



Support programme launched to help Surrey's high streets

17 March 2026



Dedicated support for high street businesses across Surrey to attract new customers, boost sales and drive growth is now available as part of wider efforts to strengthen and futureproof town centres.

The Surrey High Street Growth and Innovation Programme is open to a wide range of businesses, including independent retailers, start-ups, market traders, charities and social enterprises.

Funded by Surrey County Council's Economic Growth Fund and delivered by specialists Smarter Society and The Retail Group, the scheme offers free practical workshops, online resources and one-to-one tailored support.

There is a particular focus on 22 high streets across all 11 district and borough areas in Surrey, with targeted workshops designed to help businesses attract more customers, increase footfall, improve visibility and boost customer spend.

Businesses can register for support directly via the programme's enrolment form.

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth at Surrey County Council, said: "High streets are the lifeblood of our communities. They're integral to the character and vitality of our towns and villages, which is why we're committed to supporting them alongside our district and borough partners and Business Improvement Districts.

"This programme is a real investment in the people behind Surrey's independent businesses, giving them the tools and knowledge to thrive - which is good for our economy, our residents and our communities."

The scheme has been developed in collaboration with economic development teams from district and borough councils, alongside representatives from Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) across Surrey.

Launched last month, the programme includes workshops running through February, March and April at key locations across the county.

The Smarter Society outreach team is already engaging directly with businesses on Surrey's high streets, meeting hundreds of owners face-to-face and signing retailers up for workshops.

Four free workshops are being held in each district and borough, covering practical topics such as increasing footfall, improving online and in-store visibility, making better use of social media and promotions, and planning for growth.

Workshops are also being streamed live online, with recordings available on demand.

In addition, a range of free toolkits, guides, templates and short videos is available via the Business Surrey website, alongside one-to-one support for businesses with more specific needs.

In the first few weeks of the programme, nearly 140 businesses have registered, with 75 already receiving support across five areas.

Geoff Baxter, Managing Director of Smarter Society, said: "The Surrey High Street Growth & Innovation Programme is gaining real momentum. Businesses across the county are engaging enthusiastically with our on-street support and workshops, and we're proud to see such strong early signs of growth and innovation on Surrey's high streets."

The programme is free and open to any business trading on a Surrey high street. Further information is available via the Business Surrey High Streets page, with direct registration also available through the programme's enrolment form.

Surrey County Council



Photo: Reps from Surrey CC, Smarter Society and Hello Dorking mark the delivery of the High Street Support scheme

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