

Manifesto for West Surrey Council



Manifesto Principles

What a manifesto is

- A statement of direction, priorities and values
- A democratic mandate
- A framework for officers
- The basis for future strategies, plans and budgets
- It sets focus not automatic commitments

What a manifesto is not

- Not *how* we do things
- Not a delivery plan
- Not a list of approved projects
- Not a set of spending commitments
- Not an alternative to business cases, scrutiny or affordability tests
- Not perfect

PILLARS

1. Children's Services, SEND, and Adult Social Care
2. Environment/Climate
3. Roads and Pavements
4. Planning and Place
5. Social Housing
6. How the Council is Run

CHILDREN'S SERVICES, SEND AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE

When families need support, they are often under significant pressure. The quality of care services matters most at difficult moments in people's lives.

Our priorities will be to:

- Stabilise and improve Children's Services, SEND provision and Adult Social Care, focusing on consistent, reliable day-to-day performance.
- Make communication open, clear and honest so families and carers understand what is happening and what will happen next.
- Shift from reactive crisis response toward earlier, preventative support wherever possible.
- Reduce conflict and avoid unnecessary legal escalation by resolving issues early.
- Design services around children, families and carers, not around council structures.
- Strengthen neighbourhood-based and community-based care approaches.
- Support unpaid carers with practical and flexible assistance.
- Develop sustainable workforce pathways, including local recruitment and apprenticeships.
- Work constructively with health, housing and voluntary partners to deliver joined-up support.

This is about restoring trust in Surrey's care services and ensuring people feel supported rather than processed.

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

Surrey's environment is one of its greatest assets. Protecting it properly matters for health, quality of life and future generations.

Our priorities will be to:

- Protect green spaces, countryside, rivers and biodiversity.
- Tackle pollution and environmental damage, including sewage and fly-tipping.
- Improve waste reduction and recycling performance across the county.
- Make environmental responsibility integral to planning, transport and estates decisions.
- Make it easier and safer to walk, cycle and use public transport.
- Set out and keep under review a realistic, costed plan to reduce the council's carbon footprint and work toward net zero in an affordable and deliverable way.
- Act to reduce flood risk as part of wider efforts to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
- Strengthen enforcement within the council's powers to protect the local environment.

This is about practical environmental responsibility, not slogans.

ROADS AND PAVEMENTS

The condition of roads and pavements is one of the clearest tests of whether a council is doing the basics well.

Our priorities will be to:

- Improve the condition and safety of roads and pavements.
- Place greater emphasis on prevention as well as repair.
- Reduce repeat repairs by getting work right first time.
- Strengthen accountability and transparency in highways maintenance.
- Hold contractors to clear and visible performance standards.
- Take a pragmatic approach to service delivery models, focusing on quality and value rather than ideology.
- Improve road safety for pedestrians, cyclists and children, and better integrate highways maintenance with wider transport planning.

This is about rebuilding confidence in how the essentials are managed

PLANNING AND PLACE

How West Surrey plans and grows will shape the area for decades. Development must strengthen communities, not simply expand them.

Our priorities will be to:

- Run a planning system that is fair, open and consistent.
- Improve transparency and engagement with local communities in the plan making progress.
- Focus on creating good places, not just approving projects.
- Ensure growth is supported by the right infrastructure, including schools, transport, health provision and climate resilience.
- Take a strategic and joined-up approach to planning across West Surrey.
- Balance environmental protection with the need to provide homes including social and affordable housing.
- Build a shared West Surrey identity and sense of purpose while respecting the identity of our towns and villages.
- Support community infrastructure including sports, leisure, arts and cultural facilities that strengthen local identity and wellbeing.

This is about shaping growth in a way that people can trust.

SOCIAL HOUSING

A safe, secure and decent home is the foundation for a stable life.

Our priorities will be to:

- Increase the supply of good-quality social and genuinely affordable homes.
- Improve standards and management in council and partner-managed housing.
- Minimise homelessness and reduce reliance on temporary accommodation through prevention and early support.
- Make better use of existing housing assets, including empty homes where appropriate.
- Focus support on those with the greatest need, including vulnerable residents and families.

This is about stability, dignity and fairness.

HOW THE COUNCIL IS RUN

Good services and public trust depend on strong governance and sound finances.

Our priorities will be to:

- Run the new council on a financially sustainable basis with long-term resilience.
- Commission a full, independent review of governance, accounts and financial controls in year one.
- Deliver the structural transformation required to establish the new authority effectively while minimising disruption to services.
- Strengthen transparency, accountability and clear decision-making.
- Reinforce local voices and effective local forums.
- Improve coordination across local government functions so services feel coherent on the ground.
- Foster a professional culture of collaboration and continuous improvement between members and officers.

This is about rebuilding confidence in how the council is run.