

SURREY COMMUNITY RESILIENCE TOOLKIT



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WHAT IS THE RESILIENCE TOOLKIT?

This toolkit has been created to help communities prepare for emergencies and reduce the likelihood and impact of future risks. It explains why resilience planning is important and how it can benefit your local area.

Community resilience is most effective when it is developed collaboratively. Emergency and resilience planning should involve the people and organisations who live and work in your area, including parish and town councils, schools, faith groups, businesses, and community organisations. Working together helps ensure plans reflect local risks, needs, and strengths, and that everyone understands their role in preventing, preparing for, responding to, and recovering from emergencies.

To support this process, Surrey has developed a range of complementary resources. These resources serve different purposes, from helping communities understand risks and identify resilience actions to coordinating local support during an emergency.

Throughout this Toolkit, you will also find links to external resources that provide further information, tools, and sources of support. Further information on how to use the accompanying documents is on the next page.

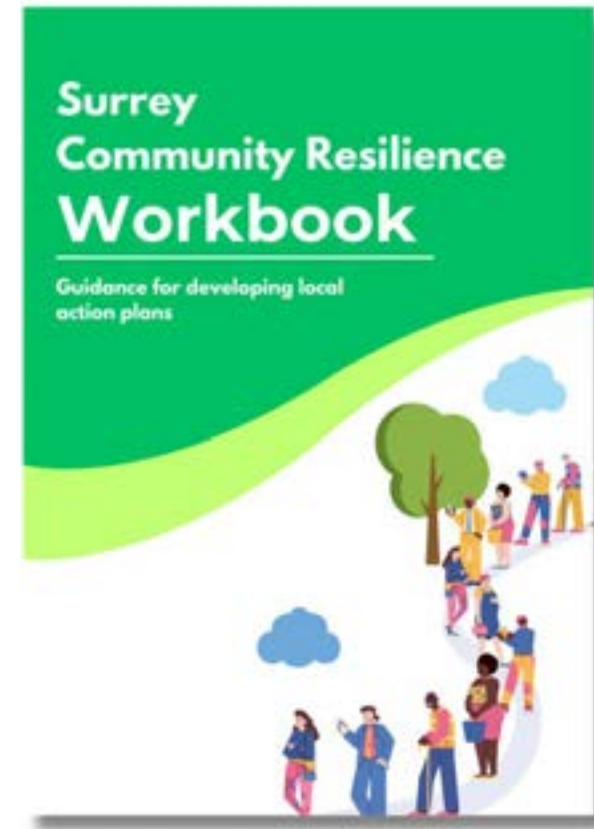


THE WORKBOOK

This document is intended to be used alongside the Surrey Community Resilience Workbook, which contains an Action Plan template designed to help guide the development of plans. The table below summarises the role of each resource and how it can support your community.

To access the Workbook, visit [here](#). Appendix 1 contains the Community Action Plan template.

Toolkit	Guidance
Workbook	Working Document
Action Plan	Building resilience and reducing risk
Surrey Prepared Community Emergency & Resilience Plan	Actions during an emergency



ACTION: Surrey Prepared also provides a Community Emergency and Resilience Plan.

Contact the [Surrey Prepared Team](#) to access the plans and find out if there are any existing plans in your area.

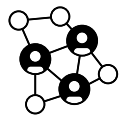
WHY COMMUNITY RESILIENCE MATTERS IN SURREY

Surrey's size, diversity, and mix of urban and rural environments mean that local knowledge, relationships, and community capacity are vital before, during, and after emergencies. Emergency services and councils play a critical role, but during widespread or prolonged incidents their resources can become stretched. By strengthening community resilience, local areas can move beyond emergency planning alone and take long-term, practical action that helps them adapt to future risks and challenges.

Strong, connected communities can:



Work alongside councils and emergency services to reduce impact and speed up recovery



Use local networks and Community Emergency Information Hubs to provide a safe space and support



Share trusted information quickly



Identify and support people who may need extra help



Start co-designing practical, long-term approaches to climate adaptation and responses



By understanding what is happening in Surrey, its landscapes, risks and communities, local groups can take practical steps to prepare for, respond to and recover from future challenges together.

PART 1

Surrey Context and Setting The Scene

This section explains the broader factors that influence community resilience in Surrey, including how extreme weather and a changing climate affect daily life, and why involving all parts of the community is essential when planning for safety and support.

By understanding this context, local residents will be better equipped to take the practical steps outlined later in this document, helping to build resilient and well-connected communities across the county.



SURREY CONTEXT

Surrey is a large and diverse county, home to around 1.2 million people, with a mix of towns, villages, and rural communities.

Although Surrey is often viewed as affluent, this can mask significant differences between neighbourhoods. Some residents experience deprivation, housing pressures, isolation, and growing vulnerability due to uneven access to services, climate impacts, and cost-of-living pressures. At the same time, these hazards can affect everyone, regardless of income or location, so a community-wide approach is strongly recommended.

Recent years have seen record-breaking heat, prolonged rainfall, flooding, drought conditions, and an increased risk of wildfires.

Communities therefore need to be prepared and supported to respond to these risks together, building resilience that benefits all residents.



Surrey saw an unusual winter wildfire at Chobham Common in January 2022, reflecting a growing trend of wildfires occurring outside the traditional summer season.



By 2050, around 1 in 4 properties in Surrey could be at risk of flooding, including areas vulnerable to river and surface-water floods.



The UK relies heavily on global supply chains: around 40% of food by weight is imported, making food security increasingly vulnerable to climate, trade, and geopolitical shocks.



The county experienced its rainiest 18-month stretch on record between 2023-2024, heightening flood and landslip risks.

THE SURREY LANDSCAPE

Surrey's natural environment is rich and varied, and it plays an essential part in protecting communities from climate impacts and mitigating local risks.

These natural assets provide important benefits: cooling during heatwaves, storing water during heavy rainfall, and offering spaces for wellbeing and community connection. They are also under growing pressure from climate change, land-use change and increasing demand.

On top of this, everyday human behaviour can add extra strain. BBQ fires, littering and fly-tipping on land and in rivers damage habitats, increase the risk of flooding and wildfire, and weaken the natural systems that support us.

Looking after Surrey's environment is not solely the responsibility of organisations or land managers. Individuals and communities have a direct role to play. Simple actions such as reducing waste, reporting fly-tipping, choosing safer ways to enjoy green spaces and supporting local conservation efforts all help protect the landscapes that, in turn, protect us.



The county contains a variety of priority habitats including wetlands, chalk grassland, ancient woodland and heathland.



Surrey is the most wooded county in England, with woodland covering over 20% of its area.



Surrey supports over 3,500 recorded species of plants and animals, with many of these species becoming rare and protected.



Surrey has several river catchments including the Thames, Wey and Mole which together support wildlife, recreation and help manage flooding.

PEOPLE AND VULNERABILITY

While Surrey ranks among the least deprived counties overall, there are still inequalities that can affect how people cope before, during and after an emergency. Vulnerability isn't fixed. It can change quickly during an incident, and some people may also face longer-term impacts that increase their vulnerability over time.

People experience emergencies differently, so community-led approaches can make a big difference. Local connections can help to identify who needs support at different points in an emergency and make sure no one is left behind.



An Ageing Population

Nearly 1 in 5 Surrey residents are aged 65+, according to mid-2024 population data. This age group has grown by 12.4% over the past decade, and Surrey's population is projected to continue ageing through the 2030s.



Pockets of Deprivation Across Surrey

Pockets of deprivation exist across the county, with some neighbourhoods falling within the most deprived 20–30% nationally, particularly in areas facing housing pressure and barriers to services.



Gender and Caring Responsibilities

Women, especially those with caring roles, can be more affected during emergencies. Female-headed households with children may face greater disruption during flooding or heatwaves.

Rural Isolation & Access Challenges

Surrey's rural and semi-rural areas face greater risks of transport disruption, isolation, and access barriers, particularly during flooding, snow or power outages. Rural populations experience higher rates of isolation linked to geographic distance and limited services.

A More Diverse Surrey

Surrey is becoming more diverse, with communities who may face language, digital or cultural barriers to accessing emergency information and support.

High Housing Costs & Increasing Vulnerability

High housing and energy costs in Surrey leave many households with limited disposable income. This can reduce their ability to prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies, or to adapt their homes to reduce risk.

Mental Health

Emergencies can worsen existing mental health conditions. Heat, disruption, and stress can increase anxiety and reduce people's ability to cope.

Infants and Children

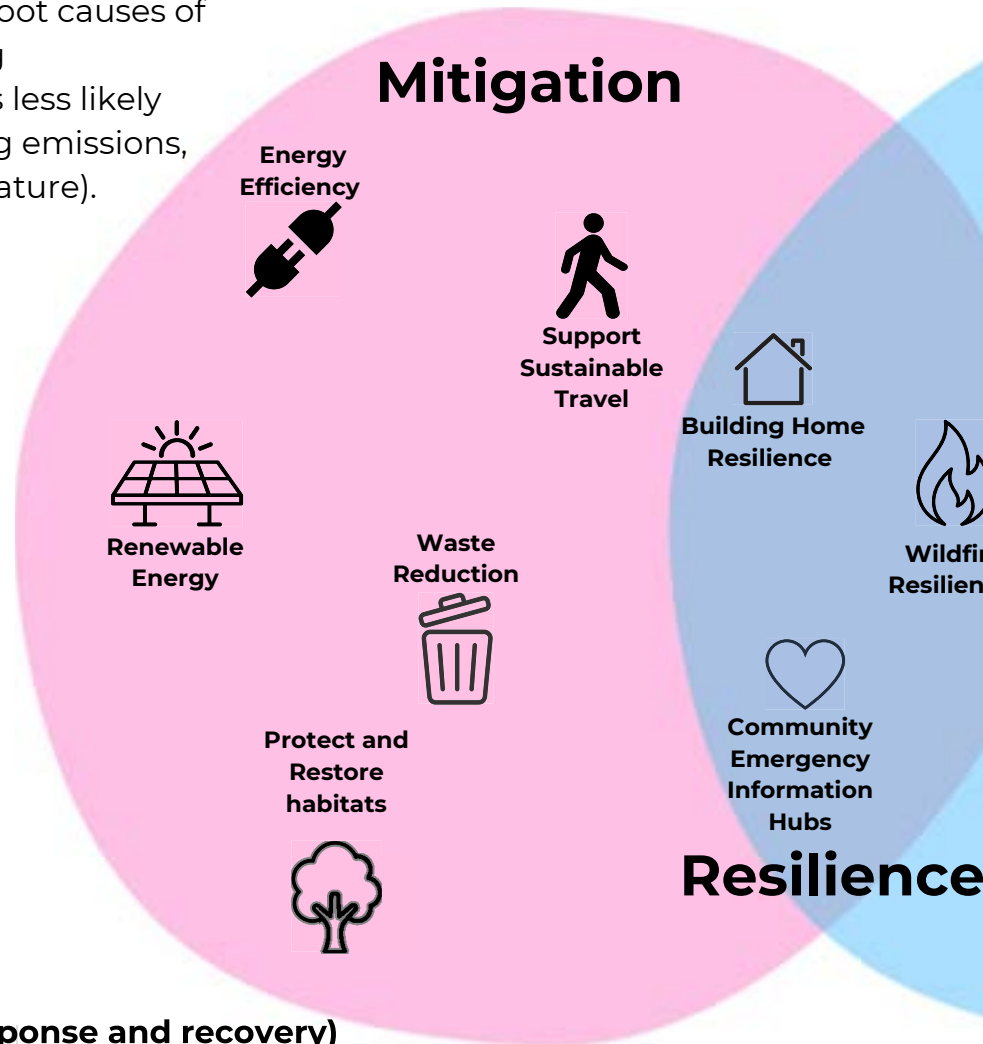
Children are more vulnerable to extreme weather and disruption. Schools and youth settings are therefore key to community resilience in Surrey.



MITIGATION, ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

Mitigation (prevention)

Tackles the root causes of risks, making emergencies less likely (e.g. reducing emissions, protecting nature).



Resilience (response and recovery)

Strengthens the ability to respond to and recover from emergencies, using lessons from past events.

Adaptation (foresight)

Uses climate science and projections to plan ahead and reduce the impact of future risks.

Surrey needs all three approaches working together to reduce risk, prepare for change, and respond effectively to future challenges.

PART 2

Risks in Surrey

This section outlines the key risks that Surrey's communities may face and the information residents should understand when preparing for them.

It covers what you need to know about these risks, the factors to consider when assessing how they might affect your area, who is most likely to be impacted, and how communities can plan ahead.



SURREY'S KEY RISKS

Surrey Prepared has identified nine major risks for Surrey, which are shown to the right.

Your community knows your area best, so you're best placed to assess which risks are most relevant based on the characteristics of your local area. For example, rural communities may prioritise risks such as animal disease more highly than urban areas.

The main risks this toolkit will focus on are:

- **Flooding**
- **Adverse Weather**
- **Wildfire**
- **Utilities outages.**

These four areas were chosen because they have both a higher likelihood of occurring and a greater potential negative impact on communities. They are also risks that your community can actively prepare for, which is why they form the main focus of this toolkit.

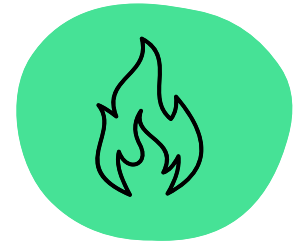
Flooding



Cyber



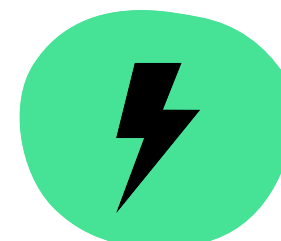
Wildfire



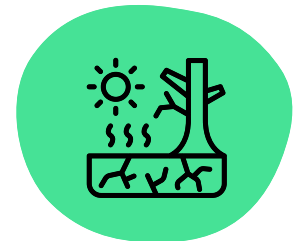
Adverse Weather



Utilities



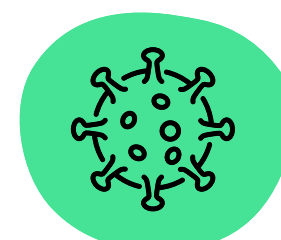
Drought



Terrorism



Pandemic



Animal Disease



GUIDANCE IN ANY EMERGENCY

In the following sections we will explore how to respond to emergencies and who is responsible for different actions. There are practical steps that community groups and residents can take safely to support response efforts:

- Activate your Community Emergency and Resilience Plan (if you have one).
- Share timely updates with your community through your usual communication channels.
- Always prioritise your own safety.
- If someone is in immediate danger, call 999.

Remember to think about impacts you may not experience personally, and consider how people with different backgrounds, circumstances and abilities might be affected.

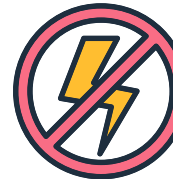
You may find that the responses required for each risk overlap. Because many of the consequences are similar, you don't need to create entirely new or separate actions when developing plans. However, these responses may need to adapt if an incident escalates. As situations change, different people may need support, priorities may shift, and your community's role may look different at each stage of the emergency.



Call 999 in an emergency



Keep away from wildfires, they can spread quickly, do not attempt to extinguish it yourself



Do not approach fallen power lines



Avoid entering flood water, flooded areas can contain hidden dangers



Never put yourself at risk, avoid travelling in adverse weather

FLOODING

DID YOU KNOW?

You're not just at risk of flooding if you live by a river. Surface water flooding is common in Surrey, and groundwater, sewer or reservoir flooding are all risks to consider.

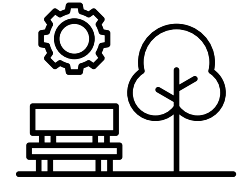
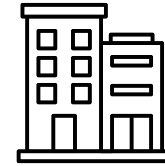
- It only takes 60cm of standing water or 30cm of flowing water to lift a car.
- Even strong, shallow flows can knock a person off their feet.
- Around 25,000 homes in Surrey are at risk of flooding, increasing to 50,000 by 2050 - that's over 10% of us.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Understand the extent to which your local area is at flood risk
- Avoid entering flooded areas where possible. Floodwater can hide hazards such as debris, sharp objects or open manholes.
- There may also be contamination risks, especially in areas with poor drainage or sewer overflow.
- Flood risk and impacts can vary across Surrey's mix of rural, urban and semi-urban areas, so consider how your local area might be affected.

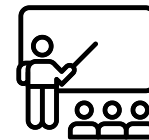
WHO AND WHAT CAN BE AFFECTED?

DAMAGE



Homes, businesses, infrastructure and green spaces can all suffer serious damage.

DISRUPTION



Essential services such as hospitals, schools and emergency responders may experience disruption or increased pressure.



ASSOCIATED RISKS

- Power outages
- Travel & communications disruption
- Increased demand on emergency services and hospitals
- Sanitation risks, particularly for basement properties or areas with poor drainage.

BE PREPARED FOR FLOODING

- Check and see if there is a local Flood Action Group, if not consider starting one.
- Understand your local flood risk using Environment Agency resources and sign up for free flood warnings.
- Keep up to date with Met Office weather warnings, monitor local conditions, and report issues such as flooding or blocked drains via Surrey County Council.
- Connect with local authorities and emergency planning teams, and use Surrey and GOV.UK guidance on what to do before, during, and after a flood.
- Ensure your Community Emergency Plan includes clear roles, responsibilities, and actions for flooding scenarios.
- Identify at-risk people and properties (e.g. homes with basements) and plan how to support those who may need extra help.
- Encourage household preparedness, such as checking insurance, keeping key documents accessible, and moving valuables to higher ground where possible.

RESPONDING TO FLOODING

Community	Alert your local Flood Action Group if you have one.
Community	Appoint someone to keep the community updated through your regular communication channels.
Community	If possible, activate a named Community Emergency Information Hubs or venue to support residents during the flood response.
Community	Support wider response activities where it is appropriate and safe to do so, such as checking in on neighbours.
Parish / Town	Liaise with the county council and emergency services regularly.
Emergency services	Respond to incidents, provide support, advice, warnings and updates to the public during the incident.

SUPPORT

[Check for flood warnings](#)

[Check your own flood risk](#)

[Get Flood Warnings](#)

WILDFIRE

DID YOU KNOW?

Wildfires can start in grassland, parks, verges and open spaces, not just woodland. Surrey has experienced wildfires outside traditional summer months, including winter incidents.

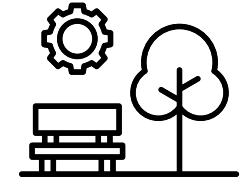
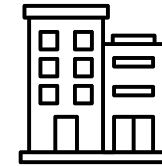
Even small fires can escalate rapidly and become dangerous due to wind, dry conditions and changing weather. You do not need to live near open countryside to be affected, smoke, road closures and evacuations can impact wide areas.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Do not attempt to tackle wildfires yourself
- Wildfire risk can increase rapidly during dry, hot or windy conditions.
- Smoke and fire behaviour can change direction quickly, increasing risk to people and property.
- Access routes may become restricted during an incident, affecting evacuation or emergency response.
- Some individuals may be more vulnerable, including those with respiratory conditions or limited mobility.

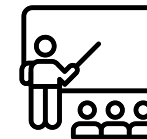
WHO AND WHAT CAN BE AFFECTED?

DAMAGE



Homes, businesses, infrastructure and green spaces can all suffer serious damage.

DISRUPTION



Essential services such as hospitals, schools and emergency responders may experience disruption or increased pressure.



ASSOCIATED RISKS

- Rapid and unpredictable fire spread
- Poor air quality and reduced visibility
- Increased risk to life if people delay leaving or attempt to tackle fires themselves
- Pressure on emergency response during periods of high demand
- Additional impacts on health, wellbeing and community resilience

BE PREPARED FOR WILDFIRES

- Be aware that wildfires can occur at any time of year, not just in summer.
- Monitor weather conditions, particularly during prolonged dry or windy periods.
- Consider how wildfire could affect your household, organisation or community.
- Plan simple preparedness actions, such as:
 - Knowing how to report a wildfire
 - Considering evacuation routes and safe places
 - Keeping important documents and essentials accessible
 - Organisations and communities should ensure wildfire is considered within existing emergency or resilience planning.
 - Identify people and properties that may be at higher risk, such as those with limited mobility, poor air-quality tolerance, or in areas where access may be restricted during an incident.

RESPONDING TO WILDFIRES

Community	Call 999 and ask for the Fire Service, giving your location and nearest access point.
Community	Do not attempt to tackle the fire yourself, even if it appears small.
Community	If possible, activate a Community Emergency Information Hub or venue to support residents affected by smoke, evacuations or disruption.
Community	Where safe and appropriate, check in on neighbours, particularly those who may be vulnerable.
Parish / Town	Share clear, factual updates with residents using existing communication channels.
Emergency services	Surrey Fire and Rescue Service will respond to incidents, assess risk and coordinate firefighting activity.
Emergency services	Emergency services may provide evacuation advice, access restrictions and safety guidance.

SUPPORT

**Surrey Fire and
Rescue Service –
Wildfire Safety**

**Met Office Fire
Severity Index**

UTILITIES

DID YOU KNOW?

You do not need to live in a remote area to be affected by utility failures. Power cuts, pressure on the electricity grid, and disruptions to electricity, gas, or water supply can happen anywhere often triggered by extreme weather, rising demand, or infrastructure strain.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Power cuts can occur during storms, cold snaps or high-demand periods.
- Supply shortfalls remain a recognised national risk.
- Infrastructure across Surrey is increasingly affected by extreme weather.
- Gas and water services can also be impacted.
- Impacts may vary across Surrey's rural, urban and semi-urban areas.

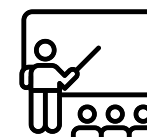
WHO AND WHAT CAN BE AFFECTED?

DAMAGE



Properties, equipment and community facilities can be harmed if utilities fail or systems are overloaded.

DISRUPTION



Utility failures may interrupt essential services and place additional strain on hospitals, schools and emergency teams.



ASSOCIATED RISKS

- Power outages
- Travel & communications disruption
- Water contamination risks
- Mobile networks may fail during prolonged power cuts
- Increased demand on emergency services and hospitals

BE PREPARED FOR UTILITY ISSUES

- Raise community awareness by forming a local group to share updates on power, gas and water service risks, especially during severe weather or high-demand periods.
- Get vulnerable residents to sign up to the Priority Services Register.
- Understand your local utility vulnerabilities, noting that storms, heatwaves and heavy rainfall can disrupt Surrey's infrastructure and essential services.
- Report issues promptly, such as fallen trees on power lines, damaged street cabinets, low water pressure or unusual gas smells.
- Check in on vulnerable family, friends and neighbours during disruptions or extreme weather.
- Ensure your Community Emergency Plan includes clear actions for utility outages, such as communication routes, welfare checks and known safe spaces for residents affected by heat, cold or equipment failure.

RESPONDING TO UTILITY ISSUES

Community	Appoint someone to keep the community updated through your regular communication channels.
Community	If safe and appropriate, activate a Community Emergency Information Hub or venue to support residents affected by prolonged outages, especially those who rely on powered medical equipment or heating.
Community	Support wider response activities where it is appropriate and safe to do so, such as checking in on neighbours.
Parish / Town	Liaise with the county council and emergency services regularly.
Emergency services	Manage the wider emergency response alongside utility providers and local authorities.

SUPPORT

Priority Services Register (Energy & Water)

National Gas Emergency Service operates a free, 24/7 hotline at 0800 111 999

Call 105 (Freephone) to report power cuts and get information.

ADVERSE WEATHER WHO AND WHAT CAN BE AFFECTED?

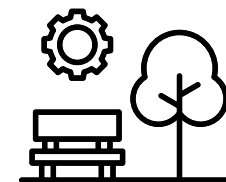
DID YOU KNOW?

You do not need to live in an exposed or rural area to be affected by severe weather. Surrey has experienced record-breaking heat, intense rainfall, storms and extreme seasonal conditions in recent years, and these events can impact every part of the county. In 2023, Surrey saw its hottest June, wettest July, and the rainiest 18-month period on record, showing how quickly conditions can shift. In June 2026 Surrey temporarily held the record for hottest June temperature - reaching 36°C.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

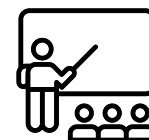
- Weather conditions can change quickly, storms, heavy rain and high winds have already caused infrastructure disruption across Surrey.
- Snow, ice and freezing temperatures can make roads and paths hazardous, increasing the risk of slips, falls and travel disruption, especially in hilly or poorly connected areas.
- Fog, high winds and heavy rain can reduce visibility, making driving conditions dangerous and affecting public transport reliability.

DAMAGE



Homes, businesses, infrastructure and green spaces can all suffer serious damage.

DISRUPTION



Essential services such as hospitals, schools and emergency responders may experience disruption or increased pressure.



ASSOCIATED RISKS

- Power outages
- Travel & communications disruption
- Increased demand on emergency services and hospitals
- Infrastructure and property damage

BE PREPARED FOR ADVERSE WEATHER

- Raise community awareness by forming a local group to share updates.
- Identify at-risk people and properties, such as older adults, people with mobility issues, or homes located in areas prone to isolation during snow, ice or storm impacts.
- Monitor weather forecasts and local conditions, and report issues such as blocked drains.
- Connect with your local emergency planning teams to understand wider initiatives and opportunities to get involved.
- Ensure your Community Emergency Plan includes clear actions and responsibilities for adverse weather scenarios.
- Encourage preparedness activities, such as checking insurance, keeping essential items accessible (torches, blankets, water, medications), preparing vehicles for winter conditions, and ensuring important documents are stored safely.

RESPONDING TO ADVERSE WEATHER

Community	If possible, activate a Community Emergency Information Hub or venue to support residents affected by severe cold, loss of power, travel disruption or isolation during storms or snow.
Community	Appoint someone to keep the community updated through your regular communication channels.
Community	Support wider response activities where it is appropriate and safe to do so, such as checking in on neighbours.
Parish / Town	Liaise with the county council and emergency services regularly.
Emergency services	Assessing and responding to emergencies caused by the weather, such as flooding, fallen trees, or damaged infrastructure.

SUPPORT

[Met Office
Weather
Warnings](#)

[Met Office Heat
Alerts](#)

PART 3

Creating the Foundation of Your Plans

This section outlines the building blocks for creating and delivering successful community resilience plans. It covers key considerations when establishing a community resilience group and identifying the people who will be involved.

Part 5 provides an overview of the Community Action Plan and the Community Emergency & Resilience Plan, including guidance on how each can be used to support your community.



ENGAGING WIDER COMMUNITY

SKILLS AND RESOURCES

Identify local people who are willing to contribute to developing a community emergency resilience plan. This may include friends, neighbours, local councillors, potential volunteers, local businesses, and members of existing community or neighbourhood groups.

If you live in an area with a Parish or Town Council, it's important to recognise that Parish Clerks and Councillors often hold key responsibilities and established links with local authorities. Before taking on a lead role, speak with your Parish Council or Clerk to understand what support they already provide and how you can work together. If the community takes the lead, they should keep the Parish or Town Council informed so communication with local authorities remains consistent and coordinated.

If you do not have a Parish or Town Council, look for other existing groups or networks such as Neighbourhood Associations, Neighbourhood Action Groups (NAGs/NACs), residents associations, or established community groups to see whether an emergency and resilience plan already exists. Avoiding duplication is vital, so if a plan is already in place, make contact and explore how you can collaborate and strengthen existing arrangements.

Whether you are starting fresh or building on existing work, clearly identify who else is key locally and outline their roles so everyone understands how they contribute to preparedness and response.



CREATING A FOUNDATION: STARTER PROMPTS

Check for existing plans

- Contact your Parish Council or Clerk to see if a plan already exists.
- Avoid duplication by collaborating with any existing group or plan.
- Clarify how your work will link into established local authority communication routes.

Establish how you will work together

- How the group will communicate day-to-day and during an incident.
- How decisions will be made.
- How volunteers will be contacted and coordinated.
- How information will be shared with residents.

Gather local information

- Important community assets (halls, equipment, safe spaces).
- Local businesses or groups that may be able to support.
- Contact details for essential partners (Parish Council, local authority teams, utilities, etc.)

Map local risks and vulnerabilities

- Identify known risks in your area, including any incidents that have occurred previously i.e., flooding.
- Consider which locations, services or groups may be most vulnerable.
- Think about how climate change could increase the frequency or severity of existing risks, or introduce new challenges in the future.
- Record this information to help inform your resilience planning and actions.

Confirm who is involved

- List the members of your community resilience group.
- Identify the coordinator and any key roles (communications, volunteer lead, liaison with Parish Council, etc.)
- Note any relevant skills, resources, or local knowledge within the group.

Identify activation triggers

- Situations that would prompt the group to activate (e.g. severe weather warnings, local authority alerts, community reports).
- How the group will assess whether it is safe to act.
- When to escalate to emergency responders.

Decide what will go into the full plan

- Outline the structure of the plan you will later complete.
- Agree who will draft which sections.
- Set a timeline for completing the full plan.

CREATING A TIMELINE

A simple timeline helps your group stay focused and ensures key actions are completed when they're needed. Agree when each stage of your planning will happen and set realistic deadlines. Think about recent events in your area, for example, if your community experienced flooding this winter, aim to have a emergency response plan ready before next winter.

A typical timeline might include:

01

Initial Outreach

Connect with your Parish Council or Clerk, check for existing plans, and identify people interested in getting involved.

02

Forming the Group

Bring together local volunteers, confirm roles, and agree how you will work together.

03

Gathering Information

Collect local risk information, key contacts, community assets, and any relevant local knowledge.

04

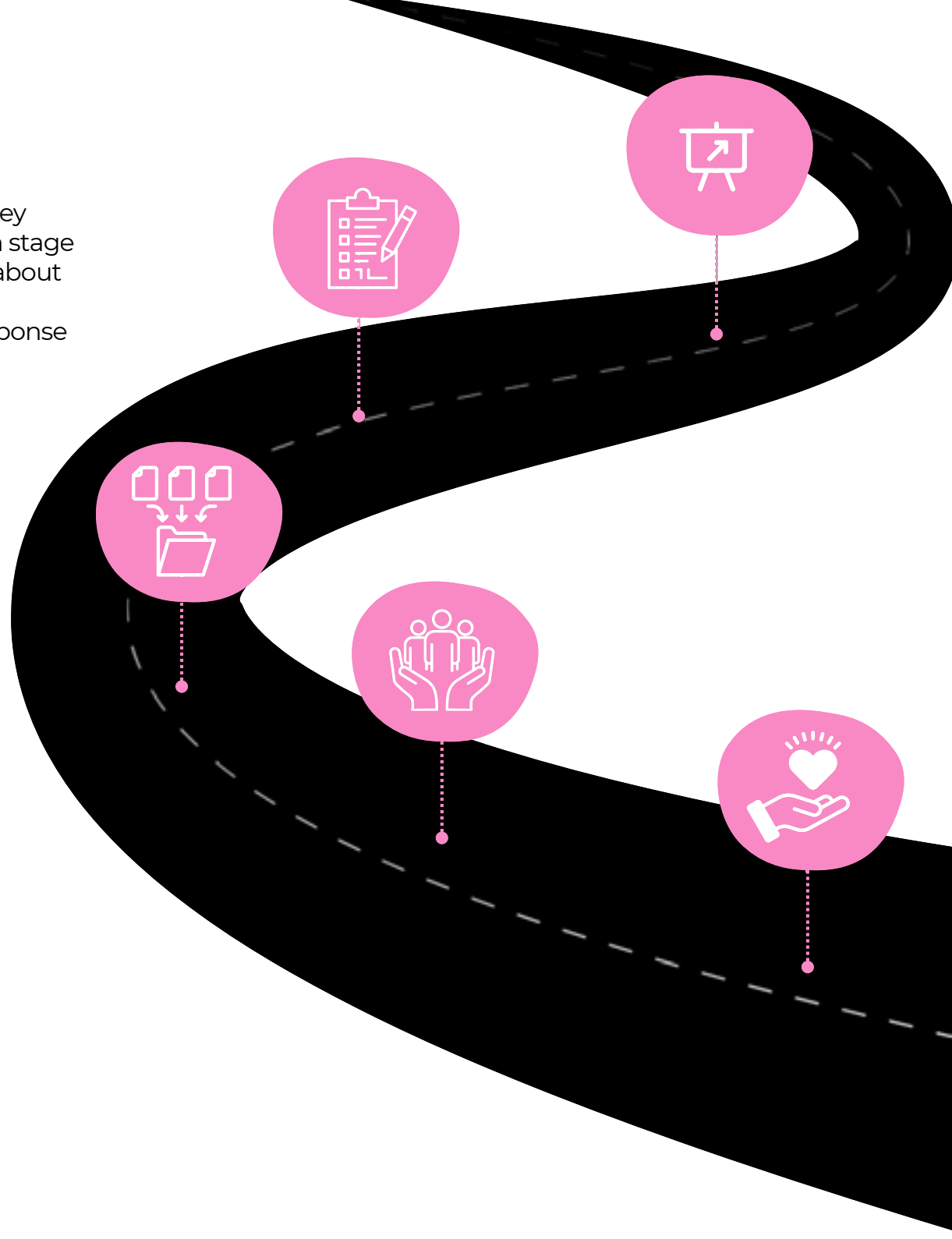
Drafting, Create and Refine the Plan

Begin shaping the content, share the draft, update details and ensure it reflects local needs.

05

Regular Updates

Review the plan, contact lists, and local risks at agreed intervals to keep everything current.



BARRIERS AND MITIGATION

Emergency and resilience planning must take potential barriers into account so that groups can prepare realistic and workable plans. This page helps you think through the challenges that may affect your activities and identify practical ways to address them. Use this section alongside your workbook to map each barrier, explore its likely impact, and set out clear mitigation actions.

COMMON BARRIERS

Low Engagement

- Community members or partners may have limited awareness, interest, or availability.
- Engagement may vary depending on timing, communication style, or competing issues.

Possible Mitigation:

- *Adapt your engagement methods (e.g. workshops, drop-ins, digital outreach).*
- *Identify and work with community champions or trusted local voices.*
- *Keep communication clear, simple, and relevant to local priorities.*

Limited Time or Capacity

- Volunteers, staff, or partners may have competing workloads.
- Resilience work may not be seen as an immediate priority.

Possible Mitigation:

- *Break tasks down into manageable steps.*
- *Spread responsibilities across the group.*
- *Schedule short, focused sessions to maintain momentum.*

Access or Inclusion Concerns

- Some groups may face barriers relating to digital access, language, disability, or confidence.
- Activities may unintentionally exclude people.

Possible Mitigation:

- *Use accessible formats and locations.*
- *Offer multiple ways to participate.*
- *Work with organisations already supporting underrepresented groups.*

Conflicting Responsibilities

- Members may have roles across multiple groups or services, creating potential conflicts in time or expectations.

Possible Mitigation:

- *Agree clear roles at the start.*
- *Plan around key pressure points (e.g. seasonal demands for services).*
- *Create shared expectations about what is achievable.*

PART 4

Tackling the Root Cause of Risks

This section introduces how nature-based and other 'soft adaptation' measures can lower risk while also improving local places, as well as how climate impacts are expected to grow over time. It explains how communities, working with local authorities and partners, can adapt to these risks and take action to reduce the likelihood and severity of future impacts.

Nature has a central role in strengthening resilience across Surrey. Aligning local action with Surrey's Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) helps communities reduce risk, support wellbeing, and deliver long-term environmental benefits by restoring priority habitats and using natural features to buffer climate-related impacts. It also highlights the organisations and services that can provide assistance.



UNDERSTANDING YOUR LOCAL RISKS

Effective resilience planning starts with understanding the risks your area has experienced in the past, what caused them, and the impacts they had on your community.

Climate impacts are expected to intensify over the coming years, increasing the likelihood and severity of flooding, drought, wildfire and extreme temperatures. This means risks may also emerge in places that have not historically been affected.

The Surrey Community Resilience Workbook includes prompts to help you identify and map local risks. Use local knowledge to build your risk map, then use this information to inform your Action Plan.

Climate Resilience

Climate resilience refers to the capacity to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to climate-related hazards, trends, and disruptions.

Climate Change Adaptation

Climate change adaptation includes the actions and solutions that countries, regions, cities, and communities develop to strengthen their resilience and adjust to the climate impacts already occurring or expected in the future.

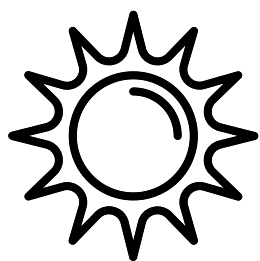
As climate impacts intensify, some risks may worsen and these examples can help you think about the challenges your own community might face, as well as the actions you can take:

- Making community spaces safer and more resilient: Improving shade, ventilation, flood-proofing or alternative meeting locations.
- Supporting residents' health and wellbeing during extreme weather: Checking in on vulnerable people, offering cool spaces, sharing guidance.
- Reducing financial pressures: Saving energy in community buildings, sharing equipment, and planning for unexpected costs.
- Managing pressures on food and water: Collecting rainwater, choosing drought-resistant plants, strengthening local food networks.
- Building trust and preparedness: Clear communication plans, safety guidance for events, and being ready for local disruptions.
- Protecting volunteer capacity: Sharing responsibilities, preventing burnout, and developing skills for emergency response.
- Ensuring fairness in local climate action: Supporting those most affected, improving accessibility, and helping everyone take part.

The Global Risk Report 2026 ranks the top three long-term global risks as climate and environmental issues, highlighting the urgent need for action through mitigation and adaptation.

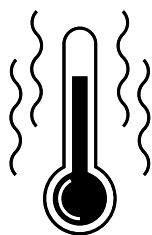
WHAT CHANGES COULD WE SEE?

Below are some of the key impacts Surrey is likely to experience as temperatures rise. A warmer atmosphere can hold more moisture while also drying out the land, which means we face both more frequent droughts and heavier rainfall leading to flooding. These changes affect far more than the weather: they can disrupt travel, utilities, communications, and local infrastructure, increase the risks of wildfire, flooding, and infectious disease, and place additional pressure on health and emergency services across our communities.



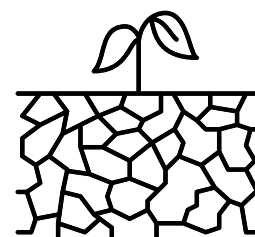
Heatwaves

- Roads and rail lines melting or buckling, causing disruption.
- Overheating of IT equipment and servers, affecting critical utilities.
- Food safety risks during transport and storage.



Warmer Temperatures

- Higher cooling costs and pressure on buildings and networks, affecting utilities
- Strain on infrastructure during prolonged heat.
- Crop losses and food supply issues, affecting community resilience.



Drought

- Water shortages and pressure on supply systems, directly affecting utilities.
- Need for additional water storage and management.
- Impacts on crops and food safety, affecting local resilience.
- Stress on green spaces, increasing wildfire risks.



Increased Rainfall

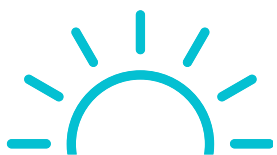
- More frequent and severe flooding.
- Roof leaks and water damage to buildings and community assets.
- Access restrictions where roads, paths or key services are blocked by flood impacts.

ADAPTING TO CLIMATE IMPACTS IS ESSENTIAL

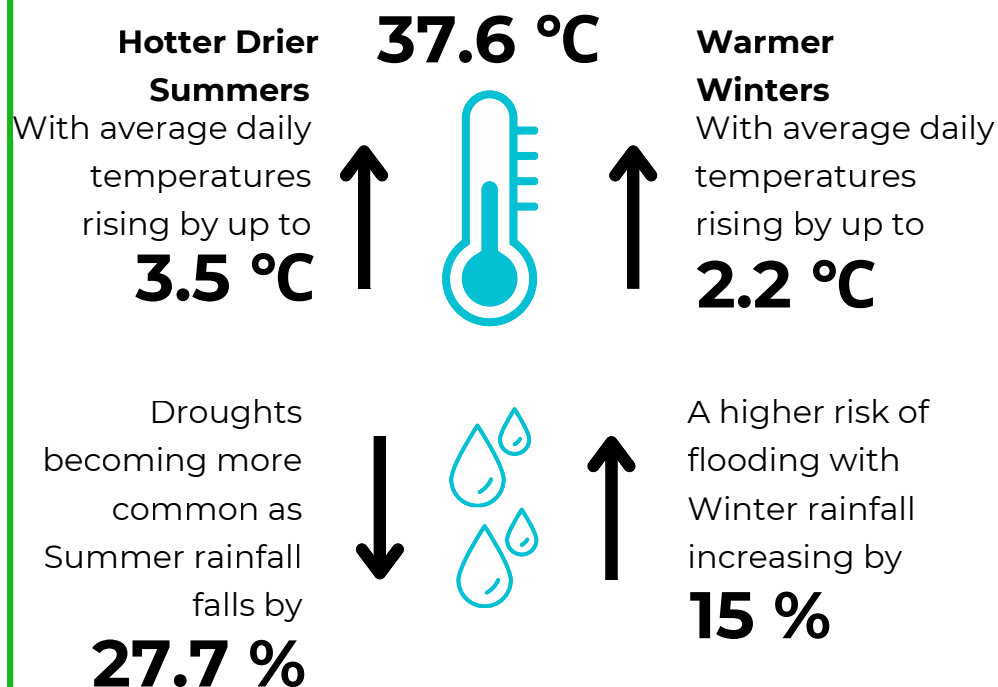
These two diagrams are from the Surrey Adapt strategy. The diagram on the left shows the predicted impacts we can expect to face *if* all global commitments to tackling climate change are met. The diagram on the right represents the expected impacts on our current trajectory toward atmospheric warming on our current trajectory of 3.2 - 4 °C above pre-industrial levels.

BEST-CASE SCENARIO

If global emissions aren't reduced and warming continues above 2°C, Surrey could see the following changes by the 2080s.

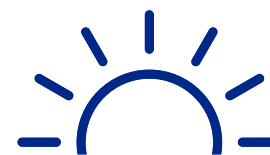


An increased likelihood of heatwaves
With temperatures of up to

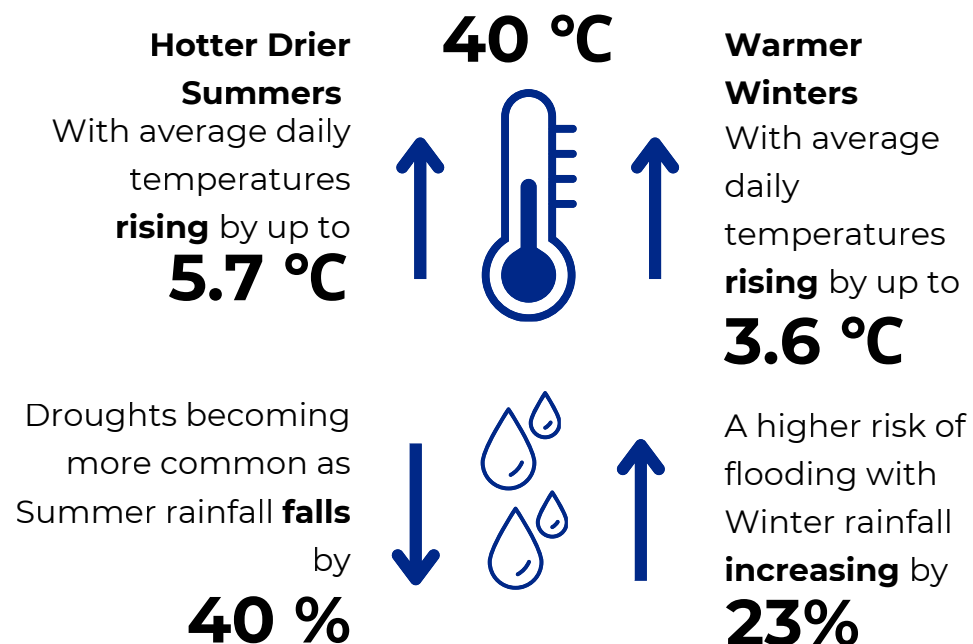


CURRENT TRAJECTORY

If global warming rises beyond 4°C, Surrey could experience the following changes by the 2080s.



An increased likelihood of heatwaves
With temperatures of up to



BENEFITS

Taking action on climate change brings wide-ranging benefits for Surrey's people, places and economy. By reducing risks now, we create a safer, healthier and more resilient future for everyone.



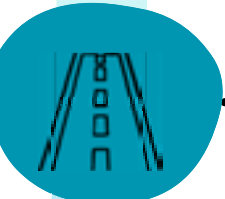
Supports Vulnerable Residents

Helps safeguard Surrey's vulnerable population, who are disproportionately affected by climate change.



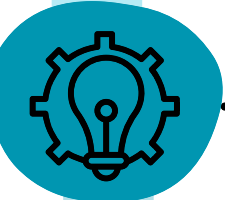
Efficient Homes

Energy-efficient homes improve energy security, lower bills, and reduce fuel poverty while cutting damp and mould.



Strengthens Local Infrastructure

Strengthens the resilience of transport networks and utilities as climate risks increase.



Boosts Skills and Local Jobs

Moving to a low carbon economy drives innovation and opens up new jobs in renewables, retrofitting and specialist engineering.



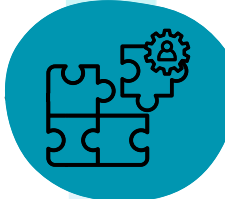
Protects People and Places

Reduces harm from heat, flooding, storms and wildfires as Surrey faces more extreme rainfall and weather.



Makes Emergency Information Accessible

Surrey is becoming more diverse, with communities who may face language, digital or cultural barriers to accessing emergency information and support.



Builds Stronger Communities

Community-led preparedness reduces isolation and strengthens support networks during emergencies.



Improves Health and Wellbeing

Helps address poor air quality by reducing air pollution, encourages active lifestyles and improving housing quality.



Protects Nature and Green Spaces

Protects species, strengthens ecosystems and restores key habitats.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

On page 7 we discussed Surrey's varied landscape. Ensuring our landscapes and habitats are healthy and well-managed is an excellent way to build resilience against local risks - particularly climate change risks.

Surrey Nature Recovery is one of 48 Local Nature Recovery Strategies nationally (LNRS), which support the restoration of nature but can have significant benefits in mitigating risks locally.

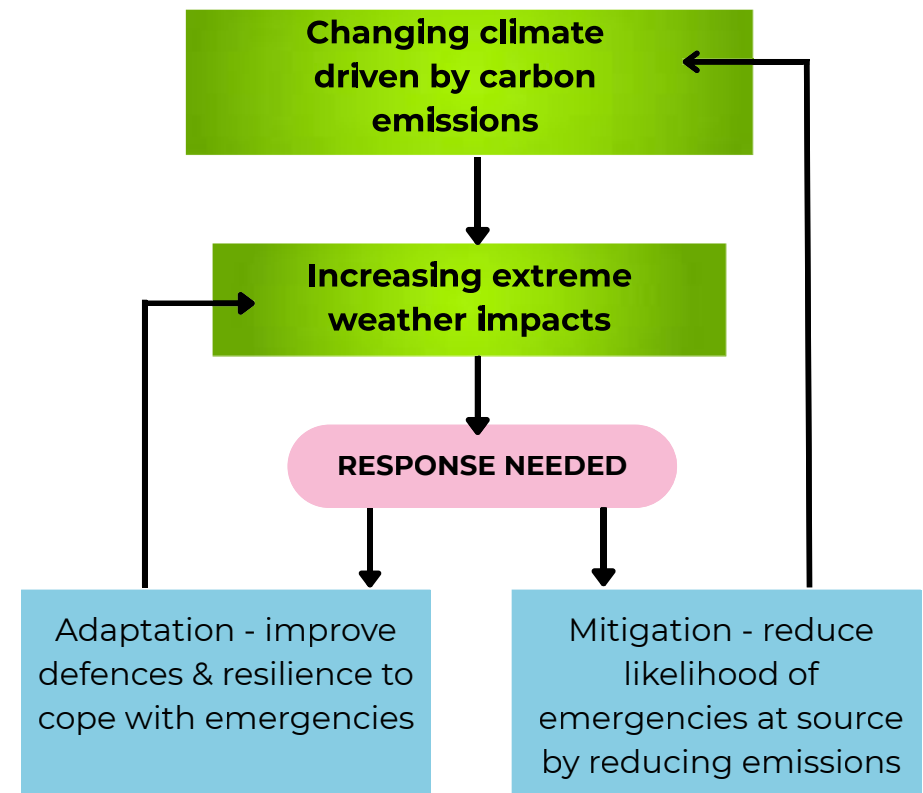
'Nature-based solutions' (NbS) can help to directly and indirectly mitigate against flooding, heatwaves, drought, wildfires, and extreme temperatures.

- **Heatwaves:** Increased tree cover and shade in urban areas can reduce heat stress, air pollution, and health issues.
- **Flooding:** Restoring natural floodplains along rivers, creating wetlands, and strategic planting can reduce flood risk.
- **Drought:** Water-efficient planting, rainwater harvesting, and water conservation education reduce water scarcity.
- **Wildfire:** Well-managed heathlands reduce fuel load, community awareness lessens the likelihood of incidents.

Actions like these help us both prepare for emergencies and reduce their impact. But we also have a role in lowering the long-term risk of emergencies by addressing their root causes including cutting the emissions that drive the worsening climate impacts of a warming planet. This is an essential part of the puzzle for the long-term security of the people and places we love in Surrey.

Local efforts to reduce emissions from transport, buildings and energy use, general waste and food waste, and goods and services can all play a huge role in this.

By reducing the amount of greenhouse gases we produce, Surrey can play an important role in reducing the climate risks facing our communities.



WHAT COMMUNITIES CAN DO

Not all the actions suggested on the previous page can be carried out by communities alone. For example, managing heathland requires strong collaboration between landowners, visitors, and local residents who may not be directly involved in your plan. However, by working in partnership with stakeholders across your community and following a clear, shared strategy you can deliver a wide range of solutions that strengthen resilience and help restore nature.

Some actions can be led entirely by community groups, while others will require support from local authorities or specialist expertise. Many will rely on joint efforts. Each action plays an important role in building resilience, but the key is to understand responsibilities and accountability so that activities are carried out safely, effectively, and collaboratively.

You'll find more detail in the workbook, but the following sections provide examples of projects and support available to help communities mitigate and adapt to local risks and build resilience.





Plant trees or hedgerows to provide shelter, nesting sites, and wildlife corridors.



Support initiatives that improve residents' health and reduce traffic through walking and cycling schemes.



Signpost residents to free home-energy advice services, such as the Home Energy Advice Team.



Set up a local composting system for food and garden waste.



Launch community borrowing and repair initiatives that cut consumption, such as Libraries of Things and Repair Cafés.



Establish a community allotment or shared garden space for local food growing.

LONGER TERM PROJECTS

QUICK WINS



Restore natural water features or install sustainable drainage systems



Signpost local businesses to training and courses that help them build resilience and reduce emissions.



Arrange workshops with external experts on varying topics like water conservation, how to improve soil health.



Work with specialist organisations, like Surrey Fire and Rescue Services to deliver community-awareness sessions.



Support citizen-science projects that monitor local habitats.



Promote the use of on-demand rural transport options, such as Surrey Connect.

NATURE SUPPORT

There are many organisations across Surrey that can support communities to improve local resilience and take action for nature. The examples below highlight two sources of support that may be useful when developing local projects.



SURREY WILDLIFE TRUST

Surrey Wildlife Trust works with communities across Surrey to protect and restore nature.

Support available:

- [Advice and guidance](#) on nature recovery and climate resilience projects.
- [Training, workshops and webinars for community groups and volunteers.](#)
- [Information on funding and grant opportunities.](#)
- Access to community resources, tools and [wildlife recording kits.](#)
- Opportunities to connect with other local groups through the [Wilder Communities Network.](#)

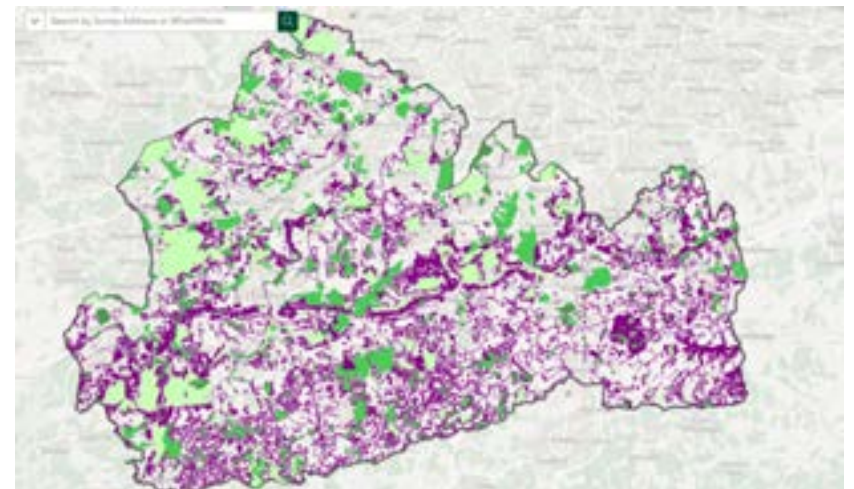


SURREY NATURE RECOVERY

Surrey Nature Recovery is a county-wide initiative that supports action to restore nature and improve biodiversity across Surrey.

Support available:

- Information on [Surrey's Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) and local nature priorities.
- Opportunities for communities to get involved in local nature recovery initiatives.
- Access to [mapping and evidence](#) that can help identify local opportunities for nature-based projects.



PART 5

The Plans

This section explores the plans available to help your community build resilience and respond effectively when incidents occur.



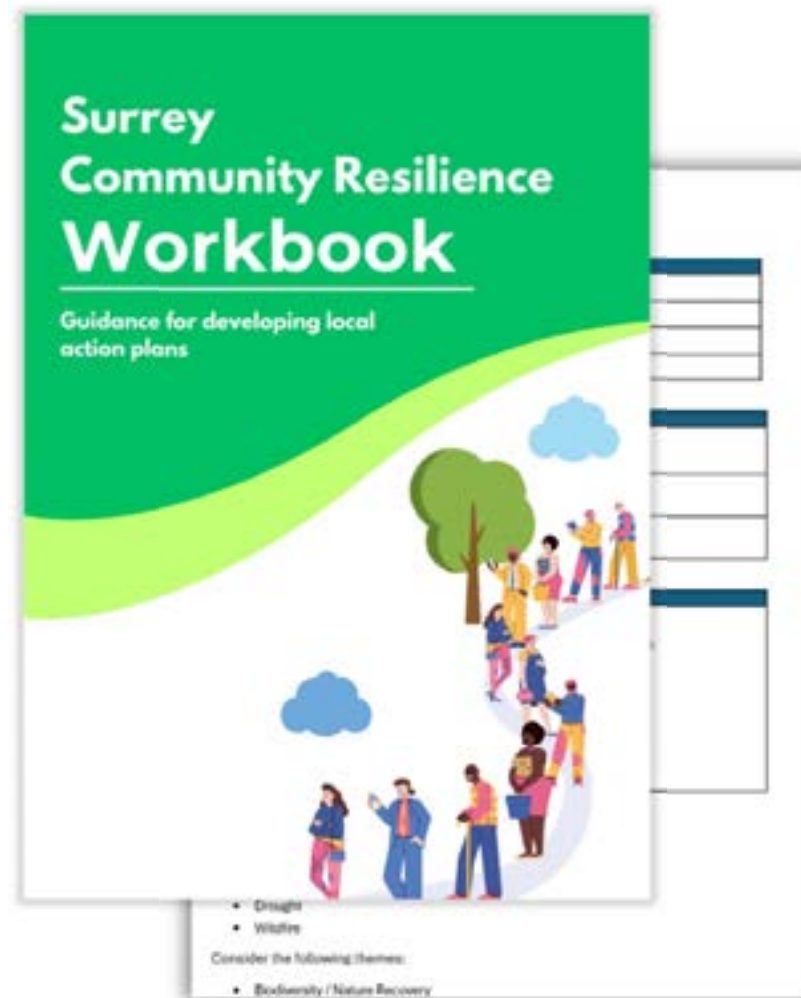
ACTION PLAN

As part of the Surrey Community Resilience Workbook, we have created a Community Action Plan template to help communities identify local risks, map available resources and agree practical actions to build resilience and adaptation.

The template supports communities to:

- Identify and understand local risks, such as flooding, severe weather, power outages and other disruptions.
- Record key community assets, contacts, skills and resources that could be used.
- Agree practical actions to reduce risks, improve preparedness and support an effective local response.
- Capture actions, responsibilities and priorities in one place, helping communities review and update plans over time.

The Action Plan also helps communities identify and prioritise projects that could address the risks they have identified and strengthen local resilience. Actions can be categorised as quick wins, medium-term priorities and longer-term ambitions.



The Action Plan template can be found in Appendix 1 of the Community Resilience Workbook.

[You can find both here](#)

SURREY PREPARED COMMUNITY EMERGENCY & RESILIENCE PLAN

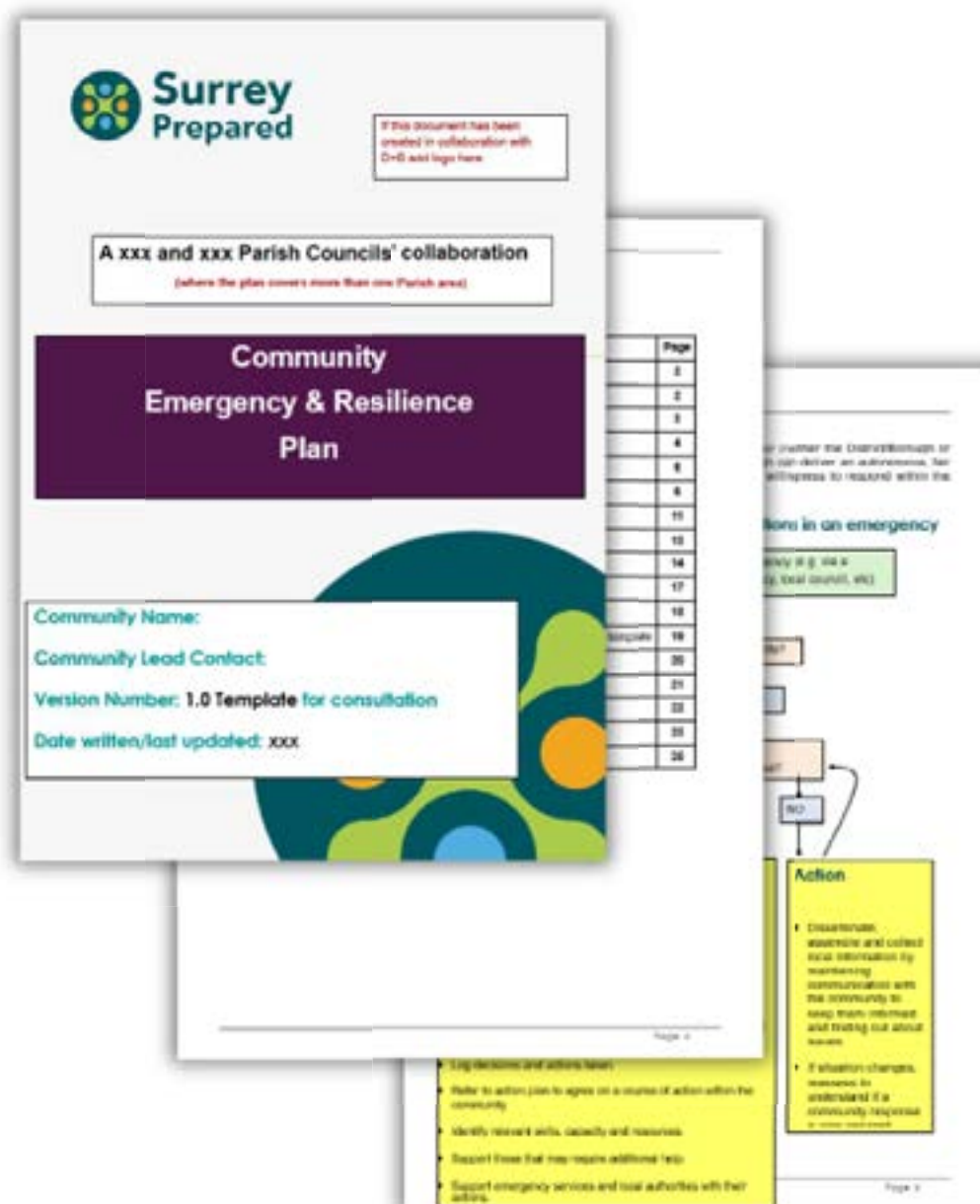
The Community Emergency & Resilience Plan is a template provided by Surrey Prepared. It acts as a working document that supports communities in organising their resources and coordinating actions when an incident occurs.

The template guides communities through:

- Mapping local skills, contacts, and resources so the community knows who can help and where support can be organised from.
- Setting out clear actions and activation procedures including how the community responds initially, how communication will work, and how vulnerable residents will be supported.

The plan is designed to complement the work of emergency responders, helping communities coordinate local resources in the crucial early stages of an incident. It also helps build long-term resilience by encouraging communities to think ahead and strengthen local preparedness.

There is no requirement for communities to complete a Community Emergency & Resilience Plan, however, if your community would like to develop a plan, support and guidance are available through Surrey Prepared.



WHEN TO ACTIVATE

The Action Plan and Community Emergency & Resilience Plan serve different purposes. The Action Plan focuses on reducing risks and building resilience, while the Emergency & Resilience Plan supports the coordination of local resources and actions during an emergency.

A major advantage of creating an Emergency Plan is that *before* any emergency occurs, your community resilience group will have agreed and been informed how and when to activate its plan and communicate with emergency responders.

Establish simple triggers that indicate when the group should begin responding. **Always call 999 if there is any risk to life.**

Avoid creating detailed, scenario specific plans. Flexibility is essential for responding to any type of incident. Always share your completed plan with your local borough or district emergency planning team.

Action Plan	Building resilience and reducing risk
Emergency & Resilience Plan	Actions during an emergency

Initial Actions

- Ensure you are safe before taking any steps.
- Contact group members and meet to assess the situation.
- Agree priorities and assign clear roles to volunteers.

Ongoing Coordination

- Meet regularly to review how the situation is developing.
- Track progress, adjust priorities, and move resources as needed.



OVERVIEW

By using this guide and the support on offer to complete your accompanying workbook, alongside a Surrey Prepared Emergency Plan, your community can prepare for emergencies, strengthen local networks, and build confidence to act when it matters most. At the same time, you will be helping to reduce the likelihood of future events by contributing to the reversal of nature loss and climate change, through collaborative, country-wide efforts to protect our communities.

Keep your plans clear, accessible, and easy to find and review them regularly so they remain up to date. The most important takeaway is this: you have a complete set of tools to build resilience, and you can tailor them to what your community needs most.

Together, these steps help ensure Surrey's communities are ready, connected, and resilient.





Surrey County Council is the local authority for Surrey, responsible for delivering county-wide services such as education, highways and adult social care.



Surrey Prepared helps communities across Surrey become more resilient by providing practical guidance, tools and support to prepare for emergencies and local risks.



Surrey Fire and Rescue Services are responsible for delivering fire and rescue services across Surrey, including providing fire safety advice for homes, schools and businesses.

 greenerfutures@surreycc.gov.uk

 Website

 community.resilience@surreycc.gov.uk

 Website

 contactfire@surreycc.gov.uk

 Website