader of Elmbridge Borough Council said: “While Elmbridge, like other districts and boroughs, is not overly enamoured with the government’s local government reorganisation, throughout this process, we have maintained an open-minded stance regarding the optimal number of new unitary authorities. Our primary goal is to ensure the best interests of Elmbridge, as well as Surrey as a whole. We have always said that our decision will be grounded in robust evidence and data and we will continue to analyse, research, and scrutinise all options until we are confident that the best solution for unitarisation in Surrey has been identified.

“Based on the proposals we have seen, we think an East/West split could make the most sense for Elmbridge both in terms of financial stability, increased flexibility to meet housing needs and the potential to minimise the impact on the character and appearance of Elmbridge.

“We will continue to work across the county to support the development of proposals that lead to the best results for our residents, and we will debate these at extraordinary meetings of our Council and Cabinet on 6 May.”

The proposal includes a recommended geographical model for the two councils, by East and West, using current District Council geographies with Spelthorne, Surrey Heath, Runnymede, Woking, Guildford and Waverley residents in the West of Surrey, and Elmbridge, Mole Valley, Epsom & Ewell, Reigate & Banstead and Tandridge residents in the East.

This model has similar levels of population, land area, total household numbers, homelessness, house building targets, waste collection, business activity, pupil distribution, number of birth and death registrations, and total miles of public highways. Demand and budget requirements would also be similar for Adult Social Care and Children Social Services across both councils and this geography makes use of the neighbouring economic benefits of London, Heathrow airport, and Gatwick airport, with a similar mix of the urban and rural landscape that makes Surrey a fantastic place to live and work.

The overall populations of each new council would exceed the government’s minimum size of 500,000 residents.



Notes:

- In February, government asked Surrey to submit plans for local government reorganisation. Once this proposal has been approved by Surrey County Council’s Cabinet on 7th May, it will be submitted to government by the 9th May deadline. A final decision is expected from government in the Autumn. The full council paper can be accessed here: <https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=121&Mid=9715&Ver=4>
- District and borough councils in Surrey are also discussing options for reorganisation at respective council meetings.
- Details of an online resident engagement event, due to be held in May, will be shared soon

Surrey Housing protocol agreed for people with mental health needs

An agreement between councils and NHS services in Surrey will help people with mental health needs find housing and avoid delays in leaving hospital.

The Surrey Mental Health and Housing Protocol sets out how services will work together to support people who find it difficult to secure long-term housing because of the mental health challenges they face.

By strengthening coordination between health, social care and housing, the protocol aims to help people find accommodation to aid their recovery and reduce the risk of becoming homeless.

The protocol, which sets out step-by-step guidance to services, will also help prevent delays in people leaving hospital, freeing up space for others in need.

Housing difficulties are a key factor in people having to stay in hospital longer than necessary. The protocol outlines clear processes for making sure that people have access to suitable housing when they are ready to be discharged.

The protocol also aims to help prevent evictions from tenancies and reduce incidents of cuckooing, where criminals exploit vulnerable people by taking over their homes for illegal activities such as drug-dealing.

Detailing a number of possible scenarios and the approaches to follow for each, the agreement encourages services to identify early warning signs of housing problems and work together to intervene proactively and find tailored solutions. This is especially important for people with complex needs or who face multiple disadvantages, such as unemployment, poor health, domestic abuse and trauma.

An earlier version of the protocol was introduced in 2016 but it has now been strengthened, updated and expanded, with a sharper focus on supporting people at the right time. Surrey organisations renewed their commitment by signing up to the updated protocol in March.

Partners who have agreed the relaunched protocol are Surrey’s 11 borough and district councils, Surrey County Council, Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, as the county’s mental health NHS provider, and the five acute care hospitals in Surrey (Royal Surrey, Epsom, East Surrey, St Peter’s and Frimley Park). The protocol can be found on the **Healthy Surrey website**.

Sinead Mooney, Surrey County Council’s Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, said: *“We know that safe and stable housing promotes good mental health, and this relaunched protocol is an important step forward in helping people stay in their homes or find suitable new ones at a time when they most need support.*

“By strengthening the way that services work together, we can help people earlier, supporting their recovery, independence and overall wellbeing, and making sure no one is left behind. With local government reorganisation on the horizon, this protocol will also support partners in getting ready for the changes ahead.”

Jo Lynch, Chief Nursing Officer at Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, said: *“I am delighted we are jointly working with our partners in social care and housing to ensure people have access to suitable accommodation when they are ready to be discharged from hospital.*

“It can be complicated to understand how best to support people to get the housing they need. The joint protocol guides us on who we need talk to and the conversations we need to have to help people more quickly find housing that can support them with their recovery and which then frees up hospital beds for others in need.”

The boroughs of Reigate & Banstead and Runnymede represented Surrey’s 11 borough and district councils on a multi-agency group which worked on updating and strengthening the protocol.

Cllr Mus Tary, Executive Member for Housing and Support at Reigate & Banstead Borough Council, said: *“Officers from our Housing Team have been involved in the co-design of the updated protocol, alongside other partners, bringing their expertise on some of the housing challenges faced by those with mental health needs. We hope this protocol will ensure consistency across the partnership and lead to improved housing outcomes for some of our most vulnerable residents.”*

Cllr Mike Smith, Chair of Runnymede Borough Council’s Housing Committee said: *“Homelessness affects people from all walks of life, and there is no one-size-fits-all solution. For those facing mental health challenges, securing and maintaining stable accommodation can be even more difficult. This updated and vital protocol prioritises early intervention and strengthens collaboration between housing, health, social care, and many other agencies to ensure no one falls through the cracks. By identifying housing issues early and providing tailored support, we can help people transition from hospital into housing—giving them stability and the best chance to recover and rebuild their lives.”*

On the Buses - Surrey going Green



Following a successful bid for funding to the Department for Transport, Surrey County Council has been awarded an additional £1.7m for 12 new zero emission buses. This follows a previous allocation in 2024, taking Surrey’s total provision to over £5 million and 31 new buses in total.

Along with the 34 hydrogen buses already operating across the county, and a further 23 coming into service this Summer, this will see 88 zero emission buses operating on Surrey’s roads.

The new fully accessible vehicles use green hydrogen and have a range of up to 600 miles. They offer a smooth, quiet ride with free Wi-Fi, charging points and social seating on board.

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth at Surrey County Council said, *“I’m delighted that Surrey will benefit from this extra funding which will help us to build upon our own significant investment in providing cleaner buses.*

“Introducing these buses to our fleet is expected to deliver an estimated carbon saving of c112,000 tonnes over the life of the buses, which is great news for Surrey residents and for everyone else travelling in and out of our county.

“We’ve also invested £6.3m in more ultra-low and zero emission community transport minibuses, £9m in bus priority measures to ensure Surrey buses turn up on time, and £1.4m in improving information for passengers at bus stops.

“Our Surrey LINK card gives young people half-price bus travel and we’ve expanded our on-demand Surrey Connect bus services to cover areas where there are limited fixed bus routes, giving more options to travel by bus for all residents right across Surrey, particularly in our rural areas.”

Richard Telling, Managing Director of Falcon Buses said, *“Through the partnership working with Surrey County Council (SCC), who have been awarded Department for Transport (DfT) ZEBRA 2 funding, we are now enhancing our roll out of zero Emission buses, introducing 21 electric buses into our fleet.*

“Financial investment from Falcon Buses, together with SCC and DfT has enabled us to place orders with Alexander Dennis for the supply of their brand new Enviro 200 EV next generation bus and we will see electric buses operating on a number of our services from Spring 2026. Exciting times are ahead for Falcon operating new technology with electric buses, and we look forward to our customers coming on the journey with us.”

Simon Rowland, CEO of White Bus said, *“We are incredibly excited about our new electric vehicle fleet coming later this year. Not only is White Bus providing greener, cleaner vehicles, but also giving our passengers the additional comfort of quieter vehicles. Our 446 and 555 will be the first routes to use the new Yutong E10s, and they will be branded in the green Flightline livery as part of other service improvements in partnership with Surrey County Council and Heathrow. Our thanks to DfT and Surrey County Council for their support in helping White Bus make the transition to a greener future.”*

Related report:

£12 million bus boost for Surrey

Image: 465 Enviro Bus in Dorking High St: Arriva436 Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license

New funding to boost Surrey’s businesses and economy



Funding worth millions is now available from Surrey County Council for innovative ideas to drive growth across Surrey.

Businesses, employer representative groups and partner organisations are all invited to apply for investment from the new Economic Growth Fund.

Up to £7 million is available for this financial year – with grants awarded to those demonstrating how they will boost economic outcomes for the people, places and businesses of the county.

Applications for the first round are now open and due to close at the end of May **via the Business Surrey website**.

The launch comes as the Council also publishes **Surrey’s Economic Growth Strategy 2025 to 2035**, which sets out the long-term focus and priorities to drive sustainable growth in the county for the next decade.

Matt Furniss, the Council’s Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Economic Growth, said: *“This is a fantastic opportunity for businesses, training providers and partners to secure immediate investment in ideas to drive growth in Surrey.*

“We know that Surrey has a strong economy, contributing £50 billion a year to UK PLC. But the refreshed economic strategy highlights several challenges around start-ups, high-growth businesses, retaining talent and an increasing number of people out of work.

“The new Economic Growth Fund is one of the ways we can tackle those challenges while delivering benefits to the people, places and businesses across the county.

“Our ambition is simple: we want to position Surrey as one of the UK’s leading regional economies while ensuring No One is Left Behind.”

The Economic Growth Fund has been created by the Council in collaboration with employers from across the county via the One Surrey Growth Board and Business Leaders Forum.

The idea is to make it as simple and easy-as-possible for those looking to drive growth to apply for funding.

So, a range of funds, such as UK Shared Prosperity Funding from government, have been pooled together into a single application process.

The first round covers three areas:

- **Business Growth Grants** are designed to support companies scale up and create jobs. Match funding of between £10,000 and £50,000, covering 50% of project costs is available.
- The **Innovation Spaces Fund** focuses on physical infrastructure, such as training hubs, collaborative workspaces, and testing facilities. Bids of £50,000 and upwards are welcomed.
- The **Future Surrey Fund** will support a small number of high-quality innovative proposals that deliver economic impact at scale. It is open to anyone, including employer representative groups, local authorities, health bodies, research institutions and schools.

Those applying are encouraged to demonstrate how the bid delivers against the three priorities in the refreshed economic strategy – workforce and skills; business growth; and economic infrastructure in Surrey’s communities.

The application process takes place across two stages, starting with an expression of interest.

Cllr Furniss added: *“As government looks to drive growth across the UK and devolve more powers to regions, it’s vital that local authorities work closely with businesses to understand their demands.*

“Our aim is to ensure that Surrey is a major part of that story – and we’ll work with partners to make the most of new opportunities to drive regional growth by meeting the demands of businesses.

Chris Hurren, Chair of the Surrey Business Leaders Forum, which is made up of more than 40 employers across the county, said: *“Growth in Surrey, like much of the country, has slowed in recent years. We can only tackle the challenges by working together while focusing on the needs of businesses and outcomes for our people and places.*

“The refreshed Economic Strategy, which is evidence-led and developed in partnership with businesses, employer representative groups, academia and other key stakeholders, is very much the starting point of our journey.

“Together, we’re determined to drive forward this ambitious agenda and deliver our ambition to benefit our residents, businesses and wider communities.”

For full details, including criteria and closing dates, visit **www.businesssurrey.co.uk**.

Image: Economic Growth Fund launches in Surrey – with Cabinet Member Matt Furniss, Director for Economy and Growth Dawn Redpath and Chris Hurren chair of Business Leaders Forum

Surrey Arts Gala went live in Guildford



Surrey Arts held its latest Gala concert on Saturday, 15 March, at G Live in Guildford, showcasing the incredible talent of over 300 young musicians from 15 different ensembles. The event featured a diverse array of performances, including original compositions and well-known pieces, highlighting the inclusive spirit of Surrey Arts. The event included Surrey Arts inclusive orchestra UP! alongside its newest ensemble, World in Music, a diverse group which aims to introduce young people to unfamiliar cultures through both western and non-western musical traditions.

Sarah Lee, Head of Service for Surrey Arts said: *“The Gala is a fantastic event which showcases the talent of our young people from many of our bands, orchestras and choirs. The concert allows young musicians to collaborate with others they would not normally have the chance to play with and gives an opportunity to play in a professional theatre.”*

At the event, Councillor Denise Turner Stewart, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities, said: *“It is lovely to be here tonight at the Surrey Arts Gala 2025. I’m really impressed with how hard the children are working. They are really enjoying themselves this evening and the audience are having a great time. It’s actually really moving to see the effort they are putting into their performances, so I would like to say a big thank you to all the staff and everyone who has organised this tonight.”*

The groups performed to a delighted audience with one parent commenting *“Thank you to all the members of Surrey Arts staff for putting on such an epic concert! We thoroughly enjoyed it, and it was a pleasure to see the wide range of ensembles run by Surrey Arts, many of which I’d never come across before.”*

Performances from the Gala will soon be available to view on the **Surrey Arts YouTube channel**.

Surrey Arts’ ensembles perform at locations across Surrey throughout the year. Visit the **Surrey Arts Ensembles webpage** to find out more.

Surrey County new land management framework



Surrey County Council has launched a new Land Management Framework, setting out best practice guidelines for managing its own land as well as striving to aspire other landowners and stakeholders to adopt and deliver similar approaches. The new framework aims to ensure Surrey’s countryside is managed in a way that maximises its ecological, educational, social and economic value for the benefit of generations to come.

Like other counties, Surrey’s natural environment is under unprecedented pressure from climate change, biodiversity loss, and increasing demands on land use. The new framework provides principles and policies to guide evidence-based decisions, manage risks, and seize opportunities.

The county council owns and manages 10,000 acres of Surrey’s countryside and has a duty to manage its own land responsibly and sustainably. By implementing the new Land Management Framework, Surrey County Council will lead by example, inspiring other landowners and stakeholders to adopt sustainable land management practices.

Marisa Heath, Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for the Environment comments: *“The council’s ambition is to act dynamically to ensure the future sustainability of our land-based assets, both financial and environmental, through embedding nature-based solutions, community action, and new technology into our land management and decision-making.*

“The county’s countryside and water bodies offer numerous benefits, including recreation, wellbeing, livelihoods, food production, wildlife habitats, and community cohesion.

“Our land will be more resilient to economic and environmental shocks and climate change, support growing biodiversity, and have strong local community engagement and ownership.”

Surrey’s new Land Management Framework is timely as Government has recently launched a national conversation about land use, encouraging feedback to a consultation that will inform the development of a national Land Use Framework later this year.

Read more about Surrey’s framework by visiting our website: **Land Management Framework - principles and policies - Surrey County Council**.