

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**TUESDAY 20 MARCH 2012**

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

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHANGE AND EFFICIENCY**

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

At the March 2010 Council meeting, the then Cabinet Member for Corporate Services answered the following question from me with a very full and detailed reply:

“How much has the County Council paid in compensation for damage to vehicles caused by defects in roads in each of the last four years, including the current year to date? How many claims have been made in each of those years in each of Surrey’s Boroughs and Districts, and how many have been paid in full or part?”

Can the Cabinet Member please provide an update to the figures provided, with the same full breakdown from 2006/7 to 2011/12.

**Reply:**

The Figtree system that the insurance section uses to record all such claims and payments made has been in operation for approximately 4 years. Whilst upon its installation, all claims that the insurance section had previously received and dealt with were transferred across, the East and West Area offices were only able to put claims on from a date later than 1 April 2006 and therefore some caveats need to be placed on the figures. Until May 2011 claims of £500 or under in value were handled by four officers in two teams, one in Leatherhead for Boroughs and Districts in the old "East Area" and one in Guildford for the "West Area". Different information systems were in use until May 2011.

It has not been possible to include figures for claims up to £500 from the West area for 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 as Highways did not capture this information at that time.

East Area captured the numbers of claims of up to £500 in value for 2006/2007 to 2009/2010 inclusive but no later and so again the information is not complete. However sums paid were captured, but not shown by Borough or District and these are shown as a footnote to the below table.

Finally, it should be remembered that of course the current year is incomplete and that the final figure in terms of numbers of claims will be significantly higher than the number shown. Similarly in terms of compensation paid, the claims are

very immature and undoubtedly the final settlement figure will be in excess of the figure shown - what it may ultimately be is difficult to speculate upon.

**Table showing pothole claims by District and Borough from 2006 to date:**

	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>CLAIMS</b>	<b>PAID</b>	<b>NO.PAID</b>
<b>Reigate &amp; Banstead</b>	2006/07	156	£85,829	12
	2007/08	238	£66,992	15
	2008/09	204	£90,856	29
	2009/10	941	£109,488	17
	2010/11	439	£77,558	246
	2011/12	146	£13,928	33
<b>Elmbridge</b>	2006/07	31	£6,849	4
	2007/08	115	£44,754	9
	2008/09	190	£61,254	29
	2009/10	530	£118,590	81
	2010/11	206	£31,702	62
	2011/12	115	£12,788	23
<b>Epsom &amp; Ewell</b>	2006/07	23	£37,596	6
	2007/08	47	£1,382	2
	2008/09	71	£52,120	6
	2009/10	199	£34,290	29
	2010/11	79	£22,675	11
	2011/12	16	£799	4
<b>Mole Valley</b>	2006/07	106	£50,570	20
	2007/08	184	£23,863	16
	2008/09	101	£58,243	14
	2009/10	389	£95,671	44
	2010/11	250	£57,586	84
	2011/12	83	£4,775	17
<b>Tandridge</b>	2006/07	84	£9,243	14
	2007/08	260	£11,759	9
	2008/09	263	£53,777	27
	2009/10	873	£149,089	49
	2010/11	593	£152,932	18
	2011/12	265	£21,963	11
<b>Runnymede</b>	2006/07	15	£0	0
	2007/08	7	£0	0
	2008/09	38	£15,308	3
	2009/10	89	£16,785	23
	2010/11	81	£2,469	5
	2011/12	22	£0	0

	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>CLAIMS</b>	<b>PAID</b>	<b>NO.PAID</b>
<b>Spelthorne</b>	2006/07	27	£30,168	3
	2007/08	20	£57,716	6
	2008/09	101	£44,568	45
	2009/10	174	£20,044	27
	2010/11	103	£16,070	18
	2011/12	21	£525	3
<b>Surrey Heath</b>	2006/07	0	£0	0
	2007/08	15	£1,488	1
	2008/09	158	£26,673	59
	2009/10	210	£35,343	39
	2010/11	110	£6,735	10
	2011/12	27	£1,375	2
<b>Woking</b>	2006/07	34	£120	1
	2007/08	28	£59,551	7
	2008/09	124	£7,892	31
	2009/10	218	£16,808	51
	2010/11	157	£6,971	20
	2011/12	28	£390	3
<b>Guildford</b>	2006/07	221	£18,461	14
	2007/08	61	£26,262	13
	2008/09	284	£83,072	140
	2009/10	759	£79,475	220
	2010/11	359	£23,871	175
	2011/12	116	£5,088	14
<b>Waverley</b>	2006/07	191	£29,700	14
	2007/08	68	£12,145	9
	2008/09	346	£52,777	100
	2009/10	962	£86,030	290
	2010/11	436	£16,724	315
	2011/12	102	£2,606	11
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>12909</b>	<b>£2,362,131</b>	<b>2613</b>

Footnote: As explained in the narrative, the above figures do not show payments of under £500 paid by the East Area Office. These are as follows:

2006/07	£34,629
2007/08	£18,468
2008/09	£31,981
2009/10	£42,623

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT**

### **(2) MR DAVID GOODWIN (GUILDFORD SOUTH WEST) TO ASK:**

How much in infrastructure contributions has been requested and how much has been received through Section 106/PICs on planning applications to Surrey County Council, not the County's Boroughs and Districts, per year over the past 5 years?

#### **Reply:**

The County Planning Authority determines planning applications for minerals and waste related development and also county council proposals including schools. There have been no infrastructure contributions sought or received for the period specified. A contribution of this kind would only be acceptable where it ameliorated the impact of a development proposal and there is clear evidence to demonstrate this. A Section 106 agreement would not be appropriate in the case of county development proposals determined by the County Planning Authority as such an agreement can only be between two separate parties.

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES AND THE 2012 GAMES**

### **(3) MR PETER LAMBELL (REIGATE CENTRAL) TO ASK:**

The former Cabinet Member recently announced plans to introduce special edition library cards to commemorate the 2012 Olympics:

- What is the cost of the scheme to Surrey County Council?
- What is the anticipated take up by existing library users of the new cards?

#### **Reply:**

For some years the library service has recognised, with over 400,000 registered borrowers that the design of the library card is an ideal opportunity in itself to promote positive aspects of the Library Service and Surrey County Council. Special "Maisy" character cards for the under fives have increased child membership. The Surrey Hills range of tickets has helped promote one of Surrey's best assets. Given Surrey's support to 2012 and the high level of public interest, the Library Service has taken this on board and produced a suite of tickets featuring Surrey athletes and a cycle race.

In 2010/11 and 2011/12 the Library Service joined up annually over 70,000 people and these 2012 tickets are not additional ticket purchases but part of our business as usual activities. The purchase reflects around 6 months new members and expected interest starting on 1 March 2012. We purchased 30,000 cards at a cost of £3,081. In August 2011, we ordered 25,000 Surrey Hills cards at a cost of £2,464.

All new library members have to be registered and receive a library card. During 2012 they will be offered a choice of the 2012 designs. Current members who wish to have a new 2012 card can change their card at the usual replacement card price of £2. Library members can also buy a set of 5 cards for £5 as a 2012 souvenir.

The cards have only been in libraries a little over a week, and users are asking about the new cards. Good publicity was received from the launch, being picked up by local media as well as the BBC.

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR CHANGE AND EFFICIENCY**

### **(4) MRS DIANA SMITH (KNAPHILL) TO ASK:**

How do Surrey Pay Salary ratios as detailed on page 2 of the draft Pay policy Statement compare with the comparable authorities against which Surrey is normally benchmarked?

#### **Reply:**

We have looked at the comparative salary ratios between Surrey and similar sized local authorities and it is likely that the ratios will be similar. This can be confirmed once each authority has published their ratios next month.

## **LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

### **(5) MRS FIONA WHITE (GUILDFORD WEST) TO ASK:**

The Leader will be aware that a complaint was made against the county councillor for Frimley Green and Mytchett in respect of his conduct during an Adult Social Care select committee meeting on 21 January 2010. That complaint was dealt with by Surrey County Council's Standards Committee on 16 and 17 July 2010 and the Committee wrote to the member on 31 July 2010 with its findings that he had failed to show respect for the officer concerned and imposed a sanction requiring him to write a letter of apology. The Leader will also know that Mr Pitt decided to appeal against both the finding and the sanction imposed and that the appeal was due to have been heard at a First-Tier Tribunal on 7 and 8 March 2012. The Appeal was ultimately withdrawn almost on the courtroom steps on the afternoon of 6 March. Accepting that when a complaint is made it has to be investigated and heard, I will not raise any questions about the original process.

However, in relation to the Appeal, please would the Leader answer the following questions:

1. How many officer hours were involved in dealing with the Appeal once it was received at the County Council, including answering the long and detailed submission by Mr Pitt and his representative. Please also

include the time of those officers who were witnesses to the original incident and were therefore involved in preparation for the Appeal.

2. On the basis that if they were not dealing with the Appeal, officers would have been carrying out their "day job", please quantify the financial costs to the Council, and therefore to the residents of Surrey, of dealing with the appeal. I don't need an accurate figure down to the last penny as if an application for costs was being made. A round figure based on an accurate estimate will be sufficient.
3. It was necessary for the Council to instruct Counsel in relation to the Appeal hearing. Please let us know what the cost of obtaining Counsel's advice and preparation for the tribunal hearing.

**Reply:**

1. Only the Legal Services team record the hours they spend on a matter, but of course the bulk of time will have been incurred by the lawyers. Legal Services have recorded 109 hours since Mr Pitt lodged his appeal.
2. This equates to around £3,900 in staff time.
3. The Council has incurred barrister's costs of £3,525 in addition to staff time.

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHANGE AND EFFICIENCY**

**(6) MRS HAZEL WATSON (DORKING HILLS) TO ASK:**

The overall Surrey County Council energy bill for 2011/12 was £16.6 million. Surrey Council Taxpayers and businesses effectively paid the County Council's "fine" of £1.135 million for carbon credits because of the County Council's poor record on energy efficiency. Surrey residents and businesses are watching their money literally go up in smoke.

The latest indicators presented to Change and Efficiency on CO2 emissions have a red traffic light and are failing against targets. Will the Cabinet Member say what measures she will take to ensure that Surrey County Council not only meets, but exceeds, its 20% cut in CO2 emissions by March 2014 both for the sake of the environment and for the financially hard-pressed residents and businesses of the county?

**Reply:**

Surrey County Council is a mandatory participant in the Government's Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme (CRC EES) that applies to all large organisations regardless of their energy efficiency performance. The County is therefore legally obliged to pay a tax of £12 / tonne CO2 to account

for its carbon dioxide emissions released from its buildings including schools and street lighting. The penalty is a tax and not a fine.

The Council's energy bill of £16.6m is made up of:-

- Schools £10.5m that is paid directly by schools.
- Corporate £3m
- Street Lighting £3.1m

SCC has reduced energy usage by 8 % in its corporate estate at November 2011 against the 2009/10 base-year for the same set of buildings. This result is ahead of the 20% long-term target for 2013/14 and, therefore, resulting in a carbon dioxide emissions reduction of 4% over the same period.

The first year's payment of carbon allowances for 2011/12 is due to be paid to the Environment Agency in June 2012 and was estimated at £1,135,000 but this has reduced to £935,000. This figure includes a reduction of £200,000 in CRC charges for 2011/12 street lighting that was achieved due to actions taken by Estates Planning and Management officers to change the method of payment for street lights energy usage to reduce levels of carbon allowance payments.

Substantial investment in energy reduction projects is ongoing as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2011 – 2015. The maintenance team are also integrating energy efficiency improvements into planned and responsive projects relating to building fabric and services related plant such as heating boilers, lighting and roof work. Projects implemented in 2011 will impact on 2012 results and future years' energy performance.

Mitigating actions to improve carbon reduction and energy performance:-

- EPM are analysing Property Energy performance to target low performing buildings.
- A business case will be taken to Cabinet in June, recommending that an element of future years' Capital investment is brought forward and targeted at the low performing buildings to secure savings earlier in the MTFP cycle.
- An energy audit survey programme was implemented in Autumn 2011 and additional resource secured to target low performing properties.
- The County's 20% target is twice the Carbon Trust Standard and is recognised as an excellent level of performance.
- Opportunities and research undertaken into renewable energy systems to take advantage of Government incentives and deliver greater efficiencies. E.g. Wood Fuel burning, Solar PV and Thermal.
- The Energy Team are working with Schools to monitor and target their energy usage. However, schools business plans are leading to increased opening hours, which has partially offset savings.
- The CRC projects delivered this year will not realise the full savings potential until 2012/13. Prior year investment for 2010/11 was minimal.
- Street lighting tariff – The Energy Team identified an opportunity to switch rates for a limited 2 year period, identifying a first year saving of £200,000, shown above and potentially up to £400,000 in total.

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT**

### **(7) MRS JAN MASON (EPSOM AND EWELL WEST) TO ASK:**

Will the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment confirm whether the new streetlights provided by Skanska Laing are constructed with technology that enables faults such as a non-functioning light to be picked up centrally and without the need for on-site inspection or customer reference?

If such technology is built into each streetlight, will he confirm the timescale for repair of any recorded fault?

#### **Reply:**

The new lights do report their own faults automatically for the majority of faults. Each day, a report is generated showing faults and new repair jobs are loaded into the Work Order system the next morning. Once the fault has a job raised, anyone looking to report the fault via the website, will see the fault already logged (this also applies to reports made via public reporting and any scheduled inspections).

The automatic fault reporting is complemented by any road user being able to report a fault through the website or via the Contact Centre who in turn report it via the website on the caller's behalf.

The response times for repairing a fault are no different to those reported in other ways - the time starts once the report is raised. It is fair to say, however, that use of the automatic reporting feature would in most cases be sooner than relying on either a planned inspection or a report via the website. The Contractor has 6 days to attend the repair (15 days for a road with a speed limit of 40mph or above). In most cases, a repair is carried out at the first visit but where further work is required (for example to repair a power supply or replace a complete lighting column), additional time is allowed which is described in full on the Surrey County Council website.

NB: At present, all lights are "scouted" for faults at night - until all lights in an area have been upgraded we require this to cover non-automatic reporting lights. All lights are checked at night twice per month October to March and once per month April to September.

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT**

### **(8) MR EBER KINGTON (EPSOM AND EWELL NORTH) TO ASK:**

Will the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment give the details of the highways staff allocated to deal with highway issues in Epsom and Ewell, including the number of posts that are currently vacant and/or unfilled.



## **Reply:**

As part of the 2010 restructure for Environment and Infrastructure, an Area Team was created to specifically deal with local issues within Epsom and Ewell, Elmbridge and Spelthorne (known as the North-East Area Team). This enables the Team to be of sufficient size to enable flexibility as and when required for officers to work across district boundaries but be small enough to ensure local knowledge is developed and preserved. The North-East Area Team currently has four vacancies (Area Team Manager, Senior Engineer and 2 Community Highways Officers) which we are recruiting. In addition to this further support is being sought to assist with cover for one officer who is assisting part-time with Olympics issues and as part of the countywide programme, the team is looking to offer training for an apprentice. Depending upon finding suitable replacements, it is envisaged that appointments will be made by the end of April although external successful candidates may have a notice period to serve. A full breakdown is below

- 1 x Area Team Manager, (vacant as of May 2012), currently recruiting
- 1 x Senior Engineer (new role, vacant), currently recruiting
- 1 x Engineer, (Officer in post but splitting time between Olympics & traffic management work in Epsom & Ewell)
- 1 x Asst Engineer, (officer primarily dealing with Spelthorne and Elmbridge traffic management issues)
- 3 x Maintenance Engineers, (currently allocated 1 per Borough)
- 8 x CHOs (including 2 vacancies, currently recruiting)
- 1 x Apprentice (currently recruiting)

The Highways Service employs over 250 staff, many of which are involved in highways activities in Epsom and Ewell who also cover a wider geographic remit such as parking, project design, project implementation, winter service, drainage and customer support. A full breakdown of the County Council's staff is available through our organisational charts, a copy of which can be provided to the Member if required.

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND LEARNING**

### **(9) MR CHRIS FROST (EPSOM AND EWELL SOUTH EAST) TO ASK:**

Introduction of tiered sibling rules at Wallace Fields Infant and Junior schools

The results of the consultation on admissions policy for September 2013 were:

Infant school: Immediate introduction of a tiered sibling rule 197 (75.5%)  
Phased introduction of a tiered sibling rule 13 (5%)  
No change 51 (19.5%)

Junior school: Immediate introduction of a tiered sibling rule 195 (74.4%)  
Phased introduction of a tiered sibling rule 14 (5.3%)

No change 53 (20.2%)

The recommendation before the Council is to go for the phased introduction of a tiered sibling rule for both schools, a stance supported by only 5% of those consulted.

- a) In the face of such a clear result, what was the deciding factor that led to the decision to go for an option that was so poorly supported?
- b) Would he reconsider the decision and now recommend to the Council the immediate introduction of a tiered sibling rule?

**Reply:**

This response will be given orally at the meeting.

**CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND LEARNING**

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

One of the reasons given for recommending phased introduction of tiered sibling criteria at Wallace Fields, despite immediate introduction from 2013 getting overwhelming support in the recent consultation, is that the phased option is preferred by both Headteachers.

As you know, parents with children at Wallace Fields claim that:

- the Headteacher of Wallace Fields Juniors has told them that both he and the Chair of Governors in fact support immediate introduction as being the fairest solution
- he was unaware that the Cabinet had been told that he supported phased introduction.

Have you now been informed of the Headteacher's view direct?

If the Cabinet recommendation was based on incorrect or out-dated information, presumably the reasons given for their recommendations to Council will need to be amended.

How does this clarification from the Junior School affect your view on the best way forward?

Given the Infants School's preference for phased introduction, would you agree to immediate introduction in 2013 at the Junior School only?

**Reply:**

This response will be given orally at the meeting.

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT**

### **(11) MR GRAHAM ELLWOOD (GUILDFORD EAST) TO ASK:**

Regarding the recycling facilities at The Slyfield Community Recycling Facility:

- 1 Why cannot provision be made for residents disposing of larger items such as old fencing or bathroom cupboards not to have to pay the £56 surcharge levied on traders and thus avoid their having to break up such items themselves first?
- 2 Why is there no provision at Slyfield for the disposal of ink cartridges and ink toner cartridges? Residents are being told to put these in Landfill which is appalling in my view.

### **Reply:**

Waste from construction or DIY activities within the home is not classified as household waste and the council does not have to accept this waste at its community recycling centres, free of charge. To assist householders, the council does however allow this type of waste to be brought to the centres, free of charge, in a private car. If the waste is brought in a van or trailer an appropriate charge will be made at the weighbridge. This policy has been in operation for the last 15 years and was introduced to discourage traders from using the sites without payment.

Containers for recycling inkjet and toner cartridges are located at all the Surrey Community Recycling Centres, including the Slyfield site. Revenue raised from recycling these items is donated to charity. To date over £7,500 has been raised for the Wildlife Aid charity at Leatherhead.

Residents with vans or trade vehicles can use facilities if they subscribe to the SCC van permit scheme, which is free.

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT**

### **(12) MRS JAN MASON (EPSOM AND EWELL WEST) TO ASK: (2<sup>nd</sup> question)**

Will the Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment confirm the instructions given to Skanska Laing in regard to the time that street lights are dimmed.

### **Reply:**

Lights in predominantly residential areas are dimmed by 50% from 2300-0530 each day. In roads with heavier traffic, the lights are dimmed by 25% from 2300-0530. Examples of this are Horton Lane in Epsom which has 10m columns to light the road which are dimmed by 25% and also has 5m columns

to light the footpath which is set back from the road - these lights are dimmed by 50%.

There are a handful of roads where dimming commences later into the night commencing between 2300 and 0300. These are areas with some form of night time economy often in Town Centres or similar such as the High Street in Epsom where the lights remain at full power until 0200 and then dim by 25% returning to full power at 0530 with all other lights.

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR CHANGE AND EFFICIENCY**

### **(13) MR COLIN TAYLOR (EPSOM & EWELL SOUTH WEST) TO ASK: (2<sup>nd</sup> question)**

In view of the recent claims that some councils in London are paying senior staff through limited companies and that this may constitute Tax Avoidance, can the Cabinet Member confirm whether any Surrey County Council staff are paid indirectly through companies, and if so how many?

#### **Reply:**

I can confirm that no member of staff at Surrey County Council is paid indirectly through a company. This has also been confirmed by our payroll manager.

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT**

### **(14) MR COLIN TAYLOR (EPSOM & EWELL SOUTH WEST) TO ASK: (3<sup>rd</sup> question)**

A few years ago an excellent job was made of resurfacing one of the main roads in my Division. However, about 3 weeks beforehand a superb job had just been made of repainting all the white and yellow road markings and parking bays etc.

When I asked about this at the time I was told that the marking team had not been aware of the resurfacing schedule, but under the new contracts there would be improved liaison and repeats should not occur.

Currently a long residential road in my Division has been listed for much-needed resurfacing, scheduled for early summer. A couple of weeks ago a central white line was marked out for the first time since it was first surfaced more than 40 years ago and all the white road markings and yellow parking restrictions have been renewed.

Local residents are bemused and angry at the apparent waste of resources. Has there been a breakdown in liaison arrangements, or has it been found more cost-effective to cut them out?

**Reply:**

The new road marking contractor has successfully renewed road markings on thousands of roads across Surrey over the last year however it is with regret that we acknowledge in this instance the road marking renewal appears to have been completed without full consideration of the future resurfacing programmes. I can confirm that officers have learnt from previous experiences of coordinating road marking renewal and resurfacing and over the last year have spent considerable time with the new contractors going through the details of future resurfacing programmes to try and avoid situations like this occurring. It is apparent that this regular liaison has not completely addressed the issue and officers will consider if any other action can be taken in future to further mitigate the risk.