

# Environment and Sustainability

**Our environment is important. The air we breathe, the views we treasure, the collection of our rubbish and the maintenance of roads, pavements and parks all contribute to our well-being. And we need to preserve these for the benefit of our grandchildren - we need to make Guildford a more sustainable community.**

**Resources are being used up too fast for sustainability and the problem of waste management is a high priority.**

**Guildford Borough Council and Surrey County Council are the lead authorities in protecting and enhancing the quality of the natural and built environment and building sustainability into policies and activities.**

## Your priorities

- Reconciling environmental conservation with development pressures.
- Dealing with waste.
- Energy efficiency

Prime concerns are:

- **Managing new development:** Infrastructure, use of brown field sites, protection of the green belt, preservation of Guildford's heritage, sustainability, communities and affordable housing.
- **Improving the environment:** Flood protection and air quality, small parks, car parking, nature conservation and concern for public safety.
- **The decision-making process:** Planning applications, phone mast policy and a suggested people's forum for consultation on office development.
- **Waste Management and Recycling:** More green box kerbside collections, education and publicity about recycling, better street cleansing, reduction in packaging and quick removal of dumped cars and fly-tipping.
- **Energy conservation:** Increasing conservation and use of renewable energy.

## The action plan

### Managing new development

The Guildford Borough Local Plan, adopted this year, runs to 2006 and the updated Surrey Structure Plan has its examination in public this autumn. These two plans share principles of environmental protection and careful management of new development.

New Government legislation may mean that a Regional Spatial Strategy under the South East Regional Assembly (SEERA), will take over strategic policymaking from county structure plans and the Local Plan may be replaced by a new district council process, called a Local Development Framework (LDF).

- This LDF will have a clearer relationship with the Community Plan and ensure that principles and key points are embodied in a land use framework. It will respond to the public's concerns and endeavour to reconcile diverging aspirations.
- Good planning requires that both physical and social infrastructure to support new development is put in place early. The Community Plan partnership will improve cooperation between local authorities, infrastructure providers, education and social care agencies, health providers and others.
- Guildford Borough Council (GBC) is updating its Urban Capacity Study into how much and where development should go. This will be fed into the Surrey Structure Plan evidence.
- Specific teams including agencies and partners may be set up to consider new developments.
- Parish Councils will assess local needs and agree infrastructure priorities in rural areas.
- The Surrey Hills AONB management plan needs to be compatible with the Community Plan.

### Improving the environment

- More pedestrian areas and links between the street lighting and walking strategies.
- Improved routes into town: Greening the Approaches.
- Flood protection measures in vulnerable parts of the borough.
- Specialist Historic Buildings and Conservation Officers look after the borough's built heritage.
- Seven full-time community safety wardens link into community groups, foster social inclusion, look after the physical appearance of wards and reduce crime and fear of crime. Guildford Police neighbourhood specialist officers help ensure a speedy response to problems.
- Parish councils encouraged to produce village design statements.
- Voluntary groups given help in applying for outside funding.
- Education and information initiatives, such as 'In Town Without My Car Day', will be developed.
- Encouraging public art initiatives and utilising the 'Percent for Art' scheme as part of the planning process.

## The decision-making process

More progress is needed to speed up decisions on planning applications but a separate forum for office development is not thought necessary. Phone mast policy guidance is already in the Local Plan.

## Waste management and recycling

Surrey County Council (SCC) and Guildford Borough Council (GBC) jointly manage the waste service: GBC collects waste and SCC disposes of it. GBC is also responsible for street cleansing. The district and county councils work together on the Waste Management Strategy and Waste Local Plan.

The borough's Sustainable Waste Management Working Group, which involves GBC, Guildford Environmental Forum, Friends of the Earth and the Guildford Anti-Incinerator Network, helps develop waste initiatives.

- A cleansing hotline enables residents to alert GBC to specific problems and obtain advice regarding litter, refuse and recycling etc.
- The green box kerbside recycling service is expanding to include cardboard.
- A trial weekly green box collection has been introduced for part of the borough.
- Improvements are planned for the bring-bank recycling system.
- Plastics bring banks have been introduced.
- The composting initiative is being expanded, including wormeries for flats. A composting demonstration centre is at Stoke Park and the mobile garden waste shredding service is available.
- A new garden waste pilot collection service involving 20,000 homes is starting soon. Residents will be able to buy special sacks for a modest charge.
- A furniture recycling store has been provided for Guildford Action for Community Care.
- The *Rubbish Revolution* newsletter is published quarterly and the *Recycling Directory* annually.
- The public is encouraged to use mail preference service to reduce junk mail.
- GBC has won extra Government funding for publicity and education on waste minimisation and recycling.
- Refuse collection methods under review.
- New cleansing schedules, a litterbin review, annual litter free campaign and extra resources for removing dumped cars quickly.
- Community Clean Ups introduced. A quick response team deals with urgent litter and fly tipping.
- A specialist team removes chewing gum and graffiti.
- GBC to pursue partnerships with town centre businesses that generate litter such as fast food outlets, bars and clubs.
- The borough Community Action Programme involves 240 volunteers monitoring the environment.

## Energy conservation and renewable energy

- GBC is the national lead authority in promoting a European programme of solar power for homes.
- Building on its success with council housing, GBC is promoting schemes to reduce energy consumption in private housing.
- GBC's Energy Working Group is working with SEEDA to develop an Energy Strategy for the Borough and it is keen to involve the private sector.
- Combined Heat and Power technology is being progressed for the Millmead council offices and Spectrum.
- SCC and GBC are supporting the use of photovoltaic cells and rainwater recycling in a new building at Holy Trinity School.
- Training for local electrical installers in photovoltaic technology is being developed at Guildford College.
- GBC's Eco-house was open from November 2002 to January 2003. Over 900 people were shown ways of making environmental improvements to their houses.
- GBC liaises with agencies on discount and grant schemes to encourage people to be energy efficient or opt for solar power.

