

# Cabinet- Supplementary Agenda



Date & time	Place	Contact	Chief Executive
Tuesday, 26 January 2021 at 2.00 pm	MS Teams, Remote Meeting	Vicky Hibbert or Huma Younis Tel: 020 8541 9229 or 020 8213 2725  vicky.hibbert@surreycc.gov.uk or huma.younis@surreycc.gov.uk	Joanna Killian
			 We're on Twitter: @SCCdemocracy

**Cabinet Members:** Mrs Natalie Bramhall, Mr Mel Few, Mr Matt Furniss, Dr Zully Grant-Duff, Mrs Julie Iles OBE, Mr Colin Kemp, Mrs Mary Lewis, Mrs Sinead Mooney, Mr Tim Oliver and Ms Denise Turner-Stewart

**Deputy Cabinet Members:** Miss Alison Griffiths, Mr Edward Hawkins, Miss Marisa Heath, Mr Mark Nuti and Mrs Becky Rush

## Supplementary Agenda

### 4 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

#### a Members' Questions

(Pages 1 - 2)

A question has been received from Mrs Angela Goodwin. A response from Cabinet is attached.

#### b Public Questions

(Pages 3 - 4)

Two public questions have been received. A response from Cabinet is attached.

#### c Petitions

(Pages 5 - 6)

One petition with 812 signatures has been received. It requests that Surrey County Council rewards their social care staff appropriately during the pandemic. A response to the petition is attached.

### 8 REPORTS FROM SELECT COMMITTEES, TASK GROUPS, LOCAL COMMITTEES AND OTHER COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL

(Pages 7 - 10)

Cabinet to consider the following:

- A. Scrutiny of 2021/22 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2025/26 (Cabinet response attached).

**Joanna Killian**  
**Chief Executive**  
Monday, 25 January 2021

**CABINET – 26 JANUARY 2021****PROCEDURAL MATTERS****Members Questions****Question (1) Angela Goodwin (Guildford North):**

Some building-based services for adults with learning disabilities are continuing to run and are providing an essential lifeline for carers. These services are of course being delivered according to strict protocols to ensure the safety and health of both staff and those attending. The implementation of lateral flow testing for asymptomatic staff would help ensure that these facilities are maintained during these difficult times and I understand that such a scheme is in the pipeline, with pilot studies planned for February.

1. Given the very high rates of infection in the county and that the scheme has already been approved, is it not possible to bring forward the start date of implementation by building on the experiences of other authorities who have already introduced this testing?
2. Please give some detail as to who will be prioritised for testing, how the tests will be carried out and whether particular attention will be paid to engaging with those communities who are traditionally harder to reach?
3. Will the implementation of lateral flow testing be affected by?
  - a. Concerns over the accuracy of the tests?
  - b. Focus on the vaccination programme

**Reply:**

1. We share your concern about the high rates of COVID-19 infection across the county, and we will continue to use all the tools available to us in our efforts to drive case rates down. Lateral flow tests are one of those tools, if used in combination with other vital infection prevention control measures such as wearing appropriate PPE, that could potentially help in reducing transmission of the virus. Since approval of the targeted community testing programme by the local governance structure of the COVID-19 response, the public health team have been working on all the elements required to successfully implement this at the necessary scale within Surrey. The public health team is in regular contact with multiple other local authorities, ensuring that we are using lessons learnt from their programmes to inform the set-up of our own. We have submitted our application to the DHSC and hope to have our initial asymptomatic testing sites live in the first phase of roll-out in February, before extending the service more widely across the county. This is a large-scale operation with lots of logistical complexities, including the setup of multiple sites, recruitment of a large workforce and co-ordination of multiple partners across the system, and we are working hard to get this service up and running as quickly as possible. It is therefore not possible that we will be able to bring forward the start date for implementation any sooner than is already planned.

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2. We intend to initially make this testing available to those people who are required to leave home for work and who are unable to access asymptomatic testing through other routes, in alignment with recent national government directives. This will include essential workers, including staff in early years settings who are not covered by the roll-out of asymptomatic lateral flow testing in primary, school-based nursery and maintained nursery school staff. The tests will be carried out at asymptomatic testing sites. We are not currently able to offer onsite testing in workplaces as part of community testing. We are also in the process of setting up access to testing via community pharmacies and are also exploring whether we can use mobile testing sites to supplement these sites. One of the aims of our targeted community testing is to increase access to testing for vulnerable and hard to reach population groups. We will be using targeted communications strategy to help reach our target populations, and we also hope to use a mobile testing site or pop up testing site model to reach specific population groups.
- 3a. We are aware of concerns regarding the accuracy of lateral flow tests. If someone tests positive on a lateral flow test, it is highly likely that they have COVID-19. This is especially the case as the prevalence of the virus in the community at the moment is high. If someone tests negative on a lateral flow test however, there is a chance they might still have COVID-19. This is because the evidence so far has shown that there is a risk of false negatives in cases of lower viral load, but the tests are more able to pick up positive cases with higher viral loads. For this reason, we are advising that a negative test should not be used as reassurance for settings or individuals to modify infection and prevention control measures or behaviours intended to suppress the virus. There is some evidence that individuals with higher viral loads are more infectious, therefore it is important that lateral flow tests are able to pick up these infectious individuals. The primary aim of this testing is to identify these asymptomatic positive cases that would otherwise have not been identified, to ensure these individuals and their contacts self-isolate appropriately.
- 3b. There is co-ordination of targeted community testing programme with the vaccination programme as part of the system wide response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Appropriate resources are being allocated to enable its delivery alongside the vaccination programme.

**Mrs Sinead Mooney**  
**Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health**  
**26 January 2021**

## CABINET – 26 JANUARY 2021

## PROCEDURAL MATTERS

**Public Questions****Question (1): Mr Paul Kennedy**

How many reports have been received in response to Surrey County Council's new service for reporting breaches of COVID-19 regulations?

**Reply:**

Thank you for your question.

As of 21 January 2021, we have had 19 different reports notifying us of a total of 31 different breaches through the new online reporting service. The reporting form went live on the late afternoon of Thursday 12 January 2021, so operational for just over a week.

- Types of breaches being identified through this route so far include:
- Businesses open and trading when they should be closed
- Staff and / or customers not wearing face masks
- Breaches of social distancing guidance
- Workers threatened with dismissal if they self-isolate
- Workers who have tested positive continuing to work
- Alcohol sold as part of take away meal

We continue to get reports of breaches from other routes. For example, in the period 19 December 2020, when the latest lockdown started, until 11 January 2021, we had received 51 reports notifying us of breaches. The new online reporting is an addition to other routes to complain about breaches.

**Mr Tim Oliver  
Leader of the Council  
26 January 2021**

**Question (2): Ms Elizabeth Daly**

A Bookham resident recently notified me that they had received an enforcement notice under section 154 of the Highways Act 1980 for an overgrown hedge which had been reported 5 months earlier, even though the hedge had in fact been cut back promptly in response to the initial report.

How many such reports were received last year, how many enforcement notices were issued, what was the average delay between Surrey County Council receiving the initial report and issuing an enforcement notice, and, when there is a delay, what steps have been taken to confirm that the evidential basis for such enforcement notices remains valid?

**Reply:**

It is the responsibility of property / landowners adjacent to the public highway to ensure that vegetation does not encroach on the highway from their land. Most property owners/

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landowners are responsible and ensure that their boundary is always maintained. Unfortunately, where it is not this can create an obstruction which impacts on people legitimately using the public highway. This can be especially hazardous for those with visual or mobility impairments. The County Council would much prefer to not have to undertake any enforcement but unfortunately this is sometimes needed.

Problems are either reported to us by the public or noted by Highways Officers. The normal process (prior to the current pandemic) is if possible, for a Highway Officer to informally approach the property owner and ask that they cut the vegetation back. In most cases that is the end of the matter. However, if the owner is unavailable or does not act, Officers serve something known as a Section 154 notice (via a card). Photographs are taken as a record. This requires action to be taken in 14 days. Officers will undertake an inspection after 14 days and if necessary, a follow up letter will be sent. It is only if action is still not taken that we will instruct our legal team to start formal proceedings. In 2020 our legal team had to become involved 24 times. There can be a delay depending on work priorities of our legal team, but if a resident makes contact with us (the S154 card and letter explains how) checks will be undertaken and any proceeding stopped, and the matter closed.

In 2020 we logged 12,291 enquires related to trees and vegetation. Of these 3,548 specifically stated overgrown vegetation and a further 2,967 as a related safety hazard. It is not possible to say how many S154 notices were issued, as our system cannot search for this and many of the enquires may not have needed enforcement action. As explained enforcement is a last resort and we never knowingly undertake enforcement on an owner who adequately maintains their boundary.

**Mr Matt Furniss**  
**Cabinet Member for Transport**  
**26 January 2021**

## Petition to: Reward social care staff appropriately during the pandemic

### The Petition

"We the undersigned petition Surrey County Council to Reward their social care staff appropriately during the pandemic".

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With the initial Covid-19 outbreak, the council agreed to pay an enhanced rate to frontline care staff working at weekends, bank holidays and in the evenings. This continued until the end of September when it was stopped (aside from those doing overtime). Staff working in care homes across Surrey deserve medals for working throughout this pandemic and now into the second total lockdown. Many Surrey residents will have 'clapped for carers'. Now is the time to do more than clap - please sign this petition to show real recognition to these workers. We are calling on SCC to re-introduce the enhanced pay rates to care staff as a minimum and also to consider a reward payment (a Christmas Bonus?) for all staff working on the frontline.

**Submitted by Paul Couchman of UNISON**

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### Response:

I completely agree with you that Surrey care staff have responded magnificently to the challenges posed by the pandemic. This was especially true in the first wave, when we had to learn very quickly about how to manage the virus, and sadly we are now having to deal with another crisis with a new variant which appears to be more infectious than before. In March last year we temporarily reinstated unsocial hours payments that had been removed for the vast majority of staff through the council's Surrey Pay 2016 negotiations; this action was taken to ensure that all staff working unsocial hours were treated in a similar way during the initial peak months of the pandemic. Because of the uncertainty about how the pandemic was going to develop this was for an initial three month period, which was extended until 30 September. Temporary enhancements have now been resumed from 1 January 2021 in response to this latest phase of the pandemic and will remain in place for all staff working unsocial hours on Covid-19 related matters until 31 March, at which point the intention is to move to a more sustainable scheme (the detail of which is currently under negotiation with the council's recognised Trades Unions for pay bargaining purposes). We also agreed a thank you payment of £250.00 to staff who had delivered hands on care in the period, not just in Adult Social Care. This was paid before Christmas.

**Mrs Sinead Mooney**  
**Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health**  
**26 January 2021**

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**CABINET- 26 January 2021**

**CABINET RESPONSE TO THE SCRUTINY OF 2021/22 DRAFT BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO 2025/26**

**Recommendations:**

1. In order to understand the long-term benefits of its capital investments the final 2021/22 - 2025/26 MTFS presented to Council by the Cabinet in February should include clarity on the expected outcomes, benefits or measures of success of the capital programme
2. The Cabinet to work with each district and borough council to agree the assumptions about receipts for council tax and business rates to ensure the 2021/22 County Council budget is based on robust figures

**Kay Hammond**

**Chairman of the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning Select Committee**

**Nick Harrison**

**Chairman of the Resources and Performance Select Committee**

**Bernie Muir**

**Chairman of the Adults and Health Select Committee**

**John O'Reilly**

**Chairman of the Community, Environment & Highways Select Committee**

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**Response:**

1. Cabinet welcomes the report and recommendations from the Select Committees and values the important role that scrutiny plays in arriving at a robust set of budget proposals. Both recommendations have been reflected in Cabinet's budget recommendations to Council.

**Capital Programme Outcomes**

2. The Capital Programme plays a key part in achieving the Council's corporate priorities; as well as delivering service plans, the Transformation Programme and efficiencies in the revenue budget. Additionally, a number of schemes are designed to safeguard homes and businesses and grow a sustainable economy; improving the lives of Surrey residents and securing the longer-term sustainability of the Council's funding.
3. The 2021/22 Final Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2025/26 sets out these benefits, alongside the robust evaluation process that capital proposals follow before inclusion in the budget. Business cases are considered by Strategic Capital Groups for Property, Infrastructure and IT and then Capital Programme Panel (which brings together a thorough review of all business cases for the entire Council) before being recommended to Cabinet for approval. This evaluation process draws out costs, benefits, risks and deliverability and these factors are presented to Members as part of Cabinet reports seeking approval for each scheme.
4. Cabinet's capital budget recommendations capture intended outcomes on a programme-wide basis, with major allocations explicitly linked to corporate priorities and the Community Vision for 2030.

5. Alongside the approved budget, the capital pipeline includes proposals developed to a stage where they can be earmarked against a flexible funding allocation built into the wider Capital Programme. The pipeline allows projects to be approved during the year, subject to the same robust process for business case approval as approved schemes. The detailed benefits and outcomes of these schemes will be documented when they are presented to Cabinet for approval.

### **Council Tax and Business Rate Assumptions**

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6. Covid-19 has led to an extraordinary year for Council Tax and Business Rates. Usually stable, both now represent a key challenge in the development of a predictable budget. As recognised by the Select Committees, District and Borough Councils play a key part in determining the budget for both sources of funding; particularly in respect of Council Tax where the County has no choice but to set its budget according to District and Borough estimates.
7. An increased level of engagement with District and Borough Council colleagues rightly reflects the increased uncertainty, volatility and risk of collection and the impact this has on our funding. Enhanced engagement this year includes:
- Monthly sharing of Business Rates and Council Tax collection rates, modelled to project the full-year outcome
  - Analysis shared across all District and Boroughs; with fortnightly discussions amongst Section 151 Officers
  - Regular information sharing on the impact of Government Covid-19 mitigation measures
  - Jointly commissioned expert advice to set out the risk of reduced Business Rates resulting from Covid-19
  - Focussed workshops on technical aspects of the collection fund
8. Continued and early engagement with District and Borough Councils has led to early information sharing of tax base information for 2021/22 for all eleven Councils, reflected in these budget proposals. Legislation allows District and Borough Councils until the end of January to finalise their estimates. Whilst no material change is expected, officers will continue close liaison until the numbers are confirmed.

### **Response to wider aspects of the Select Committees' report**

9. Cabinet welcomes the opportunity to respond to the wider findings of the Select Committees, in particular to the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture Committee's comments on efficient utilisation of funding.

### **Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture**

10. Along with many other Local Authorities Surrey County Council has a significant overspend in the High Needs Block in order to support increasing demand for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Improvement in practice along with our investment in the Early Intervention Fund and a new Graduated Response approach is building capacity in schools to enable an earlier response to children's needs.
11. Many of the Early Intervention projects are in their infancy and some have not started yet, for example the new Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) contract will start from April. Following implementation, we will be able to assess how

thresholds for support are applied and the impact on providing for need. In 2020/21 the pandemic has increased need and families who have not previously accessed SCC services are now using our services.

12. Our capital investment programme will provide places in county and closer to home for our children and young people whilst also reducing unit cost and improving outcomes. We also continue to engage with Government to make the case for increased funding to support Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities provision.
13. We are relentlessly focusing on better services which will deliver better outcomes and be better value. This is evidenced by the recent review of the Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities: Accelerated Programme Plan where DfE and NHS colleagues confirm that we have made clear and sustained progress and our work is having a positive impact on the quality of service delivery in Surrey.

**Communities, Environment and Highways:**

14. The Select Committee raised a concern on the deliverability of an efficiency relating to Highways insurance claims; drawing attention to the impact of Covid-19 on reduced claims in 2020/21. Cabinet acknowledge that improving trend has benefitted this year from the travel restrictions imposed by the pandemic, however the efficiency reflects a reduction in insurance claims over recent years linked to the benefits of increased investment in the network and a reduced impact from severe weather events.

**Reply from Mr Mel Few**  
**Cabinet Member for Resources**  
**26 January 2021**

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