



Supplementary Agenda

Items: 6, 8 (i) and 10

for the meeting of

THE COUNTY COUNCIL

to be held on

19 MARCH 2024

6 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME

(Pages 3
- 38)

1. The Leader of the Council, the Deputy Leader 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.
2. Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member Briefings on their portfolios.

There will be an opportunity for Members to ask questions.

8 ORIGINAL MOTIONS

Item 8 (i)

Robert Evans OBE (Stanwell and Stanwell Moor) to propose to alter the motion standing in his own name under Standing Order 20.3(a) to read as follows:

(additional words underlined in bold and deletions crossed through)

This Council believes that:

The current system for local government finance is no longer fit for purpose.

This Council resolves to:

Call on the next government to bring in a fairer and more robust system to ~~replace Council Tax~~.

10 ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (FRIMLEY PARK HOSPITAL)

To agree the Terms of Reference and membership of the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Frimley Park Hospital).

Recommendation: (recommendation 2 as amended)

The County Council be represented by four Members including the chair of its health scrutiny committee; and its membership be confirmed as:

- Trefor Hogg
- Richard Tear
- Michaela Martin
- Carla Morson

MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL**TUESDAY 19 MARCH 2024****QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED UNDER THE PROVISIONS
OF STANDING ORDER 10.1****NATALIE BRAMHALL, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY, WASTE AND
INFRASTRUCTURE****1. FRANK KELLY (MERSTHAM & BANSTEAD SOUTH) TO ASK:**

With regards to the recent spate of illegal fly-tipping of large amounts of waste on local roads and the cost of clearing these up, can I ask the Cabinet Member, what is the cost for cleaning up these occurrences, both in total and to each resident in their council tax?

Also, what deterrents are there in place and how is the Council going forward in prosecuting those responsible?

RESPONSE:

The clearance of fly-tipped material from public land including roads is the responsibility of district and borough councils in Surrey. The disposal of the fly-tipped material collected by district and borough councils is the responsibility of Surrey County Council as Waste Disposal Authority.

In 2022/23 Surrey district and borough councils delivered 2,536 tonnes of fly-tipped material to our waste transfer stations and using an assumed average cost for transport and disposal of £141 per tonne the total cost to the council was around £360,000. Using a figure of 482,000 households in Surrey this works out at about 75p per household per year.

This does not include the cost of clearing the fly-tipped material, which is the responsibility of the borough and district councils and for which we do not have any financial information.

Fly-tipping is illegal and both the district and borough councils have a range of powers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) or to prosecute offenders. Surrey County Council does not have either the duty or the power to undertake investigations, issue FPNs or prosecute anybody for fly-tipping on the highway.

SINEAD MOONEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE

2. CATHERINE POWELL (FARNHAM NORTH) TO ASK:

Please can the Cabinet Member confirm which types of Technology Enabled Care she is hoping will be rolled out across the whole of Surrey and the time scales that she envisages that will occur over?

I am particularly keen to understand:

- a) the strategy for the roll out of the Docobo app, which is used by the Remote Monitoring Service for patients to enter information into their Shared Care Record and has been used very successfully in reducing GP appointments and emergency hospital admissions in the Frimley Integrated Care Board (ICB).
- b) the strategy for the roll out of the Mole Valley Life Technology Enabled Care offering particularly SMART Monitoring.

RESPONSE:

- a) This is commissioned by Frimley Integrated Care Board and not Surrey County Council and we do not hold this information.
- b) We have successfully implemented an effective Technology Enabled Care (TEC) offer for residents delivered through several pilots. Over the coming months a strategic corporate strategy will be developed in collaboration with partners and coproduced with individuals who draw on our services through eligible care needs or preventative services. To support this work SCC have confirmed membership of TSA as the industry and advisory body for TEC, including securing consultancy support, to help develop a robust business case and benefits realisation model. This will ensure our strategy is suitably impactful and social care outcomes are measurable and understood for long-term investment.

We do currently work with Mole Valley Life who run an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) to provide this enhanced monitoring county-wide including delivering installation of TEC into people's homes. Additionally, we are piloting a 'Wellbeing and Community Responder Service' for people in Mole Valley, Reigate & Banstead, Epsom & Ewell and Tandridge areas, to respond in non-emergency situations.

We intend to build on the work already done and further innovate. We will ensure our strategy clearly outlines to the public that TEC is not seen as a replacement for personal care but instead is a key enabler in facilitating the best opportunities and outcomes for people.

NATALIE BRAMHALL, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY, WASTE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

3. ROBERT EVANS OBE (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK:

When Surrey County Council was selling County Hall, its former Kingston headquarters, developers RER issued a release stating it had a guide price of £20m.

This week Savills has issued a press releases stating the site now has a Gross Development Value of £250m:

<https://www.savills.co.uk/insight-and-opinion/savills-news/357792/a-unique--consented-residential-development-opportunity-in-prime-sw-london>

Can the council tell us exactly how much it got for its former Grade 2 listed site, and whether it feels this was best value for residents seeing as it now has the potential to bring in hundreds of millions of pounds for its new owners?

RESPONSE:

Surrey County Council (SCC) sold its former Grade 2 listed Kingston Head Quarters in March 2021 for £25 million, on a subject to contract only basis. This followed an extensive open marketing campaign for which best value was secured.

The purchasers RER (Kingston) Ltd have been holding the 300,000 sq. ft complex vacant over the past three years whilst pursuing a detailed planning application through the Royal Borough of Kingston to convert much of the former complex into residential units. Costs would have been incurred for empty business rate liability, which would have been circa £700,000 per annum alongside security and other holding void costs.

Although planning consent is now expected, RER have placed the complex on the market through Savills.

Whilst the agents suggest a potential value post development, it should be noted that when fully sold or let, this is not the value that a market bidder will pay for the asset today. A value bid would consider the cost, timing and risks of the development, the capital investment needed to complete any approved scheme (heritage build costs, consultant fees, ongoing security, void costs, finance costs at elevated rates since 2021) and the marketing period to sell or rent all units once converted. This could be a further 3 to 5 year project.

It is worth highlighting that when SCC sold the asset for £25 million in 2021, we negotiated a contractual position to secure any excess of value that might arise from any future development if the quantum of development exceeded a certain level. This is protected by way of a legal charge against the asset.

NATALIE BRAMHALL, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY, WASTE AND INFRASTRUCTURE / DENISE TURNER-STEWART, DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITIES

4. JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:

Redhill Library was identified as having Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in September 2023, closed on 7 December 2023 with a click-and-collect service introduced in nearby Consort House from 30 January (<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/libraries/borrow-or-renew/borrow-or-request-items-from-the-library/ready-reads>). The closure was noted as to, "Allow more detailed assessments and immediate safety measures to take place to ensure the building is safe to reopen to residents ..." and that "Further urgent work will need to be undertaken before we can provide any details on mitigation measures or timelines for re-opening."

Please confirm what detailed assessments have so far been conducted, what urgent work is now planned and when the library is scheduled to reopen either in its current location or as a pop-up or temporary library in Redhill town centre?

RESPONSE:

Assessment and planned works

Surrey County Council's (SCC) surveying consultant, AtkinsRealis has been appointed to undertake surveys and inspections to fully establish the extent and condition of the RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete) at Redhill Library.

A Stage 1B Visual Inspection of the RAAC was undertaken on Friday 3 November 2023. Further on-going monthly monitoring inspections of the RAAC were undertaken on the following dates: 21 November 2023, 9 January 2024, and 14 February 2024. As a result of these inspections, no new cracking or spalling has been observed. The condition of the panels previously observed with cracking, spalling, water staining, or services penetration were unchanged. The next on-going monitoring inspection is scheduled for 15 March 2024.

The Stage 2 Intrusive Survey works have been instructed to AtkinsRealis. A separate contractor has been appointed to complete Enabling Works which started on site on 14 March, to remove the ceilings and fully expose the RAAC panels. A further contractor will then conduct a Measured Survey and 3D Laser scan of the RAAC before the Structural Engineer can inspect and report on the condition of the RAAC and confirm what remedial works are required. This is scheduled to be completed by end of April 2024.

Currently there is a risk due to the unknown scale of the RAAC at the library and the output from the surveys detailed above will inform the level of mitigations that need to be developed and the remediation work required.

Once the full set of surveys detailed above have been completed, a programme of remedial works will be developed at which point the cost and duration for these

works can be confirmed. Depending on the works required, the scheduled programme could be approximately eight months.

Continued provision of library services in Redhill

Redhill Library opened on a click and collect basis at Consort House in Redhill on Monday 30 January 2024. The click and collect service, which is open Tuesday to Saturday enables users to return books and collect reservations and Ready Reads. The free Ready Reads service enables residents to request a selection of books along a subject matter or genre. These are then handpicked by staff and sent to Consort House for collection.

The service has been visited by 1,285 people between 30 January and 12 March 2024. We have also extended opening hours at Reigate and Merstham libraries during this time with usage increasing by an average of 40% during this period.

The library service and Land & Property have been working together to prepare the remainder of the ground floor of Consort House to extend the service offering. Therefore, from 22 April 2024, a temporary library will open offering a wide range of books, resources, study space, comfortable seating, children's area, rhyme times, events, and computers (subject to BT). The service offer will be smaller than that at the Redhill library previously, however, this is in line with what was due to be delivered during the refurbishment works. The library service will continue to be delivered from Consort House for the duration of the repairs and capital refurbishment works at the existing library building.

With regards to the longer-term provision of library services within the Redhill area, SCC is in discussions with both the freehold owner of the current site and the local Borough Council to explore all available opportunities for both the current and any potential future locations, aligned to a wider regeneration of the area.

TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

5. CATHERINE BAART (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK:

In the Chancellor's most recent budget a County Deal for Surrey was confirmed, providing new powers for the county council. This includes "the opportunity to adopt innovative local proposals to deliver action on climate change and the UK's Net Zero targets". Tim Oliver, Leader of the county council said in December "This is not about all power to the County Council, it's more about power for Surrey as a whole with devolution from central government, across all partners working together to make Surrey an even better place to live, work and do business. Within the functions that will be devolved as part of the Level 2 County Deal, there will be greater opportunity to work closely with partners and in some cases explore options for double-devolution."

What do you envisage as the process for bringing forward, and encouraging, innovative local proposals from all sectors in Surrey to tackle climate change?

RESPONSE:

The Net Zero and Climate Change chapter of the Surrey Devolution Framework Agreement sets out the environmental proposals that Surrey has agreed with Government as part of this devolution deal. These include enhanced working relationships with Ofgem around regional energy planning, better engagement between Surrey and relevant government departments to design a place-based approach to delivering retrofit measures, delivering more local green jobs following the devolution of the Adult Education Budget and UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and Surrey's role as the responsible authority for our Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Notably, the framework also outlines Surrey County Council's intentions to bring together relevant environmental and climate change strategies/plans/statutory duties under one single framework titled the Local Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP). This process will allow SCC to work more closely with relevant local partners such as district and borough authorities, utility companies and government agencies. As such, all relevant partners across Surrey will be able to better align relevant plans under the framework, allowing for more coordination at a local level. The Local EIP will also allow SCC to coordinate key partners to identify, map and assess relevant spending in the area and, through newly establish governance, will be able to better prioritise action and support implementation of local initiatives. This function will enable Surrey as a whole to more effectively tackle climate change and deliver a greener future for our residents.

MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

6. ANDY MACLEOD (FARNHAM CENTRAL) TO ASK:

The performance report presented at the Community, Environment and Highways Select Committee on 7 February showed that after NSL's abysmal performance at the start of the contract in April 2023, things have greatly improved. However, it is still disappointing that after nine months, in the third quarter NSL were only able to field 89% of the agreed parking enforcement hours against a target of 95%.

The consequence is that the average monthly number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in the third quarter of around 7,500 has now reached broadly the same level as that previously issued by the Districts and Boroughs. This is against an expected number of around 9,000 under the new NSL run system.

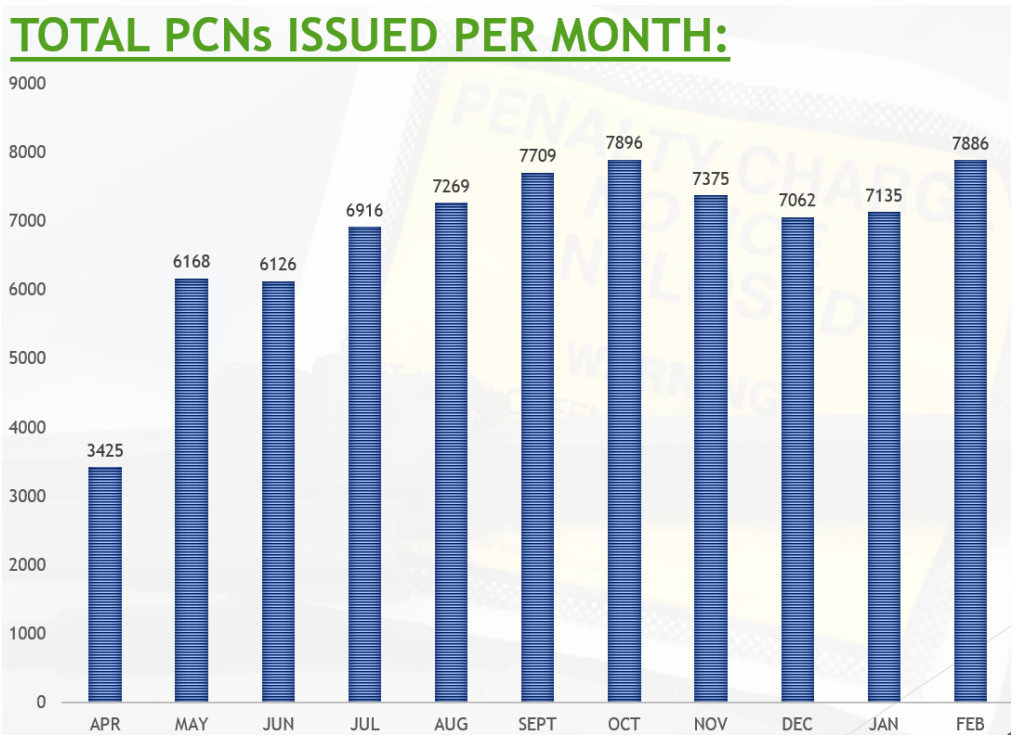
Committee members were also informed of an intention to develop a County Wide Plan to ask NSL to focus on problem parking sites.

Please can the Cabinet Member confirm:

- a) That NSL have been made fully aware that members are disappointed in their performance to date and in the second year, from April 24, it will not be acceptable for them to fail to meet their agreed targets.
- b) When Members can expect to see the County Wide Plan?

RESPONSE:

a) We have regular (weekly) meetings with NSL to discuss operational and performance issues associated with on-street parking enforcement, including feedback from Members. It is disappointing for everyone when expected levels of service are not met, however it has been mentioned on numerous occasions that only twelve Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) transferred from the districts and boroughs to NSL at the start of the contract in April 2023 meaning deployment levels were lower in this period, whilst an intensive recruitment drive went ahead. We do not have targets for Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) and the deployment levels reported for Q3 (89%) represent an average of the three months in that period, in which there was a month by month improvement in that time. I can also advise that Q4 is expected to be slightly above or very close to expected deployment levels, as staff levels have continued to increase and stabilise, although recruitment and retainment is a continual challenge. It is probable as CEOs become more familiar with their roles and areas, the number of PCNs will increase. The monthly enforcement reports for February show that the countywide PCN totals went up to 7886, the second highest total since the contract started in April. The breakdown of the PCN numbers has been included below for reference.



b) A countywide enforcement operational summary for 23/24 will be published by the end of May. Monthly reports are being sent to members highlighting enforcement activity in each borough, including school run enforcement visits. Future plans on school enforcement and district priorities will be shared later this year.

**CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES,
LIFELONG LEARNING**

**7. LANCE SPENCER (GOLDSWORTH EAST AND HORSELL VILLAGE) TO
ASK:**

Given that the School Transition deadline was 15 February, how many children in Surrey still do not have a placement at secondary school and how many of these have special educational needs?

RESPONSE:

Secondary Transition: For pupils who had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place before the statutory deadline of 15 February, there are 125 pupils who we are continuing to secure secondary provision for, for September 2024. 12 of these pupils require mainstream provision and we are actively in conversations with schools. The remaining pupils require specialist or centre provision, and we are working with providers for additional capacity. Since the statutory deadline 60 pupils have received agreement for an EHCP, 10 of which have had a school identified for September and 50 pupils have active school consultations out.

There are currently 98 children (without an EHCP) who are awaiting an offer of a secondary school place for September 2024. All of these applicants applied late, but we will endeavour to resolve an offer for each of them by the end of June as places are freed up by declines and further offers are made from waiting lists. Applicants who have not been offered a place at one of their preferred schools also have the right to submit an appeal. Late applications will continue to be received up until the end of August, as new families move into the area, and so the number of children without an offer of a secondary school place will fluctuate during this time.

**MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH**

8. ANGELA GOODWIN (GUILDFORD SOUTH-WEST) TO ASK:

Before Surrey County Council took back responsibility for parking controls Guildford Borough Council, maintained a very disciplined system of only issuing permits pursuant to the physical number of spaces available, and any new residents into the area wanting a new or extra Zone D permit would be on a waiting list that ensured they would only be issued a D permit when one becomes available due to somebody leaving or not renewing, and in the meantime, they were issued a permit for an adjacent zone.

Since SCC took over, they have observed that “literally anyone who requests a Zone D permit is being issued one as long as they fit the criteria of being a local resident, regardless of how long they have been there and how many permits are being issued per house”. As a result, the local streets have become overloaded by cars and residents are having “to plan when we go out (or not) and return to even try and have a chance to be able to park on return”.

Does SCC have any plans to restrict the issue of parking permits in Guildford to ensure that local residents are able to use the nearby parking spaces?

Is this a specific issue for Guildford, or has SCC had complaints from other areas on this subject since the move of responsibilities?

RESPONSE:

Guildford Zone D covers the town centre area where on and off-street parking is at a premium.

All permit schemes in the county have rules covering permit eligibility for residents, businesses and visitors. Those that have been set up around the county by the SCC Parking Team in the past do have relatively consistent and straight forward eligibility rules and it has therefore been easier for SCC/NSL to take over their administration. The permit rules in Zone D are far more complex, with Guildford Borough Council having defined the complex criteria, implementing and administering the Zone D permit scheme over a twenty year period.

The eligibility and terms/conditions for the various permit parking schemes in Surrey are linked here: [Parking permits, allocation, terms and conditions](#).

Following reports from residents in late 2023 that it was becoming more difficult to find a parking space in Zone D, we carried out an audit to check how many permits were in circulation.

The outcome of this audit check was that we found approximately 384 permits had been issued to Zone D properties which is higher than the number previously in circulation (316) when Guildford Borough Council was administering the scheme. We have therefore contacted permit holders who had been able to obtain a permit, but were not eligible according to the criteria in place, and either cancelled their permit or amended it from Zone D to a surrounding Zone in accordance with the rules (Permit holders were given over a month's notice and offered a refund or choice of alternative Zone for their permit in these cases).

These changes took effect from early March and will see the number of Zone D permits in circulation reduce to around 330 by April and consequently spaces should become easier to find for those residents who qualify for a permit. We will monitor resident feedback over coming months before deciding whether any further action is needed, although it would appear a longer-term simplification of the permit Zones around Guildford may be required.

Going forward, the rules for Zone D are now being more tightly enforced and a waiting list for new applicants is maintained to ensure permit numbers issued are controlled. This problem seems to be a Guildford specific one, however we will audit other permit zones around the county as needed.

**CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES,
LIFELONG LEARNING**

**9. CATHERINE POWELL (FARNHAM NORTH) TO ASK:
(2nd Question)**

Please can the Cabinet Member advise how the closure of the Mindworks to Neurodiversity referrals from both GPs and schools is going to be addressed to ensure that no-one is left behind?

Please can the Cabinet Member also advise the latest number that Surrey County Council has for the number of children who have been referred to Mindworks but are still waiting, and how we are tracking the number of referrals that are pending waiting for the system to start accepting referrals again?

RESPONSE:

Access to the neurodiversity (ND) diagnosis pathway is not closed, changes to access have been implemented that focus on those with highest need. Full details are on the Mindworks website: <https://www.mindworks-surrey.org/our-services/neurodevelopmental-services>

There was a collective decision with Mindworks, Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System (ICS) and Surrey County Council (SCC), in consultation with schools and families, that there was a need to move to a system of support that responds to the needs of neurodivergent children, rather than waiting until after a diagnosis before any help is enabled.

A Transformational Plan has been developed and its implementation is being reviewed and monitored in partnership with the Integrated Care Board / SCC / Mindworks and through a series of engagement events with schools and families. This plan has a focus on early support for all, and access to diagnosis for those based on need. The challenge is significant, and we recognise this is distressing for families which is why there are a series of co-production structures in place and being developed to share the position and work on the solutions together.

As a partnership, we have collectively funded additional assessment capacity and workforce to support with triage and the consultation conversations with schools and families which we hope will improve the current position and provide further support to children and young people (CYP), schools and families.

The latest communication to schools, primary care and families is available from the Mindworks website and newsletters from 18 March 2024.

As identified in the response above, children and young people with highest need or with safeguarding needs have always been able to access ND diagnosis. Oversight of the pathway escalation with Surrey and Borders Partnership (SABP) is through a weekly meeting. The risk is also on the Surrey Heartlands ICB organisational risk register and reviewed through quality and assurance oversight, providing update to Executives. The present Mindworks' position in March 2024 is

there are 890 CYP on the waiting lists for the “Spoke” team (the team triaging ND referrals) there are 3,608 on the waiting list for the ND diagnostic assessment. There are 940 children waiting for initiation of ADHD medication and these referrals will be further reviewed to understand risk and to support prioritisation. The children under ADHD medication – circa 2,400 require review in line with health guidelines and there is a workforce pressure to maintain these in timely way. SABP and partners are working through options to maximise workforce capacity to ensure needs of those waiting to start their medication and those under review, are met in timely way.

There are 35 slots per week available for schools to discuss children they are concerned about with the Mindworks team. At present (on average) only six consultation sessions per week of these are utilised. We anticipate this will increase to full capacity once further communication is released to schools and we will continue to work with them to support their needs.

MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

10. ROBERT EVANS OBE (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK: (2nd Question)

What measures has Surrey County Council put in place to ensure that there is no repetition, this summer, of the unsatisfactory situation regarding grass cutting last year?

RESPONSE:

It is accepted that due to several challenges last season, in some areas we were unable to provide the quality service for grass cutting that was intended. As has been previously explained, this was in part due to the exceptional growth conditions in Spring 2023, lack of clarity in terms of areas cut by some districts & boroughs and challenges with some contractor resource. An update is being provided at this Council meeting - see the Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways' Briefing.

Building on feedback from some of our residents and Members, the number of urban grass cuts has now been increased from the original four to six. The last cut of the 23/24 season has now started across the county and so far, despite the exceptionally wet weather of the past few weeks, good progress is being made.

Key to providing a quality service is having clear records of what areas should be cut and everyone being aware of this. It is worth noting that we will only cut the public highway, and not private land. Officers have undertaken a considerable amount of work to ensure we now have accurate mapped areas for cutting. You will be aware of the prototype online maps, which detail the verge areas that will be cut, from the link I shared towards the end of 2023. These were also shared with district & borough council officers. They have been updated based on the feedback we received, and the revised version will be available to the public and Members in the next few weeks. The cutting programme will be available on our website, broken down by divisions. However, with something like grass cutting, there will inevitably be some operational changes (due to weather etc), but these new maps will be

updated every time an area is cut, enabling Members and residents to see not only the verges which will be cut, but also when any cuts took place.

I am also pleased to confirm we have increased the number of contractors we are using for this activity and strengthened the governance in place. There are regular contractor meetings and each contractor provides a daily whereabouts. Alongside this, officers will audit a sample of cuts to ensure quality standards are maintained. These measures will support early identification of any performance issues and enable appropriate corrective action to be promptly taken.

MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

**11. JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:
(2nd Question)**

Redhill bus station was redeveloped as what was then described as a “temporary improvement” in 2009. It has a draughty waiting room and not enough bus stops. Increased bus numbers in the past 15 years have led to buses parking up for driver breaks on Marketfield Way. As part of Surrey County Council’s Local Transport Plan 4 (2022-2032) there is a plan to further increase public transport patronage, presumably with new bus routes and frequency.

Please confirm what the bus station’s capacity is required to be to:

- a) deal with current demand; and
- b) deal with expansion due to LTP4 to 2032 (and beyond).

RESPONSE:

Redhill Bus Station was redeveloped during 2008 to improve passenger accessibility, significantly enhance the passenger waiting environment by replacing the old bus shelters with a modern glass waiting room and ticket office, and to address the safety issues of passengers and pedestrians using the informal cross points in front of buses. This was a joint initiative between Reigate & Banstead Borough Council (the landowner) and Surrey County Council. During this redevelopment, it was, and is still, recognised that the operational capacity of Redhill Bus Station is constrained by the size of the bus station site and the location being adjacent to the A23 and nearby offices.

Surrey County Council has committed funding to accelerate the decarbonisation of the local bus network and we are excited to work with the local bus operator Metrobus to introduce zero emission hydrogen fuel buses in the Redhill area. This is supported by proposals to introduce measures along the A23 to make sure these buses can operate effectively and efficiently, reducing journey times and improving reliability. More real-time bus passenger information will also help residents make informed decisions on their journey.

The County Council’s Local Transport Plan 4 sets ambitious targets to increase bus patronage, and this is reflected through the Enhanced Partnership we have with our

bus operators and our equally ambitious Bus Service Improvement Plan. The County Council will continue to work with our bus industry partners and with Reigate & Banstead Borough Council to identify and agree the most appropriate schemes to help deliver growth in the bus network and to mitigate any identified bus station capacity challenges. This will include reviewing current bus stop arrangements in Redhill town centre, together with the operational efficiency of the bus station, to ensure that these can meet existing demand, and how we can support predicted future growth in the bus network.

MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

**12. CATHERINE BAART (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK:
(2nd Question)**

Princes Road is a private road, previously part of a bus route for the Royal Earlswood Park development (conditioned through S106) and NHS Diabetes clinic. The buses stopped running in October 2022 due to the poor road condition. Princes Road is part of the cycle route from Redhill to East Surrey Hospital, due to be improved through Active Travel funding from government, and part of a walking route in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Reigate and Banstead. Princes Road needs to be resurfaced (Surrey County Council was found not responsible for this in a Court hearing in July 2023) and there is an urgent need for the road design to be improved such that it is safe to all road users (drivers, cyclists and pedestrians) and reopens as a bus route.

Can the Cabinet Member please confirm what part Surrey County Council will play to help deliver that outcome?

RESPONSE:

As highlighted a court case was brought by a resident of Princes Road arguing that Surrey County Council were not maintaining a highway maintainable at the public expense given that Princes Road is a public right of way, and rights of way are maintainable at public expense.

We argued that as a right of way, our liability was to provide a safe surface for pedestrians and that the Town Path part of Princes Road provided that but that a right of way does not need to provide a suitable surface for vehicles. The judge agreed with our arguments.

We will continue to maintain the west side where there is a highway maintained Town Path (pavement) which is mainly used by walkers avoiding the live carriageway. The active travel cycle scheme will end at the junction of Earlsbrook Road and Princes Road and will commence again at the public footway junction with Asylum Arch Road. There are no works planned on the private Princes Road as part of this scheme.

It is important to note that this is a privately owned road and it is for the owner of the road to maintain it. The County Council has no further planned works for Princes Road on this basis.

**CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES,
LIFELONG LEARNING**

**13. LANCE SPENCER (GOLDSWORTH EAST AND HORSELL VILLAGE) TO
ASK:
(2nd Question)**

The failings of Surrey County Council's children's services has meant the Authority paid more than £250,000 in fines, compensation, and redress payments to families it let down last year.

Does SCC have a plan to reduce the number of cases that end up in this situation, and how much has been put in the budget for 2024/25 to pay parents for failings in this area?

RESPONSE:

The Council's expectation is now that all families receive regular, proactive communications from the Special Educational Needs (SEN) teams, and area managers are expected to check and review this is happening. Additionally, the Council is in the process of training a new helpdesk team to support with communications to families and other stakeholders.

A comprehensive multi-agency recovery plan is underway, with the aim of achieving an overall Education Health and Care needs assessment timeliness rate of around 60% by the end of May 2024, to address overdue assessments and ensure timely assessment for children with higher risks. This target surpasses the national timeliness percentage and aligns closely with Surrey County Council's 2021 performance.

To support this initiative a £15 million investment has been allocated for Special Educational Needs (SEN), Educational Psychology (EP), and early intervention capacity over a three-year period. The plan has three key objectives:

- Reduce long waiting times: To complete the EHC needs assessments for all children, young people, families, and schools who have been waiting longer than the statutory timescales as soon as practically possible.
- Better support while waiting: To support children, young people, families, and schools as effectively as possible whilst they are having to wait longer than they should.
- Securing a sustainable service model: The goal is to restore a sustainable service quickly, ensuring that the majority of EHC needs assessments are completed within statutory timescales, beginning with achieving a 60% rate and ultimately striving for 100%.

Targets have been set against each objective and progress is being rigorously monitored. The number of unallocated educational psychology assessments which are required as part of the needs assessment process, cases has reduced from 1,014 cases in May 2023 to 130 at the end of January 2024 and 0 unallocated cases at the end of February 2024.

In terms of budgeting for future payments related to complaints, these payments come from the specific operational service that the complaint relates to. Over two thirds of payments are in recognition of missed provision, which service budgets are already designed to cover. One third of payments are symbolic remedies for injustice, often in acknowledgement of delays, which are being addressed in the recovery plan mentioned above. These symbolic payments do not impact materially on budgets when broken down by service.

The Children, Families and Lifelong Learning directorate is focused on addressing the root cause of the complaints through significant investment in service delivery, staff development and communication, which will in turn reduce financial remedies for injustice in the future.

It is worth noting that the largest payments directed by the Ombudsman often relate to complaints initially raised between one to two years ago. Therefore, the current improvements in level of service delivery and level of communication will have a more noticeable positive impact on complaint volumes and remedy payments in the medium term rather than the short-term.

DAVID LEWIS (COBHAM), CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES

14. ROBERT EVANS OBE (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK: (3rd Question)

Will the council please list the full Surrey County Council budget, year on year since 2010 and alongside, give the equivalent figures if the budget had kept up with inflation?

RESPONSE:

The way in which local authorities are funded has changed significantly over the time period requested, as have the services delivered. The introduction of local retention of business rates, combined with transition funding for short period of time to compensate for reductions in revenue support grant, the transfer of public health responsibilities from the NHS and the introduction and replacement of historic social care grants, reflective of the increased demand for these services over the years, mean that useful comparisons of yearly budgets is only possible for the last five years.

The average annual budget increase over the period 2020/21 to 2024/25 is 5.5% per annum, with larger than average increases reflected in recent years due to increases in social care funding and higher allowable Council Tax increases. The Council's net

revenue budget in 2020/21 was £968m and this has risen to £1,197m for 2024/25, an increase of 24% over the five-year period.

Average Retail Prices Index (RPI) over the same period was 6.9%, with March positions ranging from 1.5% in March 2021 to 13.5% in March 2023. If the Council's budget had increased by the March RPI amount each year, the annual budget for 2024/25 would be c£1,261m, £64m more than the budget recently approved by the Council for 2024/25.

	SCC Net Revenue Budget £m	RPI (%) at prev % increase March 31		Budget if increased by RPI £m
2020/21	968.3			
2021/22	1,003.6	3.6%	1.5%	982.8
2022/23	1,039.0	3.5%	7.8%	1,059.5
2023/24	1,101.9	6.1%	13.5%	1,202.5
2024/25	1,197.0	8.6%	4.9%	1,261.4

MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

**15. CATHERINE POWELL (FARNHAM NORTH) TO ASK:
(3rd Question)**

The Cabinet Member wrote to all Members in preparation for the 2024 grass cutting season in December 2023 asking Members to review the SCC grass cutting responsibilities and identify which areas were missing. Where several areas in my division that had been designated as verges because they are part of the highway extent that were in fact areas that are not adjacent to a road at all but greenspaces in housing estates used for recreational purposes by residents and particularly children.

Please can the Cabinet Member advise:

- a) When the final grass cutting maps for the 2024 season will be shared with members as first cuts are due imminently?
- b) Whether the grassed recreational areas inadvertently included as verges rather than much valued recreational green spaces will now be cut to allow use by residents particularly children as part of ensuring that all children have access to the recreational spaces as intended when the housing estates were laid out?

RESPONSE:

An update is being provided at this Council meeting - see the Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways' Briefing.

We have started cutting the final and fifth cut of the 23/24 season. The first cut of the 24/25 season is planned to start in April. Our website is being updated and the intention is that the online maps you reviewed will be available for both members and residents from the start of the first 2024/25 cut.

The County Council has two categories for highway verges, these being rural or urban. There is no specific designation as recreational space on the public highway. Those highway verges in housing areas will generally be categorised as urban and benefit from six cuts per annum, which is an increase on last season. Some estates may have recreational verges, but these do not form part of the public highway and will either be managed by the landlord or, in private areas, the residents' managing agent.

MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

**16. JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:
(3rd Question)**

In December 2023 the Surrey Live carried an article on Netherne-on-the-Hill (Isolated Surrey village demands bus route before 'elderly forced to leave' - Surrey Live ([getsurrey.co.uk](https://www.getsurrey.co.uk)) and quoted Councillor Furniss as follows: "Following the success of our Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) scheme in Tandridge, from Spring 2024 we will be looking to expand the scheme to include bordering areas such as Netherne-on-the-Hill." "Officers have already been in communication with the Community Link Officer for this area to discuss the expansion, and we will be looking to see how we may best serve some of the needs of the residents of Netherne."

Please can the Cabinet Member provide an update on plans to expand DDRT to Netherne-on-the-Hill and other bordering areas?

RESPONSE:

I am delighted to announce that the phase 2 expansion of our successful and extremely well received Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) service, Surrey connect, will be available to residents of Netherne-on-the-Hill from September 2024. We are currently planning to add an extra four buses to the current Surrey Connect two bus scheme operating across the Tandridge area. This has enabled us to increase the operating zone and include Netherne-on-the-Hill.

MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

**17. CATHERINE BAART (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK:
(3rd Question)**

The Green Economy nationally is reported to be growing at 9%. Surrey County Council has recently taken on the role of skills and economic development through the new County Deal and the closing of the Local Enterprise Partnerships this year.

What does SCC plan to do / do already to positively encourage the green economy for example supporting or attracting companies that support the county council's net zero aims?

RESPONSE:

The County Council has had an economic development function operating for several years delivering across strategic themes linked to innovation, skills and talent, supporting our places, and economic infrastructure. The transition of Local Enterprise Partnership functions and responsibilities to the County Council will further enhance this activity and bring in new opportunities, such as the Growth Hub.

Recent research into Surrey's green economy by WPI Economics, Data City, and Lightcast provides a more accurate picture based on Surrey's unique business base and sectoral specialisms to help inform effective strategy development and decision-making. This research suggests that green employment is currently 20% higher in Surrey compared to the UK as a whole and is forecast to increase by around 8% per year to 2030 and on average 4% per year between 2030 and 2050. For context, the digital sector grew on average 4% between 2009-2019. A copy of this research will be made available for all Members.

Supporting the growth of the green economy is a priority for the council and it cuts across the different themes that the economic development function delivers. Here are some recent examples that the council has already delivered or been the driving force behind:

- **Skills Bootcamps** – securing £2.7 million to deliver training within Surrey in partnership with local colleges and training providers, focusing on high demand local sectors and key local skills gaps, which will include courses in Retrofit, Green electrical, and Sustainability.
- **Heat Pump installation Training** – jointly funded with Nesta to help upskill existing heating engineers and plumbers to be able to install Heat Pumps, along with an offer of financial incentives to encourage increased participation in the home retrofit sector.
- **Green skills summit** – jointly hosted with Surrey Chambers of Commerce to bring together green businesses and educational institutions to address current and future green skills gaps, exploring how the green skills needs of local residents can best be met, including key actions required.
- **Green Careers resources** – to inspire residents with the various opportunities available at businesses operating in the green economy and outline different pathways into green careers.

The creation of a Surrey Growth Hub and new business support website will further enhance and expand the council's offer to support businesses operating in the green economy to start-up, scale-up, and grow. This might include delivering tailored 1:1 support to high-growth green businesses, or a county-wide programme of support to

local businesses on implementing measures to ensure their business operations can become net zero.

**CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES,
LIFELONG LEARNING**

**18. CATHERINE POWELL (FARNHAM NORTH) TO ASK:
(4th Question)**

As discussed at the budget meeting there was a review of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) capital programme underway at the time the budget was agreed but this was not identified as a risk in the budget papers.

Please can the Cabinet Member advise whether this review has been completed (previous advised end of February) and whether the costs have risen for the delivery of the whole planned programme?

Please can the Cabinet Member also advise what steps are being taken to ensure that the programme, that was developed prior to the pandemic, still meets the needs of children in Surrey in terms of the number and type of places being provided and their geographic location, particularly given the ongoing financial pressures associated with home to school transport?

RESPONSE:

In the first four years of Surrey's Capital Programme (2019-2023), the 43 permanent capital schemes, which were more technically and financially straightforward projects, have delivered 920 additional specialist places with a further 250 places coming online for September 2024. This has increased the overall state-maintained specialist education estate by 28% from around 3,320 when the capital programme started in 2019 to around 4,240 now.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) capital programme delivery viability and cost review was completed as planned. It shows there has been a 48% increase in the net construction costs between 2015 and 2022 for SEND development specifically. It will now cost more to deliver the remainder of the Capital Programme due to this inflation, the condition of existing school buildings, carbon net zero responsibilities, and the Council's new additional conservation liabilities.

Surrey's Leader has provided a clear statement of prioritisation for SEND and AP capital budgets. This would require a further £56m resources to increase the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2027/28.

The Service regularly validates the planned growth year on year to 2030/31 from the capital programme against Key Stage transfer points and in-year transitions to ensure provision aligns with children's needs.

Alongside capital delivery planned work undertaken by other strands of the Additional Needs and Disabilities (AND) Transformation Programme continue to reflect the thinking of the Service and the wider partnership in relation to how best to achieve the vision for Surrey children's enhanced life chances and maximising a sense of belonging and inclusion to achieve our local strategy.

CABINET MEMBER BRIEFING TO COUNTY COUNCIL

NAME: Denise Turner-Stewart

PORTFOLIO: Deputy Leader, Customer and Communities

Your Fund Surrey (YFS): This has recently had its third anniversary with 35 large projects having been funded to-date, equating to a total of £17m in value. Many of the funded projects are under construction, while a number are now open to the public. The two smaller, Member-led community funds remain popular and well used, with communities seeing real, tangible benefits. Your Councillor Community Fund closed for this year at the end of January, with almost 400 funded projects across all areas of the county, with £1.3m allocated to projects to support local communities. Members spent 99% of their allocation, which is a reflection on their commitment to supporting communities in their own areas, and on the team who worked with them to process the applications. Due to the success of YFS projects, Members have been allocated an additional £50,000 for small community projects, increasing each Member's allocation to £100,000. The number of residents benefitting from the funding is immense and varies from the refurbishment of a community building benefitting the whole community, to specific projects benefitting some of the most vulnerable residents in the county.

Libraries: The libraries' transformation programme is progressing well and includes refurbishments and mini refurbishments that are underway across the county to provide modern, flexible, and multi-use libraries, as well as Super Access which is being rolled out over the next six months, following the launch at Horley Library in January. As part of the transformation work, we are scoping a programme to roll out digital screens in our 52 libraries which will be used as an engagement tool to promote library events and activities, information about local services, and news about Surrey County Council promotions and campaigns to our residents.

We are also planning to provide a hot drink facility in each library, although the facility will depend on the location of the library, we aim to create a welcoming area for customers to enjoy using and increase the amount of time they spend in the library. It will include a full café offer anticipated for the larger hub sites, to an alternative self-service/coffee cart option for other library sites and will enhance the libraries core offer for our residents.

Voluntary Community Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE): The Council has invested £100,000 into the Community Foundation for Surrey (CFS) 'Strategic Transformation Fund'. With match-funding, this creates a total of up to £200,000 to support VCSE organisations to review their sustainability and develop new business models to help them better achieve their purpose in the face of challenges. Initial discussions with representatives of the VCSE sector and the VCSE Alliance have proved positive in terms of the appetite to engage with this work. Work is also underway to identify SCC grants that could be managed more effectively by CFS on behalf of the council, thereby securing beneficial match-funding for recipients. An approach has been received from representatives of the Lord Lieutenant's Charities' Working Group to consider the potential for rationalising several SCC-related charities to make better, targeted use of the funds held by them. 'Sparks Funding' of £160,000 is being provided to VCSE Infrastructure organisations enabling them to offer small grants for community-led activity in the 21 key neighbourhoods, a good example being to support activities by the Maybury and Sheerwater Community Trust - including career support sessions, English tuition sessions, a friendship cafe, computer tuition sessions and interactive wellbeing sessions.

Customer Transformation Programme: This has now been initiated, where we are designing how we need to work together differently in the future to better meet our residents' needs. We are aiming to deliver improved outcomes for residents, as well as a more efficient, innovative council, and at the centre of this is a major overhaul of our customer-facing service functions to deliver improved services to residents. Partners have now joined us with experience to help develop this approach, and will be working with us for 12 weeks, where we will focus on testing out new approaches for activity in two key areas; the pathways and processes between the Police and Adult Social Care teams, and the work we do to respond to residents in relation to highway enquiries. We will need to embrace the use of new technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI) and embrace innovation to enable us to deliver the best experience for residents.

DEPUTY CABINET MEMBER BRIEFING TO COUNTY COUNCIL

NAME: Jordan Beech

PORTFOLIO: Customer and Communities

Arts & Culture: The Cultural Services team recently submitted a bid to Arts Council England for £400,000 to support the development of the cultural hub in the new Staines library, with a focus on youth leadership, and a programme to support progression into the creative industries sectors. As part of that work and building on the success of the Youth and Arts Festival in 2023 in Redhill and Staines, that reached 1,481 young people, we are now planning a Surrey Heath Youth and Arts Festival for Autumn 2024.

A key aim of this work is to advocate for creative skills development through local cultural engagement. Surrey Arts Music Team continues to deliver the Youth Music funded 'I Speak Music: Next Generation' programme with refugee communities and is currently working with Reigate and Banstead Borough Council to deliver a programme of activity within a women's refuge, using music as a tool for community cohesion and health and wellbeing. The Music Hub also aims to widen access by offering financial support for instrumental and vocal music lessons, and an instrument loan scheme for school children, holiday courses and Special Education programmes, and music projects for refugees.

Surrey History Centre: The centre has hosted a visit by Her Royal Highness, The Duchess of Edinburgh on 31 January 2024, which involved a tour of the centre, including the search room, conservation unit, Archaeology unit and met with volunteers and staff, before viewing documents related to Bagshot Park and Women's Institute.

Active Surrey: This has secured place investment from Sport England into Stanwell, which is in the bottom 10% nationally for inactivity levels. This partnership will focus on strengthening local systems and communities with the aim of increasing activity levels in the local area. Bookings are open for the Easter holiday activity and food delivery. With Department for Education funding, we will be making 12,834 places available at a range of holiday camps, countywide, for children on free school meals. Each camp includes daily activity and a hot meal.

Specsavers Surrey Youth Games is now also open for bookings. Targeting inactive young people in disadvantaged communities across nine boroughs and districts, young people can sign up for two months of free coaching and equipment across seven different activities from inclusive dance to judo, boccia to girls touch rugby. Active Surrey, in partnership with the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, has now established 27 Friday Night Projects countywide. Running in youth, leisure, and community centres; these offer young people a safe space to meet with friends and enjoy a range of activities at a very low cost. We have just established a SEND specific Friday Night Project in Reigate. Plans are progressing to pilot the loan of bikes in two libraries in Surrey. The bikes will be taken from Surrey's recycling centres, refurbished, and made available for local residents who might otherwise not have access to a bike.

Our Registration & Nationality Service: This service remains one of the busiest in the country, supporting people at key life moments and offering a high quality, efficient and responsive service. Appointments to register births are being offered to customers within one day and 97% of births are being registered within the statutory 42-day timescale; the highest level since March 2020.

The digital self-service offer continues to grow, offering more choice and flexibility for customers. For example, citizenship ceremonies can now be booked online, with 394 bookings made since go-live on 1 December 2023 and 98% of couples are now booking their own appointment to give notice of marriage/civil partnership. Customer satisfaction levels are also high, as demonstrated by the feedback from our onsite 'Happy or Not' feedback terminal, which is 98% with many residents commenting on the quality of the experience they received from staff.

DEPUTY CABINET MEMBER BRIEFING TO COUNTY COUNCIL

NAME: Paul Deach

PORTFOLIO: Deputy Cabinet Member to Leader of the Council

It has continued to be a busy time for our communications team as they strive to further enhance communications and drive engagement, to ensure residents are well informed about our vital services. On our core council social media channels alone last month, our content was seen **over half a million times**. Some other recent communications highlights include:

Surrey Matters improvements: Surrey Matters is going from strength to strength, with over 200,000 subscribers, and almost 120,000 of those engaged in what we put out. That is a tenth of the county's entire population. We recently signed up all staff with SCC email addresses to the newsletter too, helping them keep up to date with news from across the county. A pop up is live on the council's website which has already generated over 2,000 sign ups and many other initiatives are underway to get more.

In the latest issue, there were over 20,000 clicks on the articles featured, **the highest ever recorded**. Many of these were for articles about the M25 closure and the Vision Zero consultation, which just goes to underline what our residents care about. In fact, the March issue (along with social media posts during the same period) was responsible for an additional 1,614 responses to the [Vision Zero consultation](#) over just one weekend. This is just one example of the impact the newsletter is having with our residents and testament to the hard work the team are putting in. I look forward to helping make those figures even higher this year. While Surrey Matters is the council's flagship newsletter, the team have also been working hard to bring all newsletters under one roof, helping to cross promote all the council's output.

New targeted email updates: To ensure residents are well-informed about council services in their areas, I have been working with Environment, Infrastructure and Growth communications colleagues to launch new email updates on services that matter to them the most, starting with the launch 'Your Highways Update' - a localised bulletin for residents about roadworks in their area. Since I last updated Members in January, we have continued to promote sign ups via a range of communication channels, and this has seen subscribers grow by 540% to 7,435, and an open rate of 80% - compared to the average 'good' rate of 25%. Over the coming months we will be exploring new tactics to increase sign ups even further including bus stop advertising, direct mail and QR codes on our highways vehicles.

Other services are set to follow; including Libraries, who are working on a newsletter tailored to the users of each library. Also, in Children, Families, Lifelong Learning we are promoting a new termly update for families of children and young people with additional needs and disabilities, and the practitioners who help them. Updates will provide news and information about children's additional needs and disabilities and details of support services available in Surrey. The first update will be shared with Members shortly. We are also looking into a newsletter aimed at businesses in Surrey to better communicate with this vital audience, to help grow a sustainable economy.

Highways communications: Cllr Steve Bax and I are also working with communications colleagues to improve perceptions, and build trust and confidence in our highways service, and this will be a fundamental priority for the communications team over the coming year, working alongside the customer transformation programme. This will deliver a refresh of the highways branding, new resident-focussed materials including postcards, on-site information boards, signage, leaflets, and social media, and a review of vehicle branding. We will also continue to push sign ups to the 'Your Highways Update' bulletin whilst developing this tool to localise content even further, and a full review of all resident correspondence to ensure we are getting this right, first time, for our residents.

CABINET MEMBER BRIEFING TO COUNTY COUNCIL

NAME: David Lewis

PORTFOLIO: Finance and Resources

Budget: The Council is forecasting a £4m overspend for the financial year. Drivers are predominantly within Adults, Wellbeing and Health Partnerships (AWHP) and Children, Families and Lifelong Learning (CFLL); the result of higher prices and continued demand for Adult Social Care and Home to School Travel Assistance. This is a pressure mirrored across local authorities nationally. Cabinet has approved the utilisation of the contingency budget of £20m, although financial pressures continue to worsen the overall position. Cabinet and CLT have agreed a number of spending controls; including in recruitment and procurement, deep dives in AWHP and CFLL, and focusing attention on the SWITCH and Transformation programmes, and other areas where costs could be reduced. The impact of these controls will be closely monitored and should establish stronger financial management behaviours into 2024/25. The Capital Programme Panel has carried out an assurance session to better understand causes of capital slippage to improve both future forecasting and delivery, with several recommendations made.

Budget & Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS): The Council approved the budget for 2024/25 and the MTFS in February. The financial environment faced by local authorities continues to be challenging with a number of councils declaring S114 notices over recent months, and others in discussion with DLUHC about additional support. SCC is not in this position having worked hard over recent years to improve financial resilience and sustainability. The 2024/25 budget and finances into the medium term, however, remain challenging. The budget includes significant efficiency targets of £54m and we continue to see demand for, and the cost of, services increasing at rates faster than available funding.

Financial Accounts: External Auditors, Grant Thornton, presented their Annual Audit Report for 2022/23 to the Audit & Governance Committee in January. This includes commentary on financial sustainability, governance and improving economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. No significant weaknesses were found in any of these areas, and it was noted that SCC had strong arrangements in place and that the findings in this report were in contrast to reports relating to many other local authorities. The 2022/23 accounts were signed off by the Audit & Governance Committee following some national delays. Final technical checks are being undertaken by Grant Thornton with final sign off anticipated within weeks. The council will move from Grant Thornton to Ernst & Young as external auditors, commencing in the next financial year.

Procurement Plan: Following months of engagement and preparation with service Directorates, the Annual Procurement Forward Plan (APFP) for 2024/25 was approved by Cabinet on 19 December 2023. This means that Cabinet gave officers Approval to Procure for the 179 procurement projects (over the £213,477 inc. VAT threshold) from 1 April 2024. This marks the beginning of more detailed planning with services, as well as targeted provider engagement, with additional procurement controls being implemented to support the overall programme of spend controls.

Orbis Internal Audit: On 5 March, delivery of Surrey's Internal Plan stood at 78.1% of our audit plan completed to at least draft report stage against a year-end target of 90%. We are confident that this performance will meet the expected level by the end of the financial year.

Victoria Gate and Agile: SCC formally took possession of Victoria Gate, Woking, on 29 February and our facilities provider, Macro, is on-site. Our Design Team is scoping requirements with a view to minimising the cost of building fit out works to meet council needs and maximise capacity. The broader Estates and Agile teams are jointly re-examining options to service the needs of council offices and maximise savings.

MySurrey & Aida: MySurrey Chatbot: Introduced in June 2023, with a transition to a business-as-usual Programme established in December and due to come to an end in May. This will then transition into a permanent arrangement with a Managed Services solution and client function, looking at technical fixes to remove the need for workarounds and optimise the system's performance. Use of Digital, Data and Technology is key to making improvements to our Customer Service. As such, the Chatbot has been deployed as part of the support for the My Surrey system. It has successfully reduced the number of queries logged by answering users' questions instantly; reducing pressure on the support team and allowing them to focus on more complex queries.

CABINET MEMBER BRIEFING TO COUNTY COUNCIL

NAME: Natalie Bramhall

PORTFOLIO: Property, Waste, and Infrastructure

Halsey Garton Property Investments: Annual income has increased by £1m per annum to £17.1m due to new lettings and regears. Of note:

- **Workshop, Manton Wood:** New 20-year lease to the existing tenant at 20% rental increase.
- **Milton Keynes, Oakgrove Retail Park:** Concluding the rent review with Waitrose at 28% increase.
- **Former Debenhams in Winchester:** First two tenants (Nando's and Five Guys) occupy in May 2024. Strong interest in remaining ground floor restaurant unit with two formal offers.
- **Halsey Garton Residential:** Continues to renew tenancies for twelve months and divest assets, as per policy.
- 28 new tenancies completed with average 5% increase in annual rent.
- Terms agreed for the sale of two assets, with a further five assets due out to market.

Capital Projects – Delivery:

- **ASC Short Breaks Lakers site, Woking:** Full planning approved. Mobilisation onto site underway, ground works start March 2024. The Squirrels is expected to achieve planning approval in March 2024.
- **ASC Supported Independent Living:** Planning approved for former Coveham Hostel, former Horley Library, and former Manor School. Pre-Construction Services Agreement underway for on-site April 2024.
- **Hubs – Weybridge:** Library decant to commence 2 April, hoarding to commence 8 April. Preferred contractor identified, landscaping continues. Pre-start conditions submitted and validated. **Staines:** Planning approval imminent. Museum has received funding to engage a designer to take forward the integration of the museum into the library space. **Farnham:** Feasibility complete and delivered to service. **Sunbury:** Re-design with reduced scope presented to the services.
- **Libraries – Woking:** Contractor appointment underway. **Epsom and Redhill:** Preferred bidder identified, awaiting approval of procurement report. **Guildford:** Conditions survey completed by Macro 12 February 2024. **Redhill RAAC:** Regular monitoring. Consort House works complete.
- **Fire Station Refurbishments:** Lingfield fire station planning approved. Chobham declined twice by Environmental Agency, delaying planning approvals. Team working through redesign and targeting March 2024 for resubmissions. Reigate due for delegated planning decision in March 2024.
- **SEND / AP:** Unit for visually impaired pupils at Woking High completed February (43 schools now completed). Hopescourt, St Matthews, Dovers Green, Epsom Downs and Stepgates scheduled on site by May 2024. Anticipated that Fordway will be on site by April 2024.
- **Corporate Parenting:** Epsom and Walton Childrens Homes and Shaw family Centre completed. Live projects, Applewood, Cobham, and Dorking.

Acquisitions: Disposals – Surplus Declarations / Core Disposals:

- Victoria Gate: Acquisition completed 29 February 2024 from Woking Borough Council.
- Quadrant Court: Disposal market strategy received.
- CFLL Care leavers accommodation: 2 of 6 now acquired with a third under offer.
- CFLL Childrens Homes: Process to source 9 properties for children's homes across the county.
- Coxbridge Farm: Sale completed in January 2024. £31m in receipts payable over the next 18 months.
- Dormers: Final terms for the disposal to Tandridge is agreed and will go for Cabinet Member Decision.
- Karibu, Epsom: Contract soon to exchange.
- Lilac and Norbuy Park cottages: Exchange shortly.
- Portsbury/Hillside: Marketing closed February 2024 several bids received.
- The Edge: Re-opened on a 12-month lease.

Extra Care - Design, Build, Finance & Operate (DBFO):

- **Phase 1a (59 units) Pond Meadow:** Planning permission granted, S106 agreement in place. Scheme awaiting final decision on grant funding from Homes England. Expecting to start on site March/April 2024.
- **Phase 1b (5 sites c.306 units): Bentley and Pinehurst** secured outline planning approval. Salisbury and Brockhurst to be determined Summer 2024. Lakeside remains under review prior to planning process. Agreement for lease has commenced on the two sites that have secured outline planning.

- **Phase 2 (3 sites c.219 units):** Cabinet approved (July 2023) the procurement of a DBFO strategic partner for Colebrook (Redhill), Orchard Court (Lingfield) and Birchlands (Egham). RIBA Stage 2 design completed, and all three sites submitted for Outline Planning permission, anticipated will be determined before September 2024. Procurement for a strategic delivery partner will commence once outline Planning secured.

Workplace and Facilities:

- Macro Ltd: Phase 1 of the integrated facilities management contract went live in November 2023 with phase 2 scheduled for go live on 1 July 2024. FM Help Desk now managed by Macro.
- Life cycle and building condition surveys (& Asset Validation): Underway to inform the Capital Programme.
- **Compliance:** SCC/Macro are reporting on all aspects of compliance:
 - RAAC Schools: Programme all but complete; Shawfield Primary School confirmed with RAAC present. School remains operational following initial works. DfE supporting and confirmed funding for surveys. RAAC Corporate: Similar identification process as Schools. Five sites identified with RAAC to-date.
 - Asbestos: Task Group has updated the Council's asbestos management policy to align to HSE requirements. Progressing via SCC's specialist subcontractor to address the HSE Notice.
- Minor Capital Works: The 2023/24 programme is awaiting governance approval. It addresses urgent maintenance backlogs resulting in a change in the MTFS 5 year profiled spend.

Agile Organisation Programme: Acquisition of the new Woking Hub (Victoria Gate) completed on 29 February and design of the internal fit out is underway. Staff expected to move in from October 2024. Officers are re-examining building capacity and usage of the office estate to maximise existing buildings and minimise future footprint, ultimately leading to reduced costs of servicing buildings and decreased environmental impact.

Waste: Work developing a Materials Recycling Facility at Trumps Farm is progressing. Pre-application consultation took place between 5 February – 1 March 2024. This included two public drop-in sessions, and a virtual consultation room. Planning consultants are compiling feedback, but anecdotal evidence indicates residents acknowledged the facility was needed; concerns are around additional local traffic. We continue to develop our reuse offer and recently set up an arrangement for bicycles from community recycling centres to be provided to refugees. The bicycles are refurbished at a workshop at Ford Prison run by our waste management contractor, SUEZ, maximizing social value and training opportunities. SUEZ have applied for, and been granted, a variation to the Environmental Permit for the Eco Park. It includes several technical changes which have come about through the operation of the facility, as well as an increase in the quantity of waste permitted to be processed in the gasifier. This does not entail a change to the total quantity of waste permitted to be dealt with at the site under the Environmental Permit. There is currently no intention by SUEZ to increase the amount of waste processed in the gasifier, but this change would allow for future flexibility. Any increase in tonnage processed through the gasifier would require the consent of SCC and most likely an amendment to the planning consent which would be subject to public consultation.

Infrastructure: Good progress is being made across the Major Scheme programme, highlights include:

- **A320 North of Woking Improvements:** has all approvals needed and pre-construction planning workshops with the construction partner are in progress ahead of construction commencing later in 2024.
- **Farnham Infrastructure Programme:** the 20mph in key parts of the town is being delivered in phases, the Water Lane signal crossing works are due to start in March, detailed design is continuing on Borellis Walk cycle scheme, further design development/assessment is being undertaken on the Town Centre works and the Department for Transport has agreed for SCC to develop and submit the next stage business Case for the A31 bypass improvement.
- **Weybridge town centre:** improvement works to be delivered in phases, first phase taking place between spring and autumn 2024, including new pedestrian crossings and improvements for cyclists.
- **A308 Corridor:** improvement works are being delivered in phases – the Black Dog signal improvements are nearing completion, and The Shears signal improvement due to start on site in April.
- **A23 - Three Arch Road:** junction improvement detailed design nearing completion and legal processes to obtain some common land and small area of allotments to build the scheme are in progress with Reigate & Banstead Borough Council.

River Thames Scheme: Statutory Consultation concluded 4 March, with 800 responses received. Shepperton and Staines in-person events had the largest turnout. Progressing with Collaboration Agreement Part 2 with the Environment Agency.

CABINET MEMBER BRIEFING TO COUNTY COUNCIL

NAME: Matthew Furniss

PORTFOLIO: Highways, Transport and Economic Growth

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Transfer Functions: Preparing for the smooth transfer of former LEP functions and assets to SCC from the 1 April 2024 remains a priority. There has been extensive engagement and work with Enterprise M3 and Coast to Capital and senior officers/ representatives at the relevant upper tier local authorities (UTLAs). SCC seeks to become an Accountable Body for the purposes of collaborating with government on an integration plan and providing assurance for delivery of core LEP functions and government programmes across Surrey. As Accountable Body, we will be responsible for the delivery of the Surrey Growth Hub, the management of any residual LEP funding, and lead for the Longcross Park site as part of the EM3 Enterprise Zone. A governance review is in process to ensure the business voice is incorporated into local democratic decision-making related to the local economy.

Festival of Skills: Following the success of the first Festival of Skills event last year, this year's event has been confirmed for 15 October 2024, and we continue to plan and promote it. A Skills Demand Assessment is being conducted to increase understanding of the current skills gaps and where to target skills provision to ensure the needs of local businesses are met. Procurement for £2.3m of Skills Bootcamps training provision has begun and closes on 2 April 2024, with commencement of contracts expected to start from mid-May.

Business Surrey: From 1 April 2024, SCC will have a direct role in creating the right environment for businesses to grow and thrive through the provision of a new business support service, Business Surrey. A website will be launched and act as a one-stop-shop for businesses, providing information about business support programmes available in Surrey. Over and above the business support offer funded through the Government grant, our offer extends to those in the initial stages of starting a business, with nearly 100 people signing up to the Rebel Business School start-up course, which provides practical support to help residents turn ideas into viable businesses. We are also engaging with partners to shape the cluster development programme, ensuring cluster support activity is targeted towards work that will be most impactful for local sectors. A Civic Agreement is being developed to capture the work underway with our universities and ensure that universities and civic partners focus their engagement on meaningful activity to drive innovation, research, and growth in the local area.

Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy: The consultation on the Surrey RoadSafe Partnership Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy is progressing and being promoted to residents and stakeholders via various channels, including school bulletins, Surrey Matters and a recent social media push that has seen responses more than double from 1,700 to over 3,400. The new strategy aims to reduce death and injury on our roads, with a target to reduce collisions where someone has been killed or seriously injured by 50% by 2035 and 100% by 2050. It includes a new policy for a more flexible approach to implementing 20mph speed limits. The results of the consultation, and any proposed changes to the strategy and 20mph speed limit policy will be brought back to Cabinet in July 2024 for final approval, following scrutiny by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee.

Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT): Five new Surrey Connect DDRT services started last year (six in total), with more planned this year. A tender that will see the DDRT fleet increase from 12 to 28 zero emission electric minibuses covering more of Surrey is being evaluated, and once complete the next phase of our DDRT roll out will be announced. 5,376 trips were made across all DDRT services in Feb, with customer satisfaction rates averaging 98%, showing that residents clearly like and are benefiting from this new flexible transport offer.

Parking Enforcement: The new Surrey/NSL Parking Enforcement Service has been operational for nearly twelve months. Recruitment of Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) roles has been successful and the NSL Team is fully staffed with around 65 CEOs employed full/ part time across three main bases in Guildford, Esher, and Redhill. The team are using satellite locations (e.g. SCC facilities) for welfare breaks during their shifts to reduce travelling time. Many recruits are new to parking enforcement so there has been a need for training and familiarisation with patrol routes and 'parking hotspots'. Monthly reports are sent to Members outlining parking enforcement data and now include school run enforcement visits. The introduction of virtual permits has been successful, and our team have been streamlining the operation of permit schemes around the county to make them easier for residents to understand and use.

We have also started to operate three bus lane cameras in Guildford to help stop unauthorised vehicles using the lanes and blocking buses. Our HGV Watch scheme has helped gain information about HGV compliance with weight restrictions so that we can plan enforcement where needed.

Gatwick Airport – second runway proposal: The Gatwick Airport Examination in Public to consider the proposal to convert the emergency runway into a second general runway commenced at the end of last month and will end in August. Officers produced a Local Impact Report identifying concerns, with Tandridge and Mole Valley District Councils, and Reigate & Banstead Borough Council to submit to the Examination. Key issues are access (highways, parking, public transport, cyclists, and pedestrians), noise, and air quality. The Member Task Group will continue to meet for the Examination.

Planning Advisory Service review: This review of the Planning and Regulatory Committee has been implemented with a sixth meeting review due in April/May 2024. The changes have been broadly welcomed by Committee Members and officers and have improved the operation of the Committee.

Placemaking's Capital Programme: This programme of multi-faceted public realm schemes are progressing, with construction commenced on site at Croydon Road, Caterham, completion due in December 2024. The public realm will be improved and will introduce much needed flood reduction measures in the form of SuDs. Wider footways will improve accessibility, enable businesses to provide outdoor seating, whilst the introduction of a 20mph zone will slow traffic creating a safer environment. Phase 1 of Tongham is nearing completion with final remedial works being scheduled. Detailed designs of Horley High Street are underway with the Wayfinding project being the first element to be delivered in the summer this year.

Healthy Streets: Since its launched last year, statistics for usage of the design code website are improving, reaching almost 3,000 views. 127 SCC officers, 20 SCC Members, and 30 District and Borough Officers have received a briefing on the design code. The accessible PDF document will be published later this month, and a series of self-guided tours will be available through a digital app. A further £85,000 of funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has been secured to create a shared platform for other design codes potentially across all eleven Boroughs and Districts. A centralised system should aid the quality and success of planning approvals. The AI driven tool will increase transparency and certainty for stakeholders, speed up and improve compliance of planning applications, and could save officer and developer time in the process.

DEPUTY CABINET MEMBER BRIEFING TO COUNTY COUNCIL

NAME: Steve Bax

PORTFOLIO: Highways

Highways Horizon update: We are approaching the completion of the 2023/24 Horizon programme which has seen us carry out more resurfacing than in any other year, with over 1m² of surfacing completed on our roads and pavements equating to over 150 miles. In addition, we have completed significant numbers of schemes on other highway assets, such as the 62 refurbishments of traffic signals, and have carried out 32 schemes on our bridges and structures.

Innovative New Solutions: Utilising our Lane Rental surplus funding we trialed an innovative new solution for ground stabilisation on the A323 Aldershot Road. Traditional methods required significant removal and replacement of material, taking many weeks, and causing significant disruption. Our Highway Engineering Team identified an alternative solution used in other industries to stabilise embankments, but which has not previously been used for roads. It involved injecting a specialist geopolymer directly into the soil beneath the road up to a depth of 3m to stabilise the underlying surface prior to carrying out the resurfacing. The process was carried out overnight, meaning minimal disruption to traffic. The project has been shortlisted for a prestigious [Ground Engineering Award](#).

Grass cutting: Following on from my December update, I am pleased to confirm that the fifth and final urban cut of the 23/24 season has now started in all District and Boroughs. There will be six urban cuts in all Districts and Boroughs for the 24/25 season, with the sixth cut planned for March 2025; rural cuts remain the same, at two per year. Real progress has been made with mapping highway verges, and this will make it much easier for our contractors to ensure they cut the right areas first time. Going back to missed sections massively impacts on productivity, so real efforts have been made to avoid it this season. Grass cutting programmes will often change, for example the very wet weather over the last few weeks has meant that some verges were not able to be cut as planned. Nevertheless, an [interim programme](#) broken down to divisions is now available on our website, with the full programme for the 24/25 season due to be added at the start of April (and will be updated every two weeks).

Finally, I am aware that many Members will have viewed our prototype online maps, which detail the verge areas that will be cut, from the link shared towards the end of 2023. They have been updated based on the feedback we received, and the revised version will be available to the public in the next few weeks. These will be updated every time an area is cut, enabling our residents to see not only the verges which will be cut, but also when any cuts took place.

CABINET MEMBER BRIEFING TO COUNTY COUNCIL

NAME: Kevin Deanus

PORTFOLIO: Fire and Rescue, and Resilience

Military Covenant: The Surrey Armed Forces Team have been working to support the needs of 6,000 serving personnel, 1,224 service children and 32,500 veterans in Surrey. In March we held the annual Armed Forces Covenant conference at the Army Training Centre (Pirbright), now renamed The Soldier Academy. Over 160 people attended, including the Lord-Lieutenant, High Sheriff, Mayors, military, businesses, health, SCC, District and Borough Councils, Police, Fire, and veterans, and was chaired by Saj Hussain, Chair of Surrey Civilian Military Partnership Board. The theme was Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and delegates heard from inspirational speakers covering issues facing Foreign, Commonwealth, and Overseas armed forces personnel and their families. Caroline Paige, Chief Executive of Fighting with Pride, who became the first openly serving transgender officer in the British Armed Forces in 1999, spoke about issues she faced, the impact of the gay ban, and the support Fighting with Pride provides. Speakers included SCC and MoD colleagues exploring the support available to Carers, and the Head of HR from CGI who talked about their relationship with Defence.

Feedback was positive, with organisations considering how they can be more inclusive. SCC is looking at how to remove some of the disadvantages that ex-service personnel face by considering guaranteed interviews for appropriately qualified candidates seeking employment. The Countryside Team and Youth Offer Team welcomed seven veterans to the Norbury Park Sawmill in March for some volunteering, where they processed wood for our Forest Schools and enjoyed the opportunity of being outdoors getting to know fellow ex-service personnel. Due to the success, it will be repeated on the first Friday of each month going forward, supporting the values of the County Council and the wellbeing of our veterans. Delivery of awareness training covering the needs of the armed forces community continues, supported through promotion of the Forces Connect App sponsored by SCC, which has 22,000 downloads and 33 regions across England and Scotland, and we are engaging with Northern Ireland to bring them on board.

Trading Standards: Our winter communications focused on protecting vulnerable residents from scam phone calls. The campaign “Snow room for telephone scammers this Christmas” helped significantly increase the number of call blockers distributed to vulnerable residents. Last year 138 call blockers were installed, stopping 57,038 scam/ nuisance calls, preventing losses of over £2m. Serious delays in the court system have seen many of our prosecution cases bumped, causing serious stress for victims of crime. Despite this we have continued to successfully recover money for residents, such as £155,000 returned to the victim of a serious roofing fraud and another case recovering £180,000 for a victim of a complex phone-based scam.

Illegal Vapes and Under-age sales: On 29 January 2024 the Government as part of “Creating a smoke free generation” announced its intention to ban disposable vapes, restrict vape flavours, packaging, and placement in shops. We would enforce any new legislation and are awaiting details. Of the £30m funding announced for this we expect £5m to be allocated to local authority Trading Standards Services and £25m to go to HMRC and Border Force but this allocation is not confirmed yet. Locally there has been an increase of concerns about vapes that don't comply with existing legislation (non-approved, excessive nicotine content, exceeding max size) and a rise in complaints about sales to under 18s, so we have stepped up test purchasing with young people. Recent successes include stopping the sale of vapes to children from a vehicle selling outside of schools, seizing illegal vapes from retailers, and stopping illegal vapes entering the country. Most recently 20,000 illegal vapes were labelled as 0% nicotine to evade current legislation, but when tested by Trading Standards contained more than the maximum level of nicotine in legal vapes. We await with keen interest the new legislation and any associated resourcing for additional enforcement and prevention work. The new controls, though welcome, will create new enforcement challenges and we anticipate the growth of a black market of illegal products.

Corporate Health and Safety: The Health and Safety governance arrangements internal audit report was published in October 2023. The Corporate Leadership Team agreed ten actions; six have been implemented, with timescales agreed for the four remaining actions. These include: the development of a new Health, Safety and Wellbeing Strategy and action plan focused on improvement and maintaining a safe and healthy workforce; a health and safety update will be provided to the Resources and Performance Select Committee in May 2024, which will include updates on emerging risks and areas for improvement; and Health and Safety training for Elected Members in March/April, delivered in a Member briefing session.

CABINET MEMBER BRIEFING TO COUNTY COUNCIL

NAME: Marisa Heath

PORTFOLIO: Environment

Greener Futures: The recently launched HEAT (Home Energy Advice Taskforce) programme is one of the largest Council-volunteer collaborations in the country. Over 230 free household retrofit surveys by trained volunteers have been completed to help homeowners understand how to reduce carbon/energy bills in their home; 70% said they were more likely to install significant retrofit.

SCC has won funding to boost Green Skills in Surrey in line with the Surrey Skills Improvement Plan. Following a green careers engagement campaign in schools, new and existing courses are being subsidized, to foster local talent and address the green skills gap.

Solar Installation & Heat Networks: SCC has been awarded £5m in PSDS3c grant funding, enabling the retrofit of 14 corporate buildings over the next two years and work is ongoing to deliver the PSDS3b project by October 2024. Solar surveys will be undertaken for several SCC sites intending to procure a large solar rooftops installation contract. A data-backed solar investment plan is being developed. The current phase of Solar Together is finalising soon with the expectation to complete at least 1000 solar installations.

The team is about to commission feasibility assessments for two potential heat networks in Staines and Camberley, harnessing a government grant obtained. While the HEAT surveys and resident focus groups continue progressing, preparations work continues for the One Stop Shop for Domestic retrofit project, harnessing the LEAD government grant. The Community Energy Pathways phase 2 was launched to support the development of a Surrey-wide community energy group and support an application to the DESNZ Community Energy Fund.

Countryside: The Surrey Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) has been rebranded to 'Surrey Nature Recovery.' A meeting with Defra LNRS team was held on 7 March and Defra are pleased with our progress on the LNRS. We are aiming for a publish date between March - May 2025 and our engagement programme will start in April 2024. Our internal GIS team have produced a first draft of the LNRS baseline map and technical task groups have been set up with initial meetings undertaken or booked for the near future.

A joint procurement with SCC and nine of the Districts and Boroughs will commence in April 2024, a study looking at the potential for 60 sites across the county to be used as Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) 'Habitat Banks' BNG offsets. The SCC internal BNG working group is developing a BNG Habitat bank local sites register to act as a trading platform for the purchasing and selling of BNG credits.

Flooding: In addition to working with our partners in the immediate response, of Storm Henk Surrey teams are now working through investigations and engaging with impacted communities, some of which are still experiencing impacts related to high groundwater levels in Spelthorne and Tandridge. Surrey Teams are also supporting Districts and Boroughs in offering financial support to residents affected by flooding as part of the Governments Flood Recovery Framework. Residents may be eligible for financial support if their home or business was affected by flooding from Storm Henk - [Flooding - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/flooding).

SCC has been awarded funding through the Environment Agency and Defra's £25m Natural Flood Management (NFM) Programme for a project in Ash Ranges, Guildford. The £94k scheme was developed in partnership with Guildford BC, the Environment Agency, the Basingstoke Canal Authority, Surrey Wildlife Trust, Natural England, and the Ministry of Defence (landowners). The proposals include measures such as leaky dams, overland flow path management and water storage areas, which will temporarily store surface water during heavy rainfall.

CABINET MEMBER BRIEFING TO COUNTY COUNCIL

NAME: Mark Nuti

PORTFOLIO: Health and Wellbeing, and Public Health

Empower Mental Health Flow Improvement: This is a joint project between Surrey and Borders NHS Trust, SCC, and the Integrated Care Board, to look at improving mental health flow so it can deliver improved outcomes and better support for families and carers. The project will identify which workstreams will stop, continue, or be reframed. New projects which will maximise impact include referrals, gatekeeping and allocation; enabling flow through data and digital; personality disorder crisis pathway; timely treatment initiation; planning discharge from admission; and responsive commissioning. Leads have been identified for all work streams from across the system. Work is underway to ensure there is a one system plan in place.

Surrey System Facing Symposium Making Connections: I was delighted to host the first Surrey System Facing Symposium on Monday 19 February 2024. The purpose of this event was to nurture relationships between our wider system of partners, reaffirm roles and responsibilities within the system, and start a conversation around culture within health and how we can work more collaboratively together. 72 attendees came together, representing a wide cross section of the system: VCSE, Surrey Heartlands (including hospitals), Surrey County Council, Districts and Borough Councils, Surrey Carers, Surrey Police, Frimley, University of Surrey, and many more. Feedback was incredibly positive. The event is evolving into a bi-annual project, the next Symposium will be scheduled for autumn, focusing on a deep dive into Primary Care.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI): We are looking carefully at data to help us understand who in our communities are doing less well and how this links to things like disability, ethnicity, sex, age, and LGBTQ+ status. We are thinking particularly about education, financial security and employment, housing, health, family, and social life, whether people can use services, and if they can influence the things that are important to them. We will share this information with other organisations in Surrey to help us all work out who is being left behind and why, and what we need to do next to change this.

It is important that everyone who uses our services, and all our staff, can easily get into the new Victoria Gate office and use all the things they need to do their roles. Our new Accessibility Officer is part of the group that is making sure that the building has everything needed. She is also helping to make sure that the changes needed at Woodhatch Place are made.

Another important thing we are doing is changing how we think about Equality Impact Assessments (EIA). Instead of just seeing them as something we must do, we want everyone to see them as helpful tools for designing more inclusive services and policies, and understanding the impact of the decisions we make. To help us do this we have set up a group of EIA Champions made up of people from across Surrey County Council and are making sure that training is available. The team ran a development session for Members earlier this month.

The workforce reviews have given us a good understanding of the experiences of our disabled colleagues, those from ethnically diverse backgrounds and our LGBTQ+ staff. We know we have more to do in lots of areas, including policy development and implementation; recruitment; leadership and management; workforce development; and our workplace culture. The recommendations are informing the plan for what we want to achieve in 2024-25.

Portfolio changes to include community work: In addition to my other responsibilities my portfolio is to expand to accommodate the local engagement and prevention teams together with the engagement work with partners across our towns and neighbourhoods. This reflects the opportunity to align the work closely with the public health approach, health integration, and our goal to tackle health inequalities across the county. A key focus in coming weeks and months will be further development of the “team around the community” model – this will help us to better connect and target our key community-based roles (starting with the core of Community Link Officers, Local Area Coordinators, Communities and Prevention Coordinators) for maximum preventative impact, working alongside locality roles in the County Council, District and Borough Councils, the local NHS, and the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector.

CABINET MEMBER BRIEFING TO COUNTY COUNCIL

NAME: Sinead Mooney

PORTFOLIO: Adult Social Care

Care Quality Commission (CQC) Inspection: We have been notified that the CQC will be carrying out an assessment of Surrey's Adult Social Care Service. The service provided initial information on 8 March 2024 and a date will be confirmed for an on-site assessment visit, which will take place within the next six months, and we expect to receive 6-8 weeks' notice. The assessment will focus on how well the council is meeting its duties under the Care Act 2014. The CQC will be assessing councils over the next two years, with Surrey among the first to be visited. We welcome this external check as an opportunity to showcase the work we do every day across Surrey to support people to live their best lives. The CQC will focus on four key themes - working with people, providing support, ensuring safety and leadership.

Social Work Week: As part of Social Work week (18 - 21 March) the Principal Social Worker has encouraged all staff to attend one of the many free learning and collaboration events hosted by Social Work England that week. We are also taking the opportunity presented by this national initiative to raise public awareness of what social work is and to showcase the rewards of a career in social care. Our Academy has launched The Surrey Social Care Hotseat Podcast especially in time for social work week to promote careers in social work. The podcasts are centred around the career experiences of a Social Work trainee, a senior Specialist Practitioner, and the Principal Social Worker.

Older People & Frailty Transformation: The over-arching aims of the programme are to reduce the number of primary admissions to hospital amongst the Older People (65+)/ frailty cohort. This is to ensure good flow through hospital when admitted, with timely discharge and that more older people return home safely. This will reduce costs associated with hospital admissions and the highest cost packages of care. The launch of the wider 3-5 year programme will focus on ensuring that more older people can be discharged home safely and will be implemented through 100-day challenge programmes, running in North West Surrey, Guildford, and Waverley. These launch on 19 March and will report back after 50 days, and then at the end of the challenge. We will use the learning to roll out new approaches across Surrey. During Q2 (July-September 2024) we will be designing the wider 3-5 programme for review and approval.

Performance compared to the region: Surrey performs well in a number of indicators, for example:

- More people using social care receiving a direct payment at (29.2%) compared with (26.2%) for England and (25.9%) for the region. For this indicator, councils will generally aim for a high score, and Surrey is ranked 49 nationally for this indicator.
 - More residents with learning disabilities in paid employment (11.8%) relative to the regional (6.6%) averages.
 - More care homes rated 'good' or 'outstanding' by the CQC (81.8%) compared to regional (77.4%) averages.
- The growing number of requests for support, means we need to continue to focus on reducing the time people wait for an assessment or annual review of their needs, for safeguarding enquiries and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard applications to be completed.

Delivering the 'Right Homes, Right Support' Strategy: March marks an exciting milestone for this Strategy (formerly known as Accommodation with Care and Support). Construction will be starting at a site in Woking on a new Short Breaks accommodation this month. Once operational this will ensure that autistic people and adults with learning disabilities have places that can cater for their needs when they or their carers need a break. Alongside the bedrooms, a sensory room, communal lounge, dining room, accessible courtyard, and gardens will be provided. The building is designed on a green footprint with plans to use solar panels and heat pumps to create an all-electric, highly insulated building, and a more sustainable use of water resources.

Housing, Homes & Accommodation Strategy for Surrey: This was agreed and published in 2023 which provides, for the first time, an overview for all interested parties of the current state of housing, accommodation, and homes in Surrey, supplementing the detailed work of Districts and Boroughs. Our call to government has been shared with the Leaders of Surrey's Councils, with each Council sending it independently, as they wish. This initiative has created lots of interest in other authorities, and I have recently submitted an essay on the work to Localis. I am pleased also to have been asked to join a meeting of the Government Older People's Housing Taskforce to discuss the Strategy, which I hope will help to develop this further.

CABINET MEMBER BRIEFING TO COUNTY COUNCIL

NAME: Clare Curran

PORTFOLIO: Children and Families, Lifelong Learning

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Improvement Plan: In response to the Ofsted/CQC Inspection the improvement plan was submitted to the DfE at the start of March, after having been developed, prioritised, and co-produced with key stakeholders. Initial feedback has been positive and encouraging.

SEND Recovery Plan and Progress: Timeliness for the completion of Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCP) was 13% in January as projected in the recovery plan. This is due to overdue assessments being finalised ahead of most new applications. Educational Psychology (EP) capacity has been increased through external contract providers and this, combined with lower-than-expected demand for assessments, has enabled the EP assessments backlog to be reduced from 1,014 in May 2023 to 0 by February 2024. All overdue EP assessments are underway and will be completed by the end of March.

98% of SEN Officer roles are now filled and we have an Education, Health, and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) Recovery Team who are working to ensure that once the EP assessments are completed, the SEN team finalises the process within timescales. I am pleased to report that the team are on track to achieve the May target of 60% EHCP timeliness. Support while waiting, continues to be offered to schools and students by the Specialist Teachers for Inclusive Practice Teams until assessments are completed.

The SEN team has also established a team to ensure that annual reviews are completed without delay, and a SEN helpdesk has been established to support better communication with families and schools, alongside pilots for SENCo and parent drop-in sessions. These measures are already having a positive impact with fewer complaints coming into the service. The focus moving forward is to ensure that the SEN and EP teams are sustainable and able to meet demand for EHCP (Education and Health Care Plans) statutory work.

National Offer Day – Update for this year’s secondary place allocation: On 1 March 2024, Surrey’s School Admissions team successfully issued outcomes for secondary school places for September 2024 to over 12,200 Surrey residents. All parents were required to have either accepted or declined their offer by 15 March 2024.

In total, 83.1% of Surrey applicants have been offered a place at their first preference school (an increase from 81.3% last year) and 95.9% of Surrey applicants have been offered a place at one of their six preference schools (an increase from 95.1% last year). As some parents decline places, more places will be freed up and these will be offered to applicants according to their position on each school's waiting list. Alternatively, all parents have the right to appeal against an admission decision and to do so they should follow the advice in their outcome letter.

Early Years Expansion: The report detailing this Council’s approach to the implementation of the Early Years Expansion to Entitlements was endorsed by Cabinet in February. Recruitment to new posts within the Early Years Teams is underway to support the growth and development of the sector and ensure the best quality provision for our youngest children. The sector consultation and the parent/ carer consultations have closed, and the responses will be analysed over the coming weeks to ascertain supply and demand, and sufficiency requirements. The first grants funding panel will take place in March, to provide financial support to schools and settings to create the additional places that will be needed to meet families’ needs.

DEPUTY CABINET MEMBER BRIEFING TO COUNTY COUNCIL

NAME: Maureen Attewell

PORTFOLIO: Children and Families, Lifelong Learning

Domestic Abuse Strategy: In Surrey, our vision is for every adult and child experiencing domestic abuse to be seen, safe and heard, and free from the harm caused by perpetrator behaviour. The [Surrey Domestic Abuse strategy 2018-23](#) is currently being refreshed in partnership to support the delivery of recommendations from the [Domestic Abuse \(DA\) Needs Assessment 2023](#), Survivor Voice, and partnership workshops.

Domestic Violence Achievements in 2023:

- Support in [Safe Accommodation Strategy](#) published, and Surrey wide Sanctuary scheme delivered by outreach providers to enable survivors and their children to stay in their homes where it is safe to do so.
- Refuge Accommodation For All (RAFA) project – providing 8 safe, dispersed, self-contained refuge spaces in Surrey for all victims of domestic abuse, who face barriers in accessing communal refuges.
- Introduction of the [Surrey Gold Standard Coercive and Controlling Behaviour Framework](#), which has been presented and endorsed at an Executive level.
- Surrey DA immigration project provides the specialist casework required to support individuals who experience both domestic violence and complex immigration, nationality, and asylum challenges is live and supporting clients - 15 pieces of individual casework and 38 one off pieces of advice provided.
- Hope for Change is now live, a new service that offers temporary housing solutions for those individuals causing harm through DA – 4 residents currently with a further resident due imminently.
- A central virtual 'Steps to Change' perpetrators hub will co-ordinate a trauma informed and multi-agency approach to end abusive behaviours.
- Youths Using Violence and Abuse project has supported 71 young people in the last 12 months.
- Centralisation DA Related Death Reviews (DARDR) 15 ongoing reviews, 9 standalone and 6 joint DARDR's / Safeguarding Adult Reviews.
- Court pack has been developed to help survivors respond quickly and effectively if the alleged abusive parent applies to the Family Court in England to establish legal contact with your children.
- Continued investment in public communications campaigns on social media and in public spaces, raising awareness of DA with a particular focus on coercive and controlling behaviour. As a result, we have seen a 25% increase in unique visitors to the www.surreyagainstda.info website. An increase in calls to the Surrey Domestic Abuse Helpline is also observed during campaign periods.

Domestic Violence Ongoing projects and next steps: These include a new contract for DA Outreach Service and DA Training, which will go live in April 2024. As well as raising awareness via roll out the Court Pack to all DA providers in Surrey.

Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) – Achievements:

- Surrey's VAWG Partnership published the [Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy](#) 2023-2025.
- [The Serious Violence Duty 2022](#), ensures that local authorities and services work together to reduce serious violence, inclusive of VAWG and Domestic Abuse.
- New county-wide [Anti-Victim Blaming Guidance](#) has been published with the support of partners, specialist service provision, and survivors to improve our responses to victims and survivors. With [Anti-Victim Blaming training](#) rolled out to embed anti-victim blaming practice.
- SCC has launched a Street Harassment campaign to raise awareness of all forms of street harassment in Surrey's communities and empower both communities and professionals to act with Anti-Harassment training.
- Workshops on specific areas of VAWG to upskills partners and improve workplace culture and partnership work to improve the Night-Time Economy for women.
- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner's successful bid to the Home Office 'What Works Fund' for VAWG Engagement and Prevention Workers as part of the [Preventing Violence and Supporting Children project](#).

Violence against Women and Girls – Ongoing projects and next steps: We will improve workplace culture by introducing a Surrey County Council DA Advocacy Network. The partnership is continuing work to create a VAWG Needs Assessment, which will inform our partnership VAWG action plan. We will continue to raise awareness of all forms of VAWG and the drivers of these forms of abuse and violence.

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