

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

TUESDAY 22 MARCH 2011

**QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED UNDER THE PROVISIONS
OF STANDING ORDER 10.1**

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT

(1) MR JOHN ORRICK (CATERHAM HILL) TO ASK:

- (i) When is it expected that the revenue from the proposed introduction of on-street parking will meet the capital costs of introducing meters?
- (ii) How were the levels of charging in the on-street parking proposals approved by the Cabinet Member on 12 January arrived at?
- (iii) At what stage are officers in the tendering for the purchase of on-street parking meters?
- (iv) How can any projections of revenue be made without a business plan?

Reply:

- (i) When is it expected that the revenue from the proposed introduction of on-street parking will meet the capital costs of introducing meters?**

The capital cost of introducing the currently proposed on street parking charges is likely to be in the region of £1.5m.

The income from parking charges could vary depending on the actual tariffs that are agreed following the consultation period. It has been estimated that the operating surplus from pay and display parking charges could vary between £0.5 and £2m depending on what is approved following the consultation.

Parking enforcement in Surrey is carried out by the district and borough councils and has for the last few years operated at a deficit of about £0.5m per year. Plans are being developed to improve the efficiency of on street parking enforcement and it is anticipated that costs will be dramatically reduced in 2011/12. It is anticipated that from April 2012 further efficiencies will be made in the way on street enforcement is carried out. It is not however possible to say that even the most efficient enforcement operation possible will be able to operate within the income from Penalty Charge Notices (PCN) or parking fines. Consequently there may be some costs associated with parking enforcement in the future and the most suitable method of funding this is through on street parking charges.

Consequently there are many variables involved, however the capital investment should be recovered within 1 to 5 years. A more complete assessment of income and costs will be carried out as part of the report to the Cabinet following the consultation in each area.

(ii) How were the levels of charging in the on-street parking proposals approved by the Cabinet Member on 12 January arrived at?

The currently proposed locations for on street parking charges are generally in places where there are existing short term parking bays.

The proposed charges have been developed based on the size of the town/shopping area and existing on and off street parking charges nearby. It is planned to reassess tariff levels as part of the consultation process including the suggestion of a free parking period in some locations.

(iii) At what stage are officers in the tendering for the purchase of on-street parking meters?

It is planned that the Cabinet Member for Transport will approve the supplier for the pay and display machines on 18 May 2011. The Cabinet will then review the objections to the proposals in Reigate and Banstead and Elmbridge on 24 May and decide on the way forward. Equipment needed to install pay and display charges would only be ordered from the supplier following consultation and Cabinet approval in any particular area. It is planned to use a call off contract to ensure equipment is not ordered until it is needed and only following approval by the Cabinet.

(v) How can any projections of revenue be made without a business plan?

Income and Revenue projections can be made based on the proposals currently shown on the Council's website. Pay and display parking is not uncommon in the UK and the costs involved with operating it are generally well understood.

CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE 2012 GAMES

(2) MR STEPHEN COOKSEY (DORKING AND THE HOLMWOODS) TO ASK:

The Cabinet Response to the Report of the Safer and Stronger Communities Select Committee (Safer and Stronger Communities Select Committee Agenda Item 5a, 17 March 2011) states: "The Cabinet is committed to a full review of the development and implementation of phase one of community partnered libraries before extending this approach to other libraries."

The report to the Cabinet on the Public Value Review (PVR) of the Library Service (1 February 2011) states: “the Council should concentrate its resources on maintaining a core branch network.”

Please could the Cabinet Member for Community Services and the 2012 Games provide the criteria and scoring for each of the County’s libraries that was applied for selecting which of the County’s libraries would be subject to the PVR review to be run by local communities or face closure? What size is the “core branch network”, is it the 22 libraries stated by officers verbally at the Cabinet meeting on 1 February 2011?

Reply:

The PVR team worked with the Library Service and with Estates, Planning and Management to develop an assessment methodology for libraries, based on use, cost, proximity to another library, building suitability, and social need. This approach was outlined to the PVR Steering Board.

All 52 libraries were assessed against the same criteria using the most recent data available.

Use

- Ratio of issues against opening hours
- Issues per hour
- Ratio of visits against opening hours
- Visits per hour
- Rate of decrease/increase in use

Cost

- Cost per square metre
- Cost per issue
- Cost per active borrower
- Overall building rating – cost versus suitability

Social need

- Surrey priority area
- Surrey heat maps indicating levels of need
- Size of the population being served
- Proximity to another Group A or B library
- Whether Group A, B or C

The scores were factual statistics – the only weighting applied to the criteria was to multiply the final scores according to the position of the library within Surrey County Council Library Service strategic network of libraries agreed in 2007. This network reflected the strategic planning hierarchy of Town, District and Local Centres in the most recent Surrey Structure Plan 2001:-

Group A (Town Centre) x 3

Group B (District Centre) x 2

Group C (Local Centre) x 1

The data collected for all 52 libraries was then sorted and statistically scored using quartiles. This sorts data and divides its distribution into four groups with equal frequencies. Quartile scores were multiplied to give an overall score for each library. The logic of multiplying quartile scores rather than adding was to avoid “bunching” and it does exaggerate differences. The spread of aggregate scores range up to 5 million. The full spreadsheet will be published on the County Council website shortly.

The libraries within the lowest 25% quartile of overall scores (up to 1,150) represent account for just under 8% of all issues, and just over 7% of all visits in 2009/10.

The PVR report recommended that the eleven libraries comprising this lowest quartile (25%) from the assessment were selected for the first tranche of the community partnered arrangement.

In the PVR report to Cabinet paragraph 33, there is a recommendation that Surrey County Council should concentrate its resources and maintain a core library network for Surrey, which reflects patterns of use and takes advantage of cultural opportunities. The task going forward will be to update the hierarchy drawing on Borough/District core planning strategy hierarchies currently under development to see how well they continue to align.

Currently the strategic framework for the provision of libraries is:-

- Group A (Town Centre) - 10 libraries
- Group B (District Centre) - 15 libraries
- Group C (Local Centre) - 27 libraries

There is a need to have the future core strategic network explicitly identified in order for SCC to obtain S106 and Community Infrastructure Levy monies for the future development of libraries within the network and in relation to other matters such as obtaining commissioned work, and providing a sustainable network for delivery of other public services (a recent example being the selection of libraries for the validation of bus pass applications).

The report to Cabinet in September will:

- Consider proposals relating to the future core library network for Surrey,
- review the progress of the arrangements relating to the eleven libraries selected for community partnered before we look at giving further consideration to extending this initiative.

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

(3) MRS DIANA SMITH (KNAPHILL) TO ASK:

In 2009/10 how many respite care nights did SCC offer disabled children in SCC accommodation, through residential care with other organisations, and through domiciliary care? How many of the children in each category were under ten years of age?

What is the projected provision of these sorts of respite care in 2010/11, 2011/12, and 2012/13, assuming the Cabinet accepts the proposed changes outlined in the current review of short break services for children with disabilities?

Reply:

In 2009/10 the following services were provided:

SCC Provision (Squirrel Lodge & Ruth House)

3,081 nights respite for 68 children, of whom 2 were aged under 10 years (1 aged 9 and 1 aged 8)

Voluntary Sector

949 nights were commissioned from White Lodge to 38 children of whom 8 were aged under 10 years (2 children aged 7, 1 child aged 8 and 5 children aged 9)

1,241 nights were commissioned from Cherry Trees to 48 children of whom 9 were aged under 10 years (3 children aged 7, 2 children aged 8 and 4 children aged 9)

400 nights were commissioned from Pastens (Action for Children) to 8 children of whom 2 were aged under 10 years (1 aged 7 and 1 aged 8)

In total, the voluntary sector provided 2,590 nights to 94 children of whom 19 were aged under 10.

An increase in provision is projected for 2010/11 due to the opening of the 3rd flat at Ruth House and further increases are projected for 2011/12 as the opening of Applewood will increase the SCC beds available by 1 as this service offers 6 beds compared to 5 at Squirrel Lodge. It is also planned to commission a further 350 nights from White Lodge.

It is not anticipated at present that there will be a change from this level of service in 2012/13.

We are also seeking to increase our family-based short-break provision and have a targeted recruitment campaign prepared. This will allow us to widen the range of placements we provide. Where children can access community or family based provision it will always be preferred as a more person centred and appropriate option to residential care. Particular issues for providing residential care for younger children include the multiple carers who will be looking after the child and the possible impact of other children and young people who will be staying in the unit.

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

(4) MRS HAZEL WATSON (DORKING HILLS) TO ASK:

What urgent action is the County Council taking to ensure that the sawmill at Norbury Park which is beneficial to the environment and to the local community continues to operate at Norbury Park, as it is threatened with closure at the end of March 2011?

Reply:

The Sawmill at Norbury Park is managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust under the partnership contract.

As a charity they are not allowed to financially support a loss-making limited company, the sawmill has always struggled to operate without subsidy. We are doing everything we can, within the constraints of the contract, to find a way to enable the sawmill to continue to operate in future without subsidy.

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

(5) MR DAVID GOODWIN (GUILDFORD SOUTH WEST) TO ASK:

In an email dated 16 February 2011, from the Health and Safety Executive to the Environment Agency regarding the safe design and operation of the Ecopark, it states "Particular recommendations in [European Commission - Guideline for Safe and Eco-friendly Biomass Gasification] Guidance that do not appear to be achieved by the proposals include the effective separation of people from the fire, explosion and toxic hazards arising in the gasification plant. The risks to people are compounded by integrating the education and visitors centre within the gasification building and providing public viewing windows into the process areas. Further risks may arise to the large numbers of general public who are coming on site to unload their waste. Their waste is being fed into the gasification unit but good design practice recommends that the storage and reception area for the waste should be separated from the gasification unit by distance or high performance fire curtain. The means for achieving effective separation are not included in the proposals."

What actions were taken to ensure that the plans met with relevant safety legislation and guidance?

What action is being taken to ensure the concerns raised by the Health and Safety Executive are dealt with to ensure the safety of employees, visitors and the general public?

Reply:

Firstly I would like to state categorically that the Council would not proceed with a scheme which posed a threat to public health or environment, nor would we be allowed to by the regulatory authorities.

Safety of members of the public, visitors and site personnel at any waste facility is of paramount importance and was considered as an integral part of the design process for the proposed Eco Park. During the development of the design, SITA took advice from specialists and technology suppliers to ensure that the layout and design of the site incorporated relevant safety measures.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) were invited to comment at the draft planning application stage but declined to do so. When consulted on the formal planning application, the HSE raised no objection to granting of planning consent based on their planning consultation policy.

When the HSE were consulted by the Environment Agency as part of SITA's Environmental Permit application for the proposed Eco Park, they identified some issues which they considered needed to be addressed by SITA as part of the Environmental Permit application. Health and Safety and Technology experts from SITA have now met with the relevant staff within the HSE and have discussed, with them, the proposed site layout and detailed operation of the gasification plant. Based on this greater knowledge of how the proposed plant will operate, I understand that the HSE will be writing to the County Planning Authority to advise them that they are now satisfied that the issues can be satisfactorily dealt with during the detailed design process and health and safety stages which always precede the construction of such plant. Therefore, it is expected that they will have no objection to the grant of planning consent for the development of the Eco Park. SITA has previously made and maintains an open invitation for the HSE to participate in or observe the detailed design and health and safety stages of this or any similar projects.

CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY

(6) MR COLIN TAYLOR (EPSOM & EWELL SOUTH WEST) TO ASK:

With reference to the recent consultation on the Council's Public Safety Plan (PSP), can the Cabinet Member please clarify:

- (1) The data presented in 5.9 of the PSP indicates that the rate of incidents between 19:00 and 21:00 is higher than between 07:00 and 09:00. Why therefore is the time period when a lower level of cover is proposed set at 07:00 to 19:00 rather than the busiest range 09:00 to 21:00?
- (2) The recommendations in the PSP appear to be based upon mapping all calls including false alarms. As there are so many of these, has a check

been made based on the mapping of life-threatening incidents? If so, where can this be seen?

- (3) In addition to basing the proposed new response targets on the percentage of occasions rather than the percentage of population as previously, it is proposed to base these targets on the time from mobilisation of the fire appliance rather than on the time from receipt of the call. Given that statistics of response times from other authorities are likely to remain on the basis defined by the Communities Department CLG, how will Surrey's future performance be compared with its peers?

Reply:

- (1) As indicated in 5.10 of the draft PSP, Surrey is a safe place to be and the average number of incidents per hour is very low (approximately 0.5 – 2.5 per hour). The proposals are designed to ensure suitable and sufficient resources are available to deal with the credible planning assumptions as outlined on page 35 of the draft PSP. The timings of the change in the availability of resources across the 24 hour period is based on the ability to move around the county and availability of current retained duty system (RDS) staff. From research undertaken by SCC Transportation (see page 14 of appendix 5 – Community Risk Profile), we can predict that journey times are generally reduced between 19:00 hours and 07:00 hours. We are also aware that a number of our current RDS staff are not available by 07:00 hours as they are often undertaking their primary employment.
- (2) Yes, although some of the maps were not made publicly available during the consultation process. These maps require a certain degree of explanation to enable people to interpret them appropriately, which is difficult to provide concisely in written format. However, a wide range of data, including the impact on life and property risk incidents, was provided to support the consultation and is available in appendix 5 – The Community Risk Profile and also through the ORH study of emergency cover.
- (3) Nationally emergency response standards do not include call handling times and this is a separate standard that is measured. When the national standards of fire cover were introduced, the technology was not in place to record from the time of call – it was based on the time the fire engine was mobilised. The measuring criteria for the Government performance indicator for response standards are included in Dear Chief Officer Letter 12/1993. It states “time to be measured from the time of assigning appliances by control to the time of attendance...” It continues that systems should be installed which can “measure from the time at which the address provided by the caller is matched satisfactorily with a known address.” This method of measuring response times was confirmed in The Communities and Local Government “Review of Fire and Rescue Service Response Times” published in 2009 (page 14).

We have contacted a number other fire and rescue services in London and the South East, eight of them measure response times in the same way as Surrey. Only West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service incorporate call handling time in their response standard.

It is anticipated that the final Public Safety Plan will provide greater clarity on the way performance is measured on this issue.

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

(7) MRS PAULINE SEARLE (GUILDFORD NORTH) TO ASK:

Please could the Cabinet Member define what was meant by 'insufficient demand' for overnight respite care for disabled children that came to the Children and Families Committee on 8 March 2011, and explain how demand is defined and assessed in the context of Surrey's in-house residential provision?

Reply:

The use of the words 'insufficient demand' was incorrect and did not accurately reflect the points that wished to be made.

Analysis of the 2010 occupancy numbers at Squirrel Lodge showed that a significant number of families were not using their full allocations and there were nights when Squirrel Lodge was operating with only a few children in residence. The reasons for this are varied and include examples such as the majority of families request respite at the weekends or school holidays and there is therefore poor take up of weekday nights. There have been limitations on the needs that Squirrel Lodge can meet - the building is not fully accessible to wheelchair users. With only one ground floor bedroom, children with physical difficulties and complex health needs cannot be managed there. It is anticipated that many more needs can be met through the purpose built accommodation available at Applewood than currently from Squirrel Lodge.

Residential overnight care provided through Surrey County Council social care service is a specialist service targeted at those children with the highest level of needs. Assessments for children's social care provision are completed by social workers. In addition, Surrey County Council Children's Service commissions a range of short-break services that can be accessed by families without the need for a social work assessment. For those who are eligible for social care services, Direct Payments provide another way in which the family are able to arrange services that meet their own particular circumstances.

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

(8) MR WILL FORSTER (WOKING SOUTH) TO ASK:

On 19 January Norman Baker, the Transport Minister, announced the Local Sustainable Transport Fund; £560m of additional funding for sustainable transport projects to help create economic growth and reduce carbon emissions. He stated the government are "reducing bureaucratic burdens on local authorities to cut red tape so they can deliver a better and more integrated transport system, from cycle support schemes to car sharing and better bus lanes."

There is a widespread myth that this fund is not available for the more affluent South East, when the bidding documents are clear:

"Any English local transport authority outside London – County Councils, Integrated Transport Authorities, Metropolitan District Councils and Unitary Authorities – can apply for funding".

Given that as the recent South East England Councils briefing paper Deprivation and Public Sector Reliance in the South East states "The South East helps support spending in the rest of the country by contributing more to the Treasury each year than is spent on public services across the area" and that daily traffic on A roads in Surrey are nearly twice the national average; what action is the Cabinet Member taking to ensure that the County Council maximises this opportunity to create economic growth and reduce carbon emissions in the County?

Reply:

We are committed to winning as much funding as we can for Surrey, in order to tackle the serious congestion and travel problems that we face. Officers of the County Council have been working with key stakeholders, especially the Borough and District Councils, to develop a draft bid for the Government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund which we hope will secure up to £20 million of investment in sustainable transport measures over the next four years.

The deadlines for submitting bids to this are very tight. We have to make an initial bid by 18 April for funds that could be used in 2011-12. Accordingly, the draft bid will be considered by the Cabinet on 29 March 2011.

Should we be successful, our intention is that the actual measures delivered by this fund should be determined by local people and the Local Committees. This is the best way of ensuring that the programme delivers real improvements to tackle genuine local problems, such as the need to promote economic growth and reduce carbon emissions.

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT

(9) MR NICK HARRISON (BANSTEAD WEST) TO ASK:

Why were Members' choices of the roads in their divisions for resurfacing and major maintenance not sought and factored into the selection criteria for 2011/12 - unlike 2010/11 and the proposals for 2012/13?

Reply:

The additional investment provided by this administration means that the Council will be resurfacing over 200 miles of road in 2011/12. This includes over 30 major maintenance schemes and 440 surface treatment schemes. These lists were updated using recent condition data, but with the renegotiation of the 7 highways contracts; relocating teams and staff reductions it was not possible to ask councillors to update their three choices. This will be looked at in the year ahead.

CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE 2012 GAMES

(10) MR EBER KINGTON (EPSOM AND EWELL NORTH) TO ASK:

At the Safer and Stronger Communities Select Committee Meeting on 22 February 2011, convened to discuss the Cabinet's proposals for 11 libraries, you began your opening remarks with a statement criticising the use of the Call-In procedure – a criticism noted by both members of the public and the press.

Given the fact that as a result of the use of the Call-In procedure:

- library users and library user groups were given an opportunity to air their concerns to the decision makers, and
 - officers and politicians were able to clarify issues in a public arena
1. Do you now regret your criticism of the three Members exercising their democratic rights under the Council's Constitution to invoke the Call-In, and
 2. Are there any other procedures in the Council's Constitution, which enable Members to scrutinise individual Cabinet Member decisions, which you would also wish to see used less often?

Reply:

The Safer and Stronger Communities Select Committee met on 22 February 2011 to examine two call-ins, one of which was on the Public Value Review of Library Services. I was invited to attend and answer questions of the committee. At a subsequent Cabinet meeting, I actually highlighted my view that the call-in procedure, used correctly, is an excellent way of holding the leadership to account. I think it fair to say that the Safer & Stronger Communities Select Committee is always very thorough and indeed fair when calling Cabinet Members to give evidence. The Chairman of the Safer & Stronger

Communities Select Committee has always been scrupulously non-partisan and fair.

During this process, it was suggested that the reason for this call-in was in fact Members' perceived lack of information. This surprised me, and the Deputy Leader of the Council, because we had arranged special Members' information sessions on the Library Services PVR, which two of the three Members who initiated the call-in failed to attend. I thank the Deputy Leader for being available for all these meetings. Due to diary clashes I was not always able to attend these meetings.

Clearly then, I did not criticise them for their call-in, which as you correctly acknowledge is their democratic right, but for favouring the Party political route of a call-in, over the decent route of having the members to attend meetings convened for their information.

Therefore, I stand by my original comment, if it had really been about information, they'd have bothered attending. As they didn't, they've shown their actual intentions: to score political points. And, therefore I shan't be crediting the facetious second question with an answer.

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

(11) MR BILL BARKER (HORSLEYS) TO ASK:

Who takes the decisions whether a BOAT falls into category 1 2 or 3 regarding safety for the rights of way users including pedestrians. If it is County Council officers, what are their professional skills and/or qualifications and if it is Members of the Countryside Access Forum, what are their skills and professional qualifications so that Councillors may take due notice of their advice?

What service does the County Council provide for the Countryside Access Forum and what does it cost?

Reply:

Condition survey of BOATs

The County Council's policy for dealing with requests for TROs on BOATs was considered by the Executive in January 2009 who resolved:

"1. That Traffic Regulation Orders be used proactively where a countywide assessment indicates a Byway Open to All Traffic is in poor condition, in need of significant repair and it is considered necessary to restrict traffic, coupled with programmes of repair as resources permit.

2. That where a countywide assessment indicates a Byway Open to All Traffic is in reasonable condition a Traffic Regulation Order be only made on grounds of

significant danger to users of the route, or to prevent significant damage to the route."

In implementing this policy it is Countryside Access Officers who make the decisions regarding the categories for the conditions of BOATs. The officers have either a degree or diploma in an appropriate discipline or 10 or more years of experience in a related discipline. Senior staff are required to be members of an appropriate professional body.

The condition of each route is assessed as:

1. Good - predominantly good throughout length of route.
2. In need of some repair - e.g. short section of mud of limited rutting/erosion, or
3. In need of significant repair - whole route or substantial sections of route in poor condition e.g. deep/founderous mud and/or significant rutting/erosion.

The BOATs are assessed annually as either category 1, 2 or 3 based on the physical condition (not safety) of the byway. These condition survey/reports are carried out to access indicative levels of the physical condition of the Surrey BOAT network in relation to the County Council's Statutory Duties, as Highway Authority. Indicators of associated vehicle-related unlawful activities/impacts are also noted but do not affect the category given.

Surrey Countryside Access Forum

Section 94 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires all local highway authorities, including the County Council, to establish a local access forum. The statutory purpose of the Forum is to advise relevant bodies, including the County Council, on the improvement of public access to open spaces and rights of way for the purpose of open-air recreation and the enjoyment of the area. The Forum does not decide how Byways Open to All Traffic are categorised either in terms of safety or maintenance. However, if it chose to do so, it could offer advice on the subject.

The Forum is made up of 21 volunteers who represent various interests relevant to its remit; for example, walkers, equestrians, cyclists, landowners, conservationists etc. The Cabinet Member for Environment also sits on the Forum. The meetings are open to the public, but participation is generally restricted to members of the Forum.

Although the Forum is entirely independent, the County Council has a duty to provide it with administrative support. In practice this includes appointing members, distributing and providing information, organising meetings and publishing minutes. On occasions the County Council also presents reports to the Forum. The County Council is required to meet the reasonable expenses incurred by members of the Forum, which costs in the region of £400 per annum.

CHAIRMAN OF SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE

(12) MRS JAN MASON (EPSOM AND EWELL WEST) TO ASK:

The press has reported that you described your Select Committee's call-in decision on the Library Services Public Vale Review as 'codswallop'.

Would you also describe as 'codswallop' the important principle that a Select Committee Chairman always defends the decisions of his/her committee?

Reply:

The Safer & Stronger Communities Select Committee met on 22 February 2011 to examine two call ins, one on the Voluntary Sector Network and the other on the Public Value Review on Libraries. The second part of the meeting started at 1pm and finished at 4pm. Members were in scrutiny mode for (including pre-meeting) from 10am to 4pm - for five hours.

The Library Call-in took a great deal of detail, petitions, questions and points from members of the public and also from County Councillors who had attended to put the points of view of their constituents as well as their own. Members of the Committee gave their views, evidence etc. and I would like to stress the impartiality of the committee when considering the evidence and conducting this committee's business.

Given this, it was extremely frustrating that at the end of the three hours, Members thought fit simply to recommend that the Cabinet should abandon its decision. I was dismayed that the effort made by so many different communities and local people should be lost in one simplistic sentence. It did not seem to measure up to the debate we had just had.

Mrs Mason talks of the Select Committee "decision" but Select Committees do not make decisions; they make "recommendations" and this was a further reason for making sure that all the suggestions which had been brought into the committee's evidence taking and deliberations should be put in full to the Cabinet. Instead we seem to be having the ping-pong of politics – with an item going backwards and forwards on the principle rather than analysis and detail that had been so well demonstrated.

After the meeting, and in a hurry to get on to my next engagement, I gave vent to this feeling of frustration that the latter part of the committee had been "codswallop" (meaning "nonsense"), because it had made nonsense of the effort put in and did not in fact reflect the Select Committee's work. We had done much more than the recommendation on its own suggests.

In the event when presenting the written report to the Cabinet, I asked that some of the salient points made at the Committee be included.

Referring to an earlier question in today's papers – the purpose of Select Committees is to review and/or scrutinise decisions; and to exercise the right to call in; consider any matter affecting the County, part of the County or its inhabitants“and make reports and/or recommendations...” I take this duty very seriously (as I know other Chairmen do) and the record of the Safer & Stronger Communities Select Committee over the past two years bears witness to this fact.

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT.

(13) MR PETER HICKMAN (THE DITTONS) TO ASK:

What is the financial justification for installing a pay and display machine for a parking bay for three vehicles? This is a proposal for part of Thames Ditton High Street. It is also proposed to have another machine for a five vehicle bay in Thames Ditton High Street.

Could the Cabinet Member provide a breakdown of costs with projected annual turnover for the two bays mentioned above?

Reply:

There are currently very few parking restrictions in Thames Ditton High Street. This means local workers and residents park in what space is available for much of the day, leaving very little opportunity for customers wanting to park and use the shops in the High Street. As a result it is proposed to introduce 2 short term parking bays into Thames Ditton High Street.

The short term parking will help local businesses by providing more space for their customers.

Two parking bays are proposed, one will be 18.6m long (3 cars) and the other 30.6m long (5 cars). The two parking areas are sufficiently far apart (50m) to need 1 pay and display machine at each location.

The estimated income for a single parking space in this location with a low tariff is £750 per year. This is based on an occupancy level of 4 hours a day (in practice it is likely to be higher). This means between the hours 9am and 5pm, Monday to Saturday if cars were parked for only 4 hours there would be an income of £2.40 per day (30p per half hour), giving £750 per year.

The combined income for 8 parking spaces is therefore £6000 per year.

The estimated cost of operating a coin payment pay and display ticket machine per year is no higher than £2500. This includes the cost of cash collections, repairs and fixing fault as well as checks by enforcement officers. There would be a need for two machines in this location.

Consequently, the installation of pay and display parking in Thames Ditton High Street, based on the proposed tariff could generate a surplus of £1000 per year which could be used to help maintain the local highway network. The introduction of on street pay and display charges would also make enforcement more efficient and easier for the Elmbridge Borough Council enforcement team as well as improving access to local businesses for their customers.

DEPUTY LEADER

(14) MR JOHN BUTCHER (COBHAM) TO ASK:

Given:

- (a) the requirements of Articles 6.06 and 7.01 (b)(iii) of the council's Constitution in relation to budget setting,
- (b) the statutory role of the Director of Children's Services, for the time being, in relation to the budget for such services, that include Children's Social Services, and
- (c) your statement, at the meeting of this Council on 8 February 2011, concerning the need for Select Committees to scrutinise most carefully the budgets for their particular areas of responsibility,

Will you please provide a written statement of all the steps that have been taken by the Cabinet and by you, as its member with the main responsibility for the Budget 2011-12, to satisfy itself and yourself that the budget for that year for Children's Social Services is reasonably adequate to ensure that this council will be able to discharge its statutory responsibilities in that regard, and that all appropriate legal procedures in regard to the budget have been properly taken and documented?

Reply:

The budget process included all of the steps necessary to ensure the budget is both lawful and sustainable. These steps included informal and formal consideration by the Cabinet, informal and formal consideration by the Children and Families Select Committee and consultation with the voluntary sector and business representatives within the County prior to a recommendation being made by the Cabinet to the County Council

The Acting Director of Children's Services provided assurance, which was included in a written answer at the last council meeting, that the budget was adequate to ensure that the council's statutory responsibilities can be satisfactorily discharged in the year and that those responsibilities will not be unreasonably constrained due to the level of budget.

The Section 151 officer presented a statement to the full council stating that the budget is both deliverable and sustainable.

I am therefore satisfied that the budget for the year for Children's Social Services is reasonably adequate to ensure that this council will be able to discharge its statutory responsibilities in that regard, and that all appropriate legal procedures in regard to the budget have been properly taken and documented.

CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

(15) MR ERNEST MALLET (WEST MOLESEY) TO ASK:

In the papers issued for consultation on Countryside Partnership Schemes, reductions or deletions in finance for the Basingstoke Canal, The Lower Mole Project and the Thames Landscape Strategy, are proposed on grounds of not value to Surrey and/or that these projects do not accord with Surrey priorities and/or that they are not applicable to the whole of Surrey.

Are these not somewhat specious and contrived reasons for proposing to down grade or delete support for these projects, all of which make major contributions to the amenities, attraction and characteristics of the County of Surrey?

Reply:

The Countryside Public Value Review followed a transparent and rigorous process. The grounds chosen to prioritise existing partnership arrangements are fair and objective and they reflect the value that the partnerships deliver to the county council. Whilst it is recognised that these partnerships make a valuable contribution to the amenities of the county, in the current financial situation tough choices have to be made. Whilst revenue funding to the Basingstoke Canal will reduce, a major programme of capital investment is underway to maintain its historic infrastructure and enhance its exceptional conservation and amenity value.

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT

(16) MR STEPHEN COOKSEY (DORKING AND THE HOLMWOODS) TO ASK (2ND QUESTION)

Chris Hunt, Conservative Mole Valley District Councillor for Ashted Village and Vice Chairman of the Mole Valley Local Committee, in relation to the Cabinet decision to charge for on street parking has been quoted in the Surrey Advertiser as saying:

"We feel the charges would drive shoppers away and it seems crazy to charge more than in the district council car parks anyway. Even if they introduce them we feel they will not yield the income they hope for."

He added: "I am determined to work hard to try to keep Ashted free on-street, because the ability to park in The Street and at Craddocks Parade is a key factor behind their continued success in providing local shopping needs."

Does the Cabinet Member agree with the statement of his Conservative colleague, or does he disown him and his views?

Reply:

Short term on street parking provision is a good way of ensuring turnover of parking spaces or 'churn'. This is particularly useful in and near retail areas as it helps local businesses and provides better access for their customers.

In many parts of Surrey there is already a charge for parking in off street car parks, while parking on street remains free. This encourages motorists to search out free on street parking spaces rather than going straight to the nearest car park which can increase congestion and CO² emissions. It is normal practice to make on street charges slightly higher than off street car park charges as this encourages drivers to go straight to a car park, particularly for longer term parking.

Craddocks Parade and The Street in Ashted are both areas that are proposed to have on street parking charges. The formal consultation is presently planned to be carried out in Mole Valley during October and November 2011 and as part of this process Surrey Highways will be listening to comments and looking at ways to make this work. As part of this process we will investigate all the options in order to balance good transportation practice and the needs of local businesses. This will include looking at the viability of a free parking period in the smaller shopping areas amongst other criteria.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**(17) MR COLIN TAYLOR (EPSOM & EWELL SOUTH WEST) TO ASK:
(2ND QUESTION)**

An "In Touch" leaflet is currently being circulated in Stoneleigh promoted by Tim Hall from Chris Grayling MP's address in Ashted, that:

1. refers to the motion opposing parking charges put forward to the Borough Council by the Liberal Democrats, stating that Conservative councillors would have supported it if it had been debated and pledging Conservative council candidates to campaign against the proposed parking charges in Stoneleigh.
2. pledges Conservative council candidates to oppose any plans to close or reduce the services run by Stoneleigh library.

Is the Leader aware of this leaflet?

Do Cabinet Members no longer accept collective responsibility for Cabinet policy?

Reply:

I was not aware of the existence of this leaflet and understand that Cllr. Hall's name was incorrectly used as the imprint on the leaflet.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

(18) MRS HAZEL WATSON (DORKING HILLS) TO ASK: (2ND QUESTION)

How much has the County Council spent on each consultancy contract above the value of £500 to date in the 2010/11 financial year? For what purpose have these consultancy contracts been awarded?

Reply:

This administration discourages the use of consultants, instead preferring to use the council's own staff to do the work. As an example of this, the programme of Public Value Reviews has not used external consultants, unlike the case with many other local authorities. This has saved the council an estimated about £9m, which is the estimated cost if we had used consultants. I am sure that you will join me in congratulating officers and Members in identifying saving of over £80m so far.

However, there are times when it is right and proper to use an external consultant. This is where we do not have the relevant expertise and knowledge in house and it obviously makes sense to use a consultant in those cases. It would not good value for money to employ such specialists on a permanent basis.

We have spent £4.4m on consultants this year, which compares to £6.3m last year and £7.1m the year before. This shows our commitment and continuing success in reducing the use of consultants in this organisation. We will continue to use consultants only where we need their expertise whilst I am Leader of this Council.

As part of our commitment to transparency, we publish all our expenditure over £500 on our website in order to be open and up-front with our residents. We were one of the first county councils to do this, as it is only right that local taxpayers should know this information. If you would like to know the detail of whom we have paid, then please use this information to take up Eric Pickles' challenge to become an armchair auditor.

CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY

(19) MR WILL FORSTER (WOKING SOUTH) TO ASK: (2ND QUESTION)

What is the expected increase in young people in Surrey not in education, employment or training (NEETs) following the withdrawal of the education maintenance allowance (EMA)?

What additional investment is planned to meet this increase?

Reply:

The council has projected that a possible 400-600 young people could become NEET as a consequence of the cut to EMA. However, this is a worse case scenerio, we anticipate that the remodelling and refocussing of the Connexions service after last years in-year grant reduction will mitigate this risk. Given this remedial action the council anticipates that participation rates for 16 to 19 year olds will remain static at 96% in 2011-12 and increase to 98% in 2012-13 once the benefits of the transformation of services for young people are realised. The council remains ambitious for young people and we aim to continue our efforts to increase participation in education, training or employment.

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

**(20) MRS DIANA SMITH (KNAPHILL) TO ASK:
(2ND QUESTION)**

What parts of the 'Aiming Higher Agenda' for disabled children will be most curtailed as the result of the incorporation of the Aiming High grant into the Early Intervention grant, and the end of ring fencing?

Reply:

We are pleased to report that very few projects previously supported under Aiming High that are providing services directly to families will be curtailed as a result of the change to the Early Intervention Grant. The £800,000 savings required for 2011/12 have been achieved through:

- Reducing SCC staffing costs - most services are now well established and we will not be tendering for new projects so fewer staff are required
- Close monitoring of services and delivery to ensure outcomes are being achieved and adjusting funding as necessary has ensured value for money
- The majority of services funded through Aiming High require parental contributions towards activities which has helped towards sustainability
- Our VCSF partners have been active and innovative in their fund raising efforts to keep services in place
- The residential review has proposed a sustainable option for the future funding of Applewood, which has reduced the reliance on grant funding to deliver this service.

Aiming High has also provided a number of one-off grants to organisations and funded equipment, activities, services and events such as the Transition Conference, toys and play equipment, group outings and re-printing of the Options for the Future transition guide. Savings have been made in these areas as ongoing funding is not required. However in our budget planning a proportion of the Early Intervention Grant funding has been set aside for one-off grants and carers breaks as we recognise the value of this flexibility to organisations and families of disabled children.

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT

(21) MR NICK HARRISON (BANSTEAD WEST) TO ASK: (2ND QUESTION)

In Mr Lake's letter to members on 9 February 2011, he announced an extra £4million in revenue funding for "a major signs, lines and bollards improvement programme and additional patching and drainage repairs". How will priorities for this expenditure be determined and how can members influence the work to be undertaken?

Reply:

This additional £4 million, on top of our new lining contract will help us to deliver a step change in Surrey's streetscene. The new lining contract will deliver a rolling programme of improvements on our key A and B roads. This additional £4 million will focus on a rolling programme of lining improvements on our more residential roads and help us to work through the long list of minor maintenance that has already been identified by councillors, residents and our own engineers. This is in addition to the funding for each county councillor through the Community Pride Fund. Councillors will be kept up to date through the fortnightly bulletins.

CHAIRMAN OF THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE,

(22) MR JOHN BUTCHER (COBHAM) TO ASK: (2ND QUESTION)

Given:

- (a) the requirements of Article 7.01 (b)(iii) of Part 2 of the council's Constitution in relation to the duty of Select Committees to review and comment on draft budgets,
- (b) the statutory role of the Director of Children's Services, for the time being, in relation to the budget for such services, that include Children's Social Services, and
- (c) the Deputy Leader's statement, at the meeting of this Council on 8 February 2011, concerning the need for Select Committees to scrutinise most carefully the budgets for their particular areas of responsibility,

Will you please provide a written statement of all the steps that have been taken by the Children and Families Select Committee to scrutinise the budget for 2011-12 for Children's Social Services, in order to satisfy itself that:

- (i) that budget is reasonably adequate to ensure that this council will be able to discharge its statutory responsibilities in that regard, and

(ii) all appropriate legal procedures in regard to that budget have been properly taken and documented,

and would you please explain how steps relating to one member of that committee, as suggested in the comments that you made at the said meeting (as recorded under item 07/11 of the minutes* thereof) can be a substitute for the correct budget scrutiny process by the whole committee?

*..see the foot of page 8 of the Agenda for the Council Meeting on 22 March 2011

Reply:

The budget process included all of the steps necessary to ensure the budget is both lawful and sustainable. These steps included informal and formal consideration by the Cabinet, informal and formal consideration by the Children and Families Select Committee and consultation with the voluntary sector and business representatives within the County prior to a recommendation being made by the Cabinet to the County Council

The Acting Director of Children's Services provided assurance, which was included in a written answer at the last council meeting, that the budget was adequate to ensure that the council's statutory responsibilities can be satisfactorily discharged in the year and that those responsibilities will not be unreasonably constrained due to the level of budget.

The Section 151 officer presented a statement to the full council stating that the budget is both deliverable and sustainable.

I am therefore satisfied that the budget for the year for Children's Social Services is reasonably adequate to ensure that this council will be able to discharge its statutory responsibilities in that regard, and that all appropriate legal procedures in regard to the budget have been properly taken and documented.

The Children and Families Committee has had opportunities to scrutinise the budget. The invitation to individual members to discuss budget concerns represented an additional opportunity to scrutinise the budget. Further scrutiny of the budget will occur as a part of the Public Value Review into the Children's Service budget, and the select committee will be fully involved with this. Throughout the year the select committee will further scrutinise the budget as a part of the regular budget monitoring.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

**(23) MR WILL FORSTER (WOKING SOUTH) TO ASK:
(3RD QUESTION)**

Surrey County Council sold land in Kingfield and Old Woking, commonly known as the Rydens Way Green for £254.40.

The arms length companies of Woking Borough Council recently purchased the Rydens Way Green back from the same company for over £800,000.

Does the Leader of the Council agree with me this shows a shocking example of financial incompetence? Does the Leader of the Council believe this represents good value for money for local taxpayers?

Reply:

The land in question was acquired by the Urban District Council of Woking from A & J Simmonds on 15 March 1959 for a sum of £450. At the time it was required for a proposed highway scheme and Woking UDC agreed with A&J Simmonds that, in the event that any of the land was not required for highway purposes, the company could buy it back for the price that Council had paid for it. Following local government reorganisation Surrey County Council became the highway authority in 1974 and the land transferred to it for highway purposes. The proposed highway scheme did not go ahead and the County Council took legal advice, including a counsel's opinion, which confirmed that it was bound by a legally enforceable obligation to transfer the land back to its original owner, if it were not going to use the land for a road. Accordingly, it served notice that the majority of the land was not required for highway purposes. The company elected to exercise its right to buy the land and, in accordance with the terms of the agreement, was entitled to do so for a proportion of the original purchase price based on site area. Therefore the land which had not been taken into the highway was transferred back to the company, by then Lacey Simmonds Ltd, on 21 July 1999 for £254.40. The County Council had also sought the consent of the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions to ensure the correct approach was being taken in this case

CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE 2012 GAMES

**(24) MR WILL FORSTER (WOKING SOUTH) TO ASK:
(4th QUESTION)**

Following the recommendation by the Safer and Stronger Communities Select Committee on 22 February 2011, the Cabinet decided on 1 March 2011 to continue with their original policy to ask volunteers to take over the 11 lowest used libraries in the County.

The statistics of Byfleet Library show a footfall of 20,000 for the last year, however, significantly the library was closed for a refurbishment between 12 September and 24 November 2009.

Please can the Cabinet Member confirm whether:

- that the refurbishment was not taken into consideration in the footfall statistics and give the correctly adjusted annual figure?

- that the cost of the refurbishment was included in the annual figures, therefore unfairly increasing the running costs of Byfleet Library?
- that either or both of the above affect the overall analysis of Byfleet Library in the Public Value Review ratings?

Finally, in February this year Surrey County Council placed a ban stopping members of staff accessing the Byfleet Library's website. Please could the Cabinet Member explain who made the decision to ban access and for what reason?

Reply:

Byfleet library was closed for six weeks for refurbishment from 10 October to 21 November 2009. Refurbishments usually lead to an increase in visits once the library re-opens and the timing of this refurbishment was sufficiently far from the end of the financial year for the impact of the refurbishment to have been felt in visitor figures and issues.

Prior to refurbishment the figures seem to indicate that Byfleet library received 60,000 visitors per annum. However in the year of the refurbishment ending on 31 March 2010 - and using beam counter technology - visitor numbers of around 20,361 were recorded. If the earlier visitor numbers are relied on as accurate, refurbishment appears to have led to a massive decline in visitor numbers. Figures for the first three quarters for 2010/11 show that up to 31 December visitor numbers were 18,668. If these figures were projected for the final quarter then a full year figure of around 25,000 might be expected this year by 31 March 2011.

In our opinion the pre refurbishment visitor numbers for Byfleet library look to be unreliable for the following reasons.- most libraries of similar sizes have slightly more issues than visits per hour whereas pre 2009/10 visits to Byfleet library were almost double the issues per hour, this calls the accuracy of the data for earlier years into question. Also, we have consistent data since the library reopened showing a consistent level of visitor numbers and issues from Byfleet library are consistent across the years even allowing for the disruption caused by refurbishment - usually between 30,000 - 35,000 per annum. In 2009/10 issues were 31,417, including books and audio visual, at most the library lost around 4,000 issues, which is not enough to affect the overall scoring. The loss of issues would have also been taken into account when looking at issues per hour as the hours the library was open would have been reduced correspondingly.

The scoring also included an assessment of the building post refurbishment - which may have been to Byfleet library's advantage.

The conclusion is that the ranking of Byfleet (and its position in the lowest quartile) has not been adversely affected by the data used in the PVR assessment spreadsheet. The overall aggregate score for Byfleet library was 288 and for it to have been above the bottom 25% threshold, it would have had to have achieved a score around 1,100.

Regarding the < byfleetlibrary.org website >, there was never at any time a Surrey County Council instruction that placed a ban stopping staff or library visitors to the library accessing this website. The construction of this website, or some other technical trigger, caused the automatic filtering system of the library management network provider to be deployed to protect the library network. This resulted in the site being blocked. Admittedly it is somewhat unhelpful that the standard automatically generated network message uses phrases that suggest someone has monitored / requested this - this is not the case with this website. This action was a technically driven automatic response by the network provider for protection of the network. The network provider has now been able to ensure that this site can be accessed.

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

TUESDAY 22 MARCH 2011

**QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED UNDER THE PROVISIONS
OF STANDING ORDER 10.13**

REPRESENTATIVE OF THE POLICE AUTHORITY

MR NICK HARRISON (BANSTEAD WEST) TO ASK:

When the Chief Constable met Members before the Council Meeting on 23 March 2010, he promised up to 200 extra front line police paid for by streamlining the organisational structure and rationalising the number of police stations. Can specifics be provided of what is planned for the upcoming year:

- a) How many extra front line police (FTE) will be in service on 1st April 2011, and how many are anticipated by 31st March 2012? What budget has been set aside for these extra police?
- b) How many senior officers will be taken out of the organisation by the streamlined structure by 31st March 2012? Of these, how many have been already released?
- c) What financial savings are budgeted (revenue and capital) to be made in the year 2011/12 by the closure of police stations? What additional costs are budgeted for re-establishing police posts/ co-location arrangements?

Reply:

a) How many extra front line police (FTE) will be in service on 1st April 2011, and how many are anticipated by 31st March 2012? What budget has been set aside for these extra police?

On 1 April 2011 we will have an additional 99 police officers. By the end of March 2012 we expect to have all of the 200 additional constables in force. The budget for this frontline policing uplift in 2011/12 is £4.85m.

b) How many senior officers will be taken out of the organisation by the streamlined structure by 31st March 2012? Of these, how many have been already released?

The new force structure reduced our police officer establishment by 40 posts which delivers a saving of £3m. This new structure came into effect on 1 April 2010. We manage our actual staff numbers against this establishment using the usual levers (projecting retirements, leavers, secondments etc) and planning recruitment and promotion processes accordingly. By 31 March 2011,

24 senior officers will have left the force, with a further 7 leaving by March 2012. Additionally, the force has reduced the number of senior police staff leaders by 25%, which delivers an additional saving of £1.8m.

c) What financial savings are budgeted (revenue and capital) to be made in the year 2011/12 by the closure of police stations? What additional costs are budgeted for re-establishing police posts/ co-location arrangements?

We are budgeting for capital receipts of £3.9m and revenue savings of £789k relating to police station closures. We are budgeting for additional revenue costs of £631k relating to co-location and police posts.