


Notice of Meeting

Cabinet- Supplementary Agenda



<u>Date and Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Web:</u>
Tuesday, 26 September 2023 2.00 pm	Council Chamber, Woodhatch Place, 11 Cockshot Hill, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 8EF	Huma Younis or Sarah Quinn huma.younis@surreycc.gov.uk or sarah.quinn@surreycc.gov.uk	Council and democracy Surreycc.gov.uk  @SCCdemocracy

Cabinet Members: Natalie Bramhall, Clare Curran, Kevin Deanus, Matt Furniss, Marisa Heath, David Lewis, Sinead Mooney, Mark Nuti, Tim Oliver and Denise Turner-Stewart

Deputy Cabinet Members: Maureen Attewell, Jordan Beech, Paul Deach

AGENDA

4 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

a MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

(Pages
1 - 6)

There are four Member questions. A response from Cabinet is attached.

b PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(Pages
7 - 12)

There are four public questions. A response from Cabinet is attached.

**Joanna Killian
Chief Executive**

Published: Monday, 25 September 2023

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QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

Cabinet and most committees will consider questions by elected Surrey County Council Members and questions and petitions from members of the public who are electors in the Surrey County Council area.

Please note the following regarding questions from the public:

1. Members of the public can submit one written question to a meeting by the deadline stated in the agenda. Questions should relate to general policy and not to detail. Questions are asked and answered in public and cannot relate to “confidential” or “exempt” matters (for example, personal or financial details of an individual); for further advice please contact the committee manager listed on the front page of an agenda.
2. The number of public questions which can be asked at a meeting may not exceed six. Questions which are received after the first six will be held over to the following meeting or dealt with in writing at the Chairman’s discretion.
3. Questions will be taken in the order in which they are received.
4. Questions will be asked and answered without discussion. The Chairman or Cabinet members may decline to answer a question, provide a written reply or nominate another Member to answer the question.
5. Following the initial reply, one supplementary question may be asked by the questioner. The Chairman or Cabinet members may decline to answer a supplementary question.

CABINET – 26 SEPTEMBER 2023**PROCEDURAL MATTERS****Members Questions****Question (1) Catherine Baart**

What annual attrition rate is assumed by Ringway for temporary, reusable metal road signs. How does this compare to other counties? What annual cost is assumed for provision of such signs by Ringway, which is passed on in the contract with SCC, and what downward pressures exist to reuse signs rather than commission new ones?

Reply:

Ringway do not measure the attrition rate of temporary metal road signs; however, they would expect to replace less than 15% of these types of signs each year due to normal wear and tear, or damage. This would also be the assumption for other similar local authority contracts.

There is no direct relationship between the cost of the provision of signs to Ringway and the costs incurred by Surrey. The provision of temporary traffic management is charged via the agreed schedule of rates that form part of the contract between Ringway and Surrey CC, so no direct costs are passed on with regards to signs in isolation.

Ringway do use a few different sign types and reuse them until they have reached the end of their serviceable condition. When a sign reaches the end of its serviceable life, the sign is recovered into our depots for recycling.

Kevin Deanus**Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience****26 September 2023****Question (2) Catherine Baart**

Please explain whether a “designated conservation verge” is the same as a Blue Heart verge. Please can the list of Blue Heart verges/ conservation verges be published on the council’s website, so members of the public know where they are. How are contractors informed about BH/conservation verges in their area and what sanctions are available if such verges are accidentally mown along with none-BH verges?

Reply:

Designated conservation verges normally make up part of the rural verge network where a conscious decision has been made to not cut the grass. These areas may be enhanced through seeding wildflowers and or other initiatives that are promoted by our Greener Futures team. In the main, these verges are not currently signed. Blue heart verges are usually not quite so extensive in size, may form part of an urban

verge and in general have been promoted by residents. Many Blue heart verges are currently signed by wooden blue plaques created by residents. Small signs are also being fabricated by the County Council and will be erected this autumn to support highlighting these areas to the public and contractors. In addition, we will look into the feasibility of making this information more publicly accessible and recorded in the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Our contractors are provided maps of where to cut. If an area is designated a blue heart or conservation verge, these maps will be updated to reflect this. The proposed signs will also act as a reminder on site for the grass cutters. None of our current contractors would deliberately cut areas where they shouldn't, but if mistakes happen, they are investigated, and additional training or other measures will be offered to minimise the risk of repeating it. Should any contractor wilfully or repeatedly ignore the measures needed to protect these sites, we would look to end any contractual relationship.

Kevin Deanus
Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience
26 September 2023

Question (3) Catherine Baart

What percentage of bus stops are damaged in Surrey? How many do not have real time bus information screens? How many should be shelters but are just poles? We have a Task and Finish group for Surrey streets – does the state of bus stops need a Task and Finish group too?

Reply:

There are circa 6,500 bus stops located in Surrey. Only a very small percentage (less than 0.25%) have any element of damage to the bus stop pole, flag, timetable case or clearway restriction plate. If any of these do become damaged, they are repaired, or if beyond repair replaced. There is therefore no backlog of bus stop repairs, noting that Members and residents can report damage to bus stops using the well-established 'highways' reporting channels available to everyone.

There are circa 1,000 passenger waiting (bus) shelters at bus stops in Surrey. The provision of bus shelters is slightly more complex, as they are provided by several bodies, including the County Council, Borough and Districts Councils (often through long term advertising contracts), Parish and Town Councils, developers, as well Transport for London on some cross boundary routes. The Council maintains the bus shelters that it owns, and if officers see or are notified of damage to a bus shelter that is not the County Council's, we ensure that the 'owner' is informed so that they can repair it.

If a request is made for a new shelter where none exists at present, we will assess passenger demand and whether there is sufficient space available to install a bus shelter, alongside how it might be funded. Funding sources include developer

funding, Community Infrastructure Levy and external funding. Local Member allocations are also a potential funding source.

There are circa 500 Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) displays in Surrey. The vast majority of these are at bus stops, helping to support passengers make more informed travel choices. Some RTPI displays are also located in busy shopping areas and at train stations, such as Wolsey Place shopping centre in Woking town centre and at the town's busy railway station.

The Council has already agreed to invest significant sums of money to improve the public transport offer to residents, working in partnership with the bus industry. This includes a £49m investment to support our Climate Change Delivery Plan objectives through an investment in more zero emission buses and minibuses, more RTPI and more bus improvement and priority measures. This serves to demonstrate the Council's commitment to improving public transport. Within this programme, we are specifically investing £1.4m to deliver up to another 150 RTPI displays in Surrey. This approach was supported in the Future Bus Service Network Review public and stakeholder consultation that ran from 3 November 2022 to 6 January 2023, and was subsequently endorsed by Cabinet on 28 March this year.

Given there is no evidence of widespread damage to bus stops, no maintenance backlog, alongside an agreed programme of investment that includes RTPI, I don't believe this warrants a specific Task and Finish Group.

Matt Furniss

Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth

26 September 2023

Question (4) Catherine Powell

1. Whilst the investment in new children's homes is welcome, the need for more places is still outstripping what is available. The costs of social care placements are rapidly rising, with a significant overspend against the budget already forecast for this financial year and increasing pressures going forward.
 - A. How are the proceeds from the sale of assets such as the former children's home Karibu in Epsom being allocated? Are they being used to buy land and property to address areas of increasing capacity need, such as for more children's homes?
 - B. How is the land available within the SCC portfolio allocated for development to address capacity requirements, for example the decisions between allocation for children's homes versus more SEND provision?
 - C. Is there a full list of SCC assets which has been reviewed to determine which assets have no potential for use to address SCC land requirements, for example Sunnyridge and Woodside in Capel? What is the process for deciding

4a which assets to sell, and what is the priority criteria and timescale for disposing of these?

Reply:

- A. The Council has committed significant capital support to the development of in-house provision but is also mindful of the need to progress at a pace which can lead to actual placements for children. Accommodation is an important strand but workforce in the Children's homes sector is a significant challenge, and this is reflected nationally, contributing to the shortages. In addition to expanding in-house provision, the Council works closely with third sector providers to encourage an increase in their provision in Surrey.

With regards to capital receipts received from the sale of assets, these are generally set against the entire capital programme to reduce overall borrowing costs which benefits the Council as a whole. Purchases or new builds are then partially funded from the general capital budgets. The current budget for new children's homes is £24.9m, this figure would far exceed any capital receipts generated by the sale of any former children's homes.

- B. In the first instance, and in line with the Council's Corporate Landlord model, a Service's particular requirements for a new building are reviewed and assessed (via a business case) to inform whether it is best value for the Council to develop or purchase a building. In the event that a building purchase best serves Service needs, then a search within the target area is carried out for suitable sites or buildings which meet Service criteria.

Council-owned assets are reviewed first, and if none prove to be suitable, then a wider search is undertaken to review available properties in the private market which fulfil Service needs.

- C. The Council's Land and Property department holds, for internal purposes, data on the Council's vacant and surplus assets; this data is comprised of key sites being marketed (or being prepped for marketing) and assets being retained pending Service or Corporate decision for use.

Where a property is declared as surplus to Service requirement, it is automatically considered for disposal. Properties marketed for disposal undergo a governance process (via Capital Programme Panel) up to Cabinet or Cabinet Member Decision before contractual terms are put in place.

Timetables for disposals are dependent on the particular asset and current market conditions and may be held back to allow added value to be secured through town planning processes.

The Sunnyridge and Woodside at Capel assets referred to, are being retained as part of the Highways A24 road alignment and improvement scheme. These assets are recommended for demolition.

Sinead Mooney
Cabinet Member for Children
and Families
26 September 2023

Natalie Bramhall
Cabinet Member for Property and Waste
26 September 2023

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CABINET – 26 SEPTEMBER 2023

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Public Questions:**Question (1): Louise Gannon**

Why was the temporary Summer Term offer of reimbursement for Independent Educational Psychologist fees only open to families where their child was having an initial EHCPNA? If children have not been assessed by an Educational Psychologist for 4 or 5 years, is it not reasonable to expect an up to date assessment takes place prior to key stage transfer, to ensure accurate, relevant data is used for informing school placement?

Reply:

The reimbursement for Independent Educational Psychologist fees was only open to families where their child was having an initial Education Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) as we are experiencing delays in this area.

The educational psychology service has retained an allocation of time to undertake assessments where this is required for children with an existing EHCP, and this is managed separately to the new EHCN assessment process.

Requests for an educational psychologist re-assessment are less frequently required and usually form part of a full reassessment which is triggered when a parent, education provider or the local authority feel that a child's needs have very significantly changed, and a multi-agency assessment is required.

There is no statutory requirement to undertake a re-assessment at key stage transfer. The local authority will carefully consider all the up-to-date information provided by professionals who directly support a child or young person and the family and child/young person's view at the annual review prior to key stage transfer and utilise this information when making a recommendation for a school placement.

If any parent or carer feels that a reassessment is required, they should raise that with their school or SEN Caseworker in order that this request can be discussed, and a way forward agreed.

Clare Curran
Cabinet Member for Education and Learning
26 September 2023

Question (2): Anna Sutherland

Is it true that staff from Taxi companies providing home school transport for Surrey's children with special educational needs and disabilities decide which assistant (where an assistant is required) to place with which child, and that these assistants are not directly assessed for suitability by Surrey? I understand from Surrey's home-school

transport team that, 'operators will inform us if they (the transport operator, i.e., a member of taxi company staff) feel a journey is not safe'.

This is extremely concerning for parents with vulnerable children. I think most of us would assume that Surrey's SEND and Transport teams work together to ensure properly trained and experienced staff are assigned to look after our children, and that Surrey at least have face to face interviews with the assistants to ensure they can actually speak English, for example. After all, on line assessments can be completed by people other than the person who ends up working with the child.

For someone who works for a taxi company to be the one who decides on which travel assistant goes with which child, and what mix of children travel together, what type of vehicle etc. is safe, for example, is something I think most SEND parents would say is a dereliction of Surrey's duty.

Reply:

All drivers and passenger assistants (PA) must be issued with an Authorised Identification Badge (AIB) in order to be contracted to work on Surrey School Travel & Assessment Team (SSTAT) routes, which once issued forms visible proof of identity and clearance to work with children and vulnerable adults on SSTAT contracts. To award an AIB the driver/PA must complete a number of assessments and checks overseen by the SSTAT.

SSTAT assumes full responsibility for ensuring that all transport contractor's staff are in possession of an Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS); have passed a face-to-face English Language test with the SSTAT; appropriate Right to Remain / Work in the U.K. checks have taken place; and, where necessary, overseas criminal record checks are undertaken.

Approved transport contractors must provide written confirmation – which is checked through audit samples - that they have recruited the driver / passenger assistant in compliance with the Surrey Safeguarding Childrens Board and Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board guidelines¹ which includes (but may not be limited to): -

- Completion of an application form.
- Collected at least two references, ideally both employment references and one from their current or last employer.
- Have a documented face to face interview with the applicant.
- Kept on record a 5-year employment history for the applicant prior to their employment with the transport contractor

All drivers and passenger assistants will have completed the Barnardo's certificate, as proof of safeguarding training. They will then be required to complete a classroom lead Comprehensive Safeguarding training course before their first AIB renewal, which are annual.

¹ [Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership \(procedures.org.uk\)](http://procedures.org.uk)
[SSAB Policy and Procedures - Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board \(surreysab.org.uk\)](http://surreysab.org.uk)
[Safer Recruitment and Recruitment and Selection Policies - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](http://surreycc.gov.uk)

When the SSTAT tender routes, they detail the individual needs of the children and the council officers setting up transport are responsible for assigning which children are added to a route and what type of vehicle is being requested. It is however the responsibility of the operator to assign staff (who have all been issued with an AIB) to these routes, as per the information that is provided by SSTAT at the time of tender.

The council's own enforcement officers maintain a regular audit on school (and contractors') premises of all badges and other contractual obligations and follow a contract management process to formally raise any concerns. Parents and school staff are invited to inspect the AIBs as often as they wish, through raising an enquiry using the below link:

[Home to school enquiry - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk)

In addition to the checks performed by the SSTAT all our contracted transport operators also have additional licensing or checks independent to SSTAT

- 8 Seat and under Passenger Private Hire and Hackney Carriages are Licensed by the Borough/District Council (or TFL in London)
- Over 8 Seats under an 'O' License from the Traffic Commissioner
- Community Transport under Section 19 Permits

Clare Curran
Cabinet Member for Education and Learning
26 September 2023

Question (3): Clare Powdrill

How many parents received reimbursement for Independent Educational Psychologist fees, following the temporary Summer Term 2023 offer? It was not at all clear on the Local Offer website how to apply for this, and repeated requests to various Surrey staff for details went unanswered.

Reply:

For the summer term, the council received around 60 requests for the use of independent psychologists' reports as part of the needs assessment of which 40 assessments were agreed for use and reimbursement was provided or is in process.

There is guidance available on the Local Offer website to support parents, carers and professionals to understand the conditions of the offer and the process to follow for reimbursement.

There is a section which is titled "How do I request Surrey use my private assessment report/ advice for the Education, Health and Care Needs assessment?"

The response indicates that "If you would like us to consider using your private Educational Psychologist assessment advice as part of the Education, Health and Care Needs assessment, please discuss this with your Case Officer in the first instance. You will need to share the private advice/ report with the Case Officer who will liaise with the Educational Psychology service regarding this. Once the advice has

been reviewed and a decision made on whether it is appropriate to use this, or further advice is needed your Case Officer will let you know.”

If agreed the Case Officer will advise parents on the process for reimbursement.

Information has been recirculated to all Case Officers to support their discussions with parents and carers in line with this guidance and the temporary arrangements.

The Local Offer website has been updated to state that the offer that was initially made for the Summer Term will be extended to the end of the Autumn Term 2023.

Clare Curran
Cabinet Member for Education and Learning
26 September 2023

Question (4): Paul Kennedy

The Mole Valley Connect demand-responsive bus sharing service, operated by Mole Valley District Council on behalf of Surrey County Council, is a great example of collaborative working between councils on behalf of our residents, now covering the whole of Mole Valley and which has recently been extended to a number of other areas across Surrey. However, it can be frustrating for residents living in adjacent areas which are still not covered.

One such example is Effingham, where residents are unable to take advantage of the services enjoyed by their Bookham neighbours, including perversely the ability to travel to Effingham Junction. Is there any prospect of the service being extended in the near future to Effingham, and if so, when?

Reply:

I am extremely encouraged by the success of the Surreyconnect Digital Demand Responsive Transport service in Mole Valley, and I welcome your recognition of this excellent scheme. The Mole Valley service started in June 2022 initially in the north and was extended across the whole of the district during June this year. Passenger feedback has been very positive with many residents undertaking trips that were simply not possible previously.

The scheme was initially established to help improve transport options for our Mole Valley residents, and this included offering a range of out of zone travel destinations for residents living within the Mole Valley zone, including Effingham Junction Station as you note. We have received several requests from our residents asking that the zone be expanded to include them. As part of the Mole Valley DDRT performance review, we will be considering all such requests and will include those areas where we believe this will be operationally feasible. There is a service review with our booking/technology provider during November and this will assist informing the future operating areas. Any changes will be implemented during Spring/Summer 2024.

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