

Notice of Meeting

Cabinet- Supplementary Agenda



| <u>Date and Time</u> | <u>Place</u> | <u>Contact</u> | <u>Web:</u> |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tuesday, 27 February 2024 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 |

AGENDA

4 PROCEDURAL MATTERS

a MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

(Pages
1 - 6)

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

b PUBLIC QUESTIONS

(Pages
7 - 10)

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

Joanna Killian
Chief Executive

Published: Monday, 26 February 2024

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Thank you for your co-operation.

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 – 27 FEBRUARY 2024**PROCEDURAL MATTERS****Members Questions:****Question (1) Catherine Powell**

The Promoting and Supporting Sustainable Economic Growth in Surrey (LEP Integration) report states that the Surrey Business Leaders Forum *‘will have a wider membership and include a diverse, local, business voice related to Surrey’s key economic strengths’*.

Can the Cabinet member advise:

- a. What the current criteria for joining the Surrey Business Leaders Forum is.
- b. How is this approved or actioned.
- c. How will participation be ‘widened’ going forward.

Reply:

Currently the Surrey Business Leaders Forum is designed to provide a forum for Surrey’s large multi-national businesses. They are members by virtue of their strategic importance in the county, as well as the regional/national economy. Further details about current membership can be found on the [Invest in Surrey](#) website.

However, we recognise that moving forward it is important that the council has in place a governance structure that has a diverse business representation reflective of all business interests in the County so that businesses can meaningfully engage with and influence council decisions. Membership of the Surrey Business Leaders Forum will therefore be broadened out through a process and campaign of open recruitment encouraging businesses and business representative organisations to submit an expression of interest. This process will invite a broader number of businesses to submit information on their reason for wanting to join the Forum and highlight their demonstrable interests and capability in supporting the economic outcomes agreed within the Surrey economic strategy. Approval of new members will be jointly overseen by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth and Chair of the Surrey Business Leaders Forum.

Please note that these proposals are still in draft and are being consulted on by stakeholders. A Cabinet report about strategic partnership boards is being planned for later this year and will include formalised details about the changes.

Matt Furniss

Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth

27 February 2024

Question (2) Catherine Powell

In 2020 Farnham was designated by the World Crafts Council as a “World Craft City”, England’s first. How does the cabinet member envisage that this will be

addressed in the refresh of the economic strategy for Surrey including Growth Hubs as part of SCC becoming the “accountable body” for LEPs across Surrey and how can local members help with this?

Reply:

Farnham’s designation as England’s first “World Craft Town” [correction to the question] is a fantastic achievement. It highlights the diversity of enterprise that exists across the county, from the larger multi-national companies that call Surrey “home”, through to the next generation of craft artists and makers that can be found in Farnham.

The Surrey Growth Hub will be a free and impartial resource for businesses within the Craft Town to benefit from. It will provide a mixture of private sector resources and signposting through to more intensive 1-1 business support for high growth businesses. Once the website and service are operational, we would encourage any Surrey-based business to access the resources to understand the range of support that is available through different partners across the county and submit enquiries to the team for additional support.

It is worth noting that Waverley Borough Council (where the World Craft Town is based) are in the process of producing their new Economic Development Strategy, and we have been actively involved in responding to the draft and identifying ways in which there are opportunity for collaboration aligned to the Council’s strategic economic priorities. The Council also has a strong strategic relationship with the University for the Creative Arts, which may be one of the ways in which the Council can support local initiatives that emerge from Waverley’s new strategy linked to the World Craft Town status.

Matt Furniss

Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth

27 February 2024

Question (3) Catherine Powell

The Household Support Fund is due to end in March 2024; this has been vital to many families in Surrey struggling to afford the essentials, including energy bills. However, the number of families using foodbanks is continuing to rise, for example, the Farnham Foodbank has seen a 25% increase in the need for food support compared to the same time last year. Use of Community Fridges and Cupboards also continues to rise.

Recent research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has shown that the number of people facing destitution in the UK has increased by 61% between 2019 and 2022.

Will the Cabinet write to the Chancellor calling for him to extent the Household Support Fund ahead of the Budget on the 2nd of March to support no one left behind not just in Surrey but across the Country?

Reply:

The Leader has raised the issue with the Secretary of State at DLUHC and any announcement regarding the future of the fund will be made by the Chancellor on 6 March 2024.

Tim Oliver
Leader of the Council
27 February 2024

Question (4) Catherine Powell

Given the additional funding in the final settlement from Government that has been earmarked for prevention and early intervention services, will the Cabinet be reconsidering the efficiency that resulted in a 10% reduction in the overall budget for Family Centres and Early Help mentoring contracts equating to approximately £728,000, which is covered by this EIA - [Proposal for Family Centres and Family Resilience Equality Impact Assessment \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/proposeal-for-family-centres-and-family-resilience-equality-impact-assessment)?

The four actions to mitigate the negative impacts listed in the EIA, below, have been identified as not being sufficient to fully alleviate the negative impact of reducing the financial envelope for these services and for family centres to support our 21 Key Neighbourhoods.

EIA extract

There are four actions required to mitigate the negative impacts:

- 1. Providers will be expected to utilise Social Value and funding opportunities outside of contractual arrangements in addition to carrying out fundraising activities to help generate additional income to support and enhance service delivery.*
- 2. Providers will also be expected to explore co-delivery opportunities with other services so that the costs of running group sessions for instance can be shared across partners.*
- 3. Providers will be asked to explore the development of volunteering models as a cost-effective way of supporting children, young people and families.*
- 4. It is anticipated that these mitigating actions will help however will not be sufficient to fully alleviate the negative impact of reducing the financial envelope for these services.*

Reply:

It was Cabinet's decision to reduce the budget for recommissioning the Family Centres by 10% in 2023. We work closely with the providers to ensure we are supporting children and their families through the delivery of group and individual sessions. Cabinet agreed an additional annual sum of £2m to set up and deliver the Intensive Family Support Service in October 2023 which will be a further part of the

integrated early help system for children and families in Surrey which includes the services provided from the Family Centres.

Clare Curran
Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning
27 February 2024

Question (5) Fiona Davidson

- I. How many 2-year-olds in Surrey are considered to be disadvantaged in terms of current Early Years Education Entitlements?
- II. Of this cohort of disadvantaged 2-year-olds, how many are currently receiving 15 hours of funded provision for 38 weeks of the year?

Reply:

- I. The DfE list sent to Surrey County Council in January 2024 included 1681 2 year old children eligible under the criteria for deprivation to access 15 hours funded entitlement.
- II. The current take-up of 2 year old provision as of 6th February 2024 is 1203. This represents 71.5% of those eligible. We would expect this figure to rise over the remainder of this term.

Clare Curran
Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning
27 February 2024

Question (6) Fiona Davidson

- I. What is the estimated number of places required to meet the extension of provision in April 2024 to the 2-year-olds of working parents and in September 2024 to the children of working parents from 9 months?
- II. How many places do the Implementation Team estimate will be available in April 2024 and September 2024 to meet the new requirements of the extended provision?

Reply:

- I. The number of 2 year old places estimated for by DfE for is 4933. On the basis of 2 year olds currently accessing early years provision with parents paying fees this represents a conversion rate* of around 82%.

For under 2 year olds DfE predict the current provision to be 2252 with a similar conversion rate as for 2 year olds.

- II. We estimate that although the figures are quite accurate (our survey showed a conversion rate of between 78% and 82%) we expect the demand to grow

across the year. Whilst parents are unlikely to change their work patterns for 15 hours of entitlement, they are much more likely to for 30 hours. For this reason, we think the peak in demand will come in anticipation of the entitlement to 30 hours in September 2025. For 2 year olds we are predicting between 10% to 15% increase which translates as 740 additional places.

For under 2's we expect the demand for places to be lower and for this to rise more gradually. In the first academic year from September 2024 to July 2025 we predict demand for around 10% additional places at just over 200.

For context we currently have 23,495 children aged 3 and 4 years currently accessing their EY entitlement

We have a parent/carer consultation which is currently LIVE and will close next week. Once we have collated the responses, we will have much more accurate information about demand. We will then analyse and publish the results alongside the results of the sector and schools' consultation which will inform us about the level of engagement and the number of places that can realistically be created and staffed.

We have had over 60 applications for start-up funding which would indicate significant interest in creating additional places.

**Conversion rate = the number of children who are currently in provision and parent funded who will meet the working family's eligibility criteria and will therefore transition to the new entitlement. We therefore have a baseline from which we can estimate how many new places we will require to meet need.*

Clare Curran
Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning
27 February 2024

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CABINET – 27 FEBRUARY 2024**PROCEDURAL MATTERS****Public Questions:****Question (1): Kate Gray**

Why is the option to retain Reigate Priory School in its current form (5 form entry) on its existing site excluded from the scope of the working group?

Please take account of the following points when responding to this question.

- Reigate and Banstead Borough Council has stated that many of SCC's "stated constraints are capable of being overcome" and requested "to work with the County Council and Department for Education to consider all options pertaining to the existing site, to conclude the potential for the school to remain there, before a decision is made on relocation options."
- In a letter dated 17 July 2020, Strutt & Parker as agents for the Department for Education described an option for a 2-storey rebuild on the current site as "a well-considered and high quality scheme which enhances the heritage value of the site. It also complies with all national and local policy, including in respect of heritage and Green Belt matters."
- 100 out of 216 Priory parents and 46 out of 98 Holmesdale parents who responded the survey left a comment that they wanted a solution on the existing site. This was overwhelmingly the single largest piece of feedback from the consultation.

Reply:

Thank you for this question. Please refer to Annex 2 of the Cabinet report which outlines the multiple constraints of the current site and why the school in its current form cannot remain at Priory Park.

Clare Curran

Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning

27 February 2024

Question (2): Chris Morris**Consultation Process**

SCC giving the public 24 hours notice to digest the consultation results before submitting any questions is yet another example of how SCC rail road processes through that suit no one except themselves. A consultation where both choices end up with the same outcome is not open or transparent, it's an abuse of power.

Are SCC confident that this public consultation is legal? Specifically the framing of the consultation, the binary choices, the selective choices of what's in scope and what's not.

The general principles for a lawful consultation process must be adhered to:

- It must take place when proposals are still at a formative stage. A final decision has not yet been made, or predetermined”.

Our legal advice suggests SCC could be in breach of this based on the fact the proposals are not at a formative stage and have very much been pre determined. What is your response to this?

Reply:

Thank you for this question.

The Council strongly refutes this suggestion that the outcome is predetermined. We have consulted about options which were chosen legitimately and reasonably, and responses are being taken into account.

The Council considers that the consultation was appropriate, fair, and open and therefore adhered to the principles of a lawful consultation process.

The Cabinet Report on the provision of school places in the planning area of Reigate to which this question relates, includes a Consultation Analysis Report to ensure Cabinet decision making is informed by consultation responses, alongside information on the viability of any solutions.

Clare Curran
Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning
27 February 2024

Question (3): Justin Gibson

Surrey County Council have spent £2.4m (expected to be £2.6m) on this planning proposal from an allocated £3m budget.

At what stage was the £3m funding agreed to be accounted for under the capital programme? Why is it not possible to account for option 2, some elements of which may also require capital spend, under this budget line?"

This appears another example of WP being pre determined and everything fitting around this pre determination.

Reply:

It is always made clear that feasibility costs in any project have the potential to be written off as abortive costs to revenue. It is important to investigate feasibility of any project properly in order to determine deliverability of any scheme. Costs included in any feasibility of the Woodhatch site included several options that were explored, in addition to education provision.

The report delegates authority to spend up to £0.6m on option 2. There is a capital budget for school provision in Reigate. Financial regulations and policy would allow

us to capitalise option 2 if this option delivers an asset. Either option would be a revenue pressure if an asset is not created nor enhanced.

Clare Curran

Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning

27 February 2024

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