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Surrey's 3 Unis and Council leaving no one behind

22 September 2024



Surrey County Council, in partnership with Surrey's three leading universities – Royal Holloway, University of London; University for the Creative Arts; and the University of Surrey – is proud to announce the launch of a new Civic Agreement for Surrey.

This groundbreaking initiative defines a shared commitment for these organisations to work collaboratively in the interests of the wider Surrey community: ensuring that no one is left behind.

By pooling resources and expertise, the partners believe they are better placed to address local needs, drive innovation, and create a more inclusive and resilient Surrey by 2030.

The Civic Agreement will be formally signed at an event in Woking today (Friday September 20, 2024).

It will serve as a public commitment to working together to bring about real and positive change to the people who live, learn and work in our communities across the county

Details are set out in a 32-page formal document which defines shared priorities, objectives, programmes of work and future ambitions.

All will be delivered against four shared priorities, which are:

- Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit.
- Tackling health inequality.
- Enabling a greener future.
- Empowered & thriving communities.

Tim Oliver OBE, Leader of the Council, Surrey County Council, said: "Surrey's universities are engines for regional innovation, with a profound impact across all four strategic priorities. The partners are committed to ensuring our residents, communities and businesses can easily access and benefit from our range of innovation organisations, assets, and networks. These all play a part in addressing the four objectives of our agreement, and ensuring that no one is left behind."

Prof. Max Lu, President and Vice-Chancellor of University of Surrey, said: "The University of Surrey has a proud track record of collaborating with local government and university partners to address issues that matter to Guildford and the wider Surrey community. One recent example is the Games and Innovation Nexus Project, partnering with University for the Creative Arts, Surrey County Council and Warwick University. Other examples include our Centre for Doctoral Training in AI for Digital Media Inclusion, in partnership with Royal Holloway University of London. We welcome the strengthening of these ties through the Civic Agreement for Surrey, ensuring the breadth and depth of our expertise from our Institutes for Sustainability and People-Centred AI, and all our schools, and companies on our Surrey Research Park continue to enable our community to grow and thrive."

Prof. Julie Sanders, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Royal Holloway, University of London, said: "As a University of Social Purpose, we want to take a proactive role in tackling societal changes, enabling sustainable social and economic growth, and improving skills and opportunities for those in our community. Our inclusive education and research has a focus on achieving positive benefits for and with our local community, and our collaboration with academic partners, community groups, schools and local government brings investment, jobs and opportunity to Surrey. As well as through the Centre for Doctoral Training with the University of Surrey and its emphasis on digital inclusion, this effort is integral to the CoSTAR project, which seeks to ensure the UK's screen and performance industries have the infrastructure, research and innovation skills to compete globally. Declaring our public agenda through the Civic Agreement for Surrey will amplify the positive role the university can play in the region."

Prof. Jane Roscoe, President and Vice-Chancellor, University for the Creative Arts, said:

"As a leading creative university, the University for the Creative Arts plays a pivotal role in driving innovation across the arts, technology and business. Through our partnerships with local government, businesses and fellow academic institutions, we are committed to ensuring that creativity remains at the heart of Surrey's economic and social growth. Our involvement in initiatives like the Games and Innovation Nexus (GAIN) project, alongside Surrey County Council and our university partners, is just one example of how we can harness creative thinking to solve real-world challenges. The Civic Agreement for Surrey reflects our dedication to fostering a creative and inclusive environment that empowers

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individuals, enriches communities and drives regional innovation."

Today's launch of the Civic Agreement for Surrey is very much the first step in a long-term collaboration that includes every part of Surrey.

We welcome further engagement from community stakeholders, businesses, and residents who share an interest in advancing the shared priorities and objectives set out in our civic agreement.

Details on how the community can get involved will be shared in the coming months.

A video explaining the commitment is also available on each of the partners' websites.

For more information on the Civic Agreement for Surrey and how you can get involved, contact: civicagreement@surreycc.gov.uk

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