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Agenda and Reports

for the meeting of

THE COUNTY COUNCIL

to be held on

13 OCTOBER 2015

SUPPLEMENTARY – Members' Questions

7 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

(Pages 1
- 10)

- (1) The Leader of the Council or the appropriate Member of the Cabinet or the Chairman of a Committee to answer any questions on any matter relating to the powers and duties of the County Council, or which affects the county.

(Note: Notice of questions in respect of the above item on the agenda must be given in writing, preferably by e-mail, to Anne Gowing in Democratic Services by 12 noon on Wednesday 7 October 2015)

- (2) Cabinet Member Briefings on their portfolios

These will be circulated by email to all Members prior to the County Council meeting, together with the Members' questions and responses.

There will be an opportunity for Members to ask questions.

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Thank you for your co-operation

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**TUESDAY 13 OCTOBER 2015****QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED UNDER THE PROVISIONS
OF STANDING ORDER 10.1****MR DAVID HODGE, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL****(1) MR ROBERT EVANS (STANWELL & STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK:**

What discussions have taken place with Surrey's Police and Crime Commissioner regarding the possibility of him taking joint responsibility for both the Police and the Fire and Rescue Services?

Reply:

Under current legislation it is not possible for the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to take on the responsibilities of the local fire and rescue authority and I have not had any discussions with Surrey's PCC regarding this matter.

On 11 September 2015, Government published a consultation looking at ways to enable closer working between emergency services. One of the proposals under consideration in the consultation is whether Government should remove this barrier and legislate to enable Police and Crime Commissioners to take on the responsibilities of the fire and rescue authority in their area which can be implemented if there is a good case and local will for this to happen.

The Council will be responding to the consultation, and the Resident Experience Board (which Mr Evans is a member of) will have the opportunity to feed into this response at their meeting on 16 October 2015.

MR DAVID HODGE, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**(2) MRS FIONA WHITE (GUILDFORD WEST) TO ASK:**

In view of the difficulties this Council has in recruiting staff, especially in the areas of social care, and the impact of high housing costs on people living in Surrey and their children, would you agree with me that there is an urgent need for a house building programme in the county of affordable housing both to rent and to buy? Would you tell Members what actions this Council is taking in partnership with Districts and Boroughs across Surrey to identify the need and to help to meet it?

Reply:

We have invested in a raft of measures over the last two years and continue to refresh this on a regular basis. Initiatives include a Social Work Academy, new Career Grade for Children's Social Workers, a nation-wide recruitment campaign for Assistant Team Managers and experienced Social Workers (currently on-going), help with resources for new workers who move into Surrey to help them settle in. And the latest initiative is a "Refer a Friend" scheme which pays a modest finder fee to anyone who refers someone to work for Surrey as a social worker or occupational therapist (OT).

As regards help with housing, there are a number of government “Help to Buy” initiatives, as follows:

- Shared ownership: new-build and re-sales
 - Maximum household income of £60,000 (up to £85,000 for London area)
 - Normally first time buyers
- Rent to buy: rent 20% below market value with option to move to shared ownership
 - Maximum household income of £60,000

Priority to existing serving forces and social housing tenants or those with a local priority

- Equity loans: 5% deposit, 20% Govt equity loan, 75% mortgage
 - New build only
 - Maximum house price of £600,000
 - Not just first time buyers

Other support we are currently exploring is as follows:

For new staff appointments re-locating to the area:

- Signposting to access private rented sector options
- Affordable rent options
- Help with rental deposit/first month’s rent due before salary payment
- Further help with childcare costs e.g. nursery deposits
- Additional support for overseas/long range candidates
- Partnership with local estate agents and Registered Providers (RPs)
- Encouraging staff to buy/access long tenancies in the area as then more likely to stay with Surrey
- Temporary short term options to support short term project work and specialist locums
- Engaging regularly with local Boroughs and Districts to encourage them to recognise the need for affordable housing for public sector staff who provide public services to local communities in their housing policies and local plans
- For developers and registered providers to see public sector staff as good targets for successful mixed use developments
- Promoting existing help to buy schemes through recruitment and internally

The devolution prospectus for the Three Southern Counties identifies that one of the major contributors to the economy of the area realising its full potential is to increase housing delivery and land supply and in particular to address the need for affordable and starter homes. The rationale is precisely to enable more people to move into jobs that use their skills and to live close to where they want to work. We expect that housing will be a priority issue in the devolution discussion with Government.

MR DAVID HODGE, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

(3) MR IAN BEARDSMORE (SUNBURY COMMON & ASHFORD COMMON) TO ASK:

Have the Surrey Leaders' group discussed housing supply and demand issues anytime in the last two years either in Surrey generally or in Spelthorne, specifically?

Reply:

Surrey Leaders have discussed housing supply on a number of occasions in the context of a strategic approach to planning for Surrey as a whole. There have been no discussions relating to individual boroughs.

MR JOHN FUREY, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND FLOODING

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

I understand that there are gullies throughout Surrey that are not recorded on the County Council's asset register and are therefore not emptied as part of the cyclic gully cleansing programme. Will the Cabinet Member give a commitment that all drains and gullies on County Council roads will be identified and included on the asset register and thus included in the cleansing programme contract by 31 March 2016?

Reply:

Surrey has over 169,000 recorded gully assets which are all programmed to be regularly cleaned. The programme is designed to clean those gullies prone to blockages more frequently and provides an appropriate level of cleaning to those gullies that do not get blocked, thereby using resources efficiently. Whilst we are confident that the vast majority of the gully asset is known to us and included on the cleaning programme, it is perhaps un-surprising on an asset of this scale that we continue to identify new gullies on the highway network that haven't previously been cleaned. These are identified through two principle routes. The contractor is expected to record and clean any missing gullies found within roads included on the programme as part of their cyclical cleansing works. However, on the rare occasion that a road is found to be missing entirely from the cleansing programme, the Local Highways Team have a gully machine made available to them that enables these assets to be mapped and cleaned. Once recorded, the assets are automatically included in the normal cyclical cleansing programme and will receive regular cleans thereafter.

It is important that any concerns about missing or blocked gullies are reported to the Local Highways Team, who will investigate and take appropriate action to ensure that the gullies are included in the cyclical programme. I am aware that concern has been expressed about several roads in the Dorking area, and these are expected to be attended to by the Local Highways Team. As identification of missing assets is dependent upon them being raised through either of the routes described, I am afraid that no guarantee can be given that all assets will be included in the cleansing programme by the end of March 2016.

DENISE LE GAL, CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS SERVICES AND RESIDENT EXPERIENCE

(5) MR EBER KINGTON (EWELL COURT, AURIOL & CUDDINGTON) TO ASK:

In September, a resident contacted me and asked for a copy of the recent OFSTED Reports published in June and August which focussed on Children's Services and the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board. I visited the website in order to provide him with a link and typed the following into the search engine:

- Ofsted
- Ofsted Inspection
- Ofsted Inspection of Children's services
- Children's Services Ofsted Inspection
- Children's Social Care Ofsted Inspection
- Child Protection Ofsted Inspection
- Safeguarding Ofsted Inspection
- Surrey Safeguarding Children's Board
- Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding

None of the searches took me direct to these major Ofsted Reports. Any mention of Ofsted took me to factual information on OFSTED's work and role, or educational information, or pages of listed items which contained one of the words I had typed in the search engine. In the end I abandoned my search.

I contacted the Surrey County Council (SCC) Web Team who, after their own search, confirmed that there is no direct link to the Ofsted Reports or any search engine access.

I was referred to the Communications Team who provided me with a link to the relevant pages but were not sure why the search does not come up with these links.

1. Would the Cabinet Member for Business Services and Resident Experience agree with me that, for a Council committed to openness and transparency, this a serious failing in regard to the public accessibility of key information on a major public concern?
2. Would she also clarify with the Service Communications Teams that create content for the website the importance of tagging their pages with relevant keywords to ensure accurate search results?
3. Would she also arrange for a review of the front page of the website so that, alongside the dedicated sections directing residents to the most popular requests and pages, there is also a section on the most important and current service issues engaging the public, the Council and the media, with direct links to the relevant information?

Reply:

1. Surrey County Council is committed to being completely open and transparent. A link to the Ofsted Report and the subsequent action plan have been sent to over 200 individuals including all Members, districts and borough leaders and chief executives, MPs, all schools in Surrey including independent schools, health and police contacts, the Health and Wellbeing Board, Safeguarding Board, Care

Council, DfE, Ofsted, unions, chairs of governors and Further Education Colleges. It was also sent to Surrey media.

A wide range of channels have been used to communicate the report and action plan including Communicate (Surrey Members), Children's Schools and Families newsletter, Issues monitor (internal and external readers), Chief Executive's weekly email to the whole organisation and Schools Bulletin and the website.

There is a dedicated page on the County Council website including the report, action plan and improvement programme in the social care and health section. There is also a page under children's social care, "Children's social care Ofsted inspections 2015". If Ofsted or Ofsted Report is entered in the search it is clearly accessible as the third search result.

2. I will ask the appropriate officers to re-emphasise the importance of clear and accurate tagging when putting information on the website.
3. When designing web pages there is extensive testing and engagement with users to establish content and format of the pages, especially for the home page. We aim to ensure the information on the home page includes the most important and current service issues engaging the public, the Council and the media, with direct links to the relevant information. However, I will ask the web team to look at the way the home page information and signposting is structured to ensure more intuitive access to important information, such as Ofsted reports.

MR JOHN FUREY, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND FLOODING

(6) MR STUART SELLECK (EAST MOLESEY & ESHER) TO ASK:

1. How much money did Kier pay to Surrey County Council in 2014/15 for underperformance against their set performance indicators?
2. How much money has Kier paid and how much money is owed to the Council for underperformance in 2015/16?

Reply:

Surrey Highways has not identified any significant underperformance issues with Kier contract in 15/16. In the last year they have delivered their key strategic objectives including:

- Project Horizon is on track with 50% of schemes complete and £7m savings delivered to date;
- Over 70,000 defects (mostly potholes) have been repaired in the last year, with over 85% repaired permanently within 20 working days of being reported;
- The 15/16 ITS programme is on track with 50% of schemes completed on-site and the majority on course to be completed by March
- The major transport improvement schemes in Redhill and Walton town centres have been completed on time, quality and budget expectations
- Winter gritting was delivered last year to standards and Kier are fully prepared for this year's winter programme
- New processes have been implemented for minor planned works and residents communications to improve overall delivery

To maintain operational performance, the Kier contract has two distinct control mechanisms:

Task Completion Certificate:

All schemes requested by Surrey Highways must have a formal written approval by an SCC engineer before the scheme invoice is paid. For all work funded by Local Committees this is approved by a local highways engineer, with any centrally funded schemes approved by a Works Delivery engineer. If the engineer is not happy with any element of the scheme they can withhold payment until quality issues are resolved. The contract allows the engineer to withhold 15% for snagging issues (such as signs not removed or minor defects), or 100% withheld payment if scheme has significant flaws. In the last 12 months approximately 5% of schemes have had their payment withheld, which is line with industry expectations. All issues have then been resolved to SCC satisfaction. Consequently there is no money “owed” to SCC as Surrey Highways does not pay any invoice until work is fully delivered to its satisfaction.

Profit Allocation:

Kier profit is paid separately from delivery of schemes. This ensures SCC senior management only approve Kier profit based upon achievement of 28 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) . A monthly contract performance board, with equal representation from Local Highways and Asset Management, review Kier's monthly profit application. Based upon pre-agreed targets, the SCC board can award between 20% to 100% of Kier's monthly profit and overhead allocation. In the first quarter of this year, following board assessment, Kier achieved 76% of their available profit. The SCC Performance Board withheld the remainder due to failures in:

- a) Not permanently repairing damage to council property (caused by 3rd parties) within agreed timescales impacting on network condition
- b) Programming and communications issues impacting on resident experience of highways

The conclusions of the monthly performance board and overall delivery of Kier strategic target therefore indicate that Kier continues to meet pre- agreed SCC level of performance, However, as would be expected, there is always room for further improvement.

If you have any specific scheme or performance issues then please refer them to the Area Highway Manager. The Area Highway Manager cannot only investigate to confirm resolution but also informs the monthly Performance Board and consequently any identified ongoing performance issues would be reflected in any future profit assessment.

DENISE LE GAL, CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS SERVICES AND RESIDENT EXPERIENCE

(7) MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:

This question concerns Surrey County Council's assessment of the budget implications of the government's new “National Living Wage”, particularly the costs of retaining the same level of staffing within social care provision in Surrey.

- Could you provide a breakdown of the number of people employed both directly by Surrey County Council and by companies contracted to Surrey County Council, by service area, who are currently paid below the new National Living Wage of £7.20 to be introduced from April 2016?
- Please provide a breakdown, again by service area, as to what the additional annual staff costs will be once the new £7.20 National Living Wage is introduced in the next financial year.
- As any increase in these costs has been required by changes to Central Government policy, could the Council assure its residents that the Council will be seeking additional funding from Central Government to meet these increased staff costs?

Reply:

The introduction of the National Living Wage, which was announced by the Chancellor in his first budget of a majority Conservative government, will significantly improve the pay of many workers in this country, and is an important part of the direction of travel to move the UK to a high pay, low tax economy. As has been widely reported in the press, this will have a significant impact on the public services, particularly providers of social care.

Currently the council's minimum grade point is above the national minimum wage of £7.20, and this is likely to be the case for a number of years. Therefore the council does not directly employ any staff under this rate. However, we are aware that some of our providers, especially in the area of social care may do so. We do not know the number of staff this will affect as we cannot know our suppliers pay rates for individual employees, nor their age. Remember the National Living Wage only applies to employees over the age of 24 years.

Officers have analysed the council's contracts with care providers to estimate the potential impact on the council, and used a model developed with other local authorities. On the basis of the key assumptions in this model, the council could be facing a multi million pound budget pressure from 2016/17, which would grow in future years as the national living wage rate increases. The council will continue to work hard to manage budget pressures.

MR DAVID HODGE, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

**(8) MRS FIONA WHITE (GUILDFORD WEST) TO ASK:
2nd question**

The Leader has recently appointed a fifth Cabinet Associate member. What is the additional cost per annum for this post and from which budget will it be funded? Does the Leader have any plans to appoint any more Cabinet Associates?

Reply:

As Members are aware Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Wellbeing, is currently on long-term sick leave. Linda Kemeny, Cabinet Member for Schools, Skill and Educational Achievement has been covering Clare's responsibilities and I appointed Mary Lewis to the position of Cabinet Associate in order to provide temporary support for Linda. During this time, Mary Lewis will receive an allowance as per the Member Allowances Scheme agreed by this council, which will be funded from the same budget as existing allowances.

Given the importance of our Children's services and the need to provide strong leadership in order to drive improvements in this area, I trust that Members will agree that this is a prudent appointment.

MR MIKE GOODMAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

**(9) MR IAN BEARDSMORE (SUNBURY COMMON & ASHFORD COMMON) TO ASK:
2nd question**

Even after the completion of the Charlton incinerator there will still be a significant amount of Surrey's waste going to Kent for disposal. What is the long term solution for dealing with this waste?

Reply:

SITA Surrey's contract with the Allington Waste to Energy Plant in Kent expires in March 2019. Now construction of the Eco Park is underway we will work with SITA Surrey to consider what options might be available to deal with this waste following expiry of this contract.

MR MIKE GOODMAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

**(10) MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:
2nd question**

1. Could you confirm how the Waste Budget item in the Surrey County Council Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) is currently split between:
 - (a) waste reduction, reuse, recycling, composting and anaerobic digestion, and:
 - (b) waste disposal, via landfill and incineration.

Please could you provide a breakdown of each of these numbers, including setting out how much is included within the annual sum paid through the long-term waste contract with SITA (Surrey Waste Management Ltd).

2. Could you provide a breakdown of the planned savings in each of year of the current MTFP on:
 - (a) waste reduction, reuse, recycling, composting and anaerobic digestion, and:
 - (b) landfill and incineration.

Please can you provide a breakdown of each of these numbers, including setting out how much is included within the sum paid through the long-term waste contract with SITA (Surrey Waste Management Ltd).

3. Could you confirm how much is planned to be saved through the consulted changes to the Community Recycling Centres across Surrey.

Reply:

Officers have already provided you with answers to your first question. With regard to your second question, savings are against the budget as a whole, not against these individual headings. For example much of the savings activities relate to working with districts and boroughs to increase the amount of material that is reused, recycled and composted. If this is achieved, our expenditure on reuse, recycling and anaerobic digestion will increase and our expenditure on landfill and incineration will decrease, resulting in an overall net saving. It is therefore not possible to provide a breakdown of these numbers.

With regard to your third question our savings plans include reducing the cost of running the CRC service by £1.8 million.

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