



Supplementary Agenda

Item 15

for the Annual meeting of

**THE COUNTY COUNCIL**

to be held on

**21 MAY 2024**

(i)

(ii)

**15 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME**

(Pages 5  
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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.

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**MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL****TUESDAY 21 MAY 2024****QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED UNDER THE PROVISIONS  
OF STANDING ORDER 10.1****MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND  
ECONOMIC GROWTH****1. ROBERT EVANS OBE (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK:**

Can the Cabinet Member update the Council on any discussions or progress on plans for a southern rail link to/from Heathrow Airport?

**RESPONSE:**

This Council supports a southern rail connection to Heathrow Airport, which is a priority in our Rail Strategy.

The overall aims of a southern access to Heathrow are to:

- Encourage modal shift and reduce road congestion;
- Reduce environmental impacts;
- Connect communities;
- Boost economic growth and encourage regeneration; and
- Enhance our global competitiveness by making Britain a more attractive place to invest.

There are various schemes and options that could deliver this. Spelthorne Borough Council, the private 'Heathrow Southern Rail Limited' consortium and others have presented their schemes to the Heathrow Area Transport Forum, of which the Council is a member. Each scheme has different strengths and weaknesses in terms of strategic fit, noting that a connection via Staines as part of a regional rail scheme serving Guildford and Woking would have the greatest connectivity benefits, both to Heathrow and within Surrey.

Having various schemes and options is a challenge when trying to make a cohesive and compelling case to government for consideration and funding. The Council has therefore been working closely with the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group, the Heathrow Area Transport Forum and Heathrow Airport Limited to try and generate a consensus position. Recent work has seen the completion of an independent review of the Heathrow Southern Rail Limited scheme, which is a privately funded scheme with a heavy rail connection to Heathrow Airport. The review included engagement with key stakeholders, including this Council, Heathrow Airport Limited, London

Borough of Hounslow, Runnymede Borough Council, Spelthorne Borough Council, Network Rail, and Transport for London.

This independent review highlighted that Spelthorne Borough Council remained in opposition to the Heathrow Southern Rail Limited scheme, as the Borough Council is committed to its own Southern Light Rail scheme.

To help all stakeholders understand the comparative merits of the Heathrow Southern Rail Limited scheme and Spelthorne's Southern Light Rail scheme, a high-level compare-and-contrast exercise between the two is being completed. With a specific list of criteria agreed with Spelthorne Borough Council, the aim is to understand how the Southern Light Rail scheme compares to the Heathrow Southern Rail Limited scheme for Spelthorne and its residents.

The conclusions of this work should be available in June. It aims to help us to reach an agreed approach across most if not all stakeholders, so that one or more options can be progressed with government.

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

### **2. CATHERINE POWELL (FARNHAM NORTH) TO ASK:**

There are many reports on education recovery in schools in England post COVID: [Education recovery in schools in England - Committee of Public Accounts \(parliament.uk\)](https://www.parliament.uk/publications/2022/01/education-recovery-in-schools-in-england) includes a number of concerning statements including:

- *“It is alarming that it may take a decade for the gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and others to return to what it was before the COVID-19 pandemic.”*
- *“Effective recovery relies on pupils being at school but absence is higher than it was before the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly among disadvantaged pupils.”*
- *“Disadvantaged pupils have, on average, lower attainment than other pupils, and results from the Key Stage 1, 2 and 4 tests taken in 2022 showed that this disadvantage gap had grown.”*

There are 18 Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Surrey that are decile 1 (the lowest 10% nationally) for the Children and Young People Subdomain, and 27 LSOAs that are decile 2 (lowest 20% nationally) for the Children and Young People Subdomain. Not all these areas are covered in the 21 key Neighbourhoods, and not all the 21 Key Neighbourhoods are decile 1 or 2 in the Children and Young People Subdomain.

Can the Cabinet Member explain what steps are being taken to help the children and young people living in these areas to overcome the widening gap in attainment?

## RESPONSE:

Whilst outcomes for all children and young people are improving post pandemic, as with the national picture, outcomes in some key performance indicators have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. It is also clear from the data, that again in line with national data, disadvantaged children and young people have been disproportionately affected.

The high priority status and moral imperative of this issue is clearly set out in the statutory guidance for Lead Members and Directors of Children's Services, which states:

*“working with headteachers, school governors and academy sponsors and principals, the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services should support the drive for high educational standards for all children and young people, paying particular attention to the most disadvantaged groups”.*

Surrey County Council fully embraces this moral imperative and is taking steps to help children and young people living in Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) to overcome the widening gap in attainment starting as early as possible to stop gaps in attainment forming in the first place.

In the Spring of 2023, the Government announced their intention to expand the funded early years entitlement further and to include working families of all children aged 9 months+. Early Years Commissioning officers are working closely with all partners in the sector to ensure there is enough provision for all families in Surrey, especially in areas of disadvantage. Additionally, special attention has been paid to ensuring that funded early education for two-year-old (FEET) places are protected for the disadvantaged families who require this support. It is important to note that research suggests that high quality early education has a positive and long-lasting impact on children's educational outcomes and that children from disadvantaged backgrounds who attended high quality provision also have improved outcomes.

In addition to this, officers in the Early Years Educational Effectiveness Team have worked in partnership with settings to create a Community Vision for Surrey in 2023 linked to early years and narrowing the gap. This work sets out all the support on offer from wider Surrey County Council services and has been shared with local providers so all can access services to promote positive achievement for disadvantaged children.

Within schools and colleges, Surrey County Council works in partnership with its commissioned school improvement partner, Schools Alliance for Excellence (SAfE) to ensure continued support is in place and that levels of achievement, especially for disadvantaged children and young people improve. Strategies include:

- Webinars for Primary Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers in January delivered by national experts on the topic of narrowing the gap for disadvantaged pupils.
- School level data analysis to identify schools to be prioritised for support, ensuring our resources are targeted correctly.

- An 'Ambition for all, positive outcomes for all' programme has commenced to improve attainment of disadvantaged young people. This primary school programme supports school leaders develop a stronger understanding of the needs of their cohorts and best practice approaches to support underachievement of vulnerable groups. Schools have been selected for this programme based on achievement data to again ensure the right support is in place where it is needed. Secondary schools in Surrey have access to a focused programme on 'widening the lens on socio-economic disadvantage'.

As part of our drive to improve levels of achievement for our disadvantaged children and young people, Surrey County Council and SAfE officers will conduct analysis to ensure these projects are making a positive difference. In addition to this, officers are adopting a more outward facing approach, looking to neighbouring local authorities in London to understanding how they have closed their disadvantaged gaps as well as contacting northern local authorities as there is a wealth of knowledge within the northern powerhouse region. This expertise will be used to build upon and strengthen the work within Surrey.

All of this has been captured in our new 'Lifetime of Learning' Strategy, which has been co-created with all partners to underpin the Surrey Education Vision 2030, ensuring 'no one is left behind'. The creation of a 'Lifetime of Learning' Strategy has been specifically designed to focus on creating educational equity across Surrey, ensuring the focus remains on vulnerable groups, so that robust action is taken to remove barriers preventing equity and achievement gaps diminish until they are obsolete.

## **KEVIN DEANUS, CABINET MEMBER FOR FIRE AND RESCUE, AND RESILIENCE**

### **3. JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:**

Banstead Fire Station is proposed to be closed in the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP).

To help understand the impact of this proposal, please can you explain:

- a) What are the current lease arrangements for Banstead Fire Station, is there no option to renew the lease for the current site? Please provide the alternative sites assessment which resulted in this proposal, specifically in the Banstead area.
- b) What changes will there be to response times for incidents in the Banstead area as a result of the removing the daytime appliance from the current location (as opposed to response times across Reigate and Banstead as a whole which is currently provided in the consultation documents)?
- c) Will this result in increased response times for incidents in the Banstead area and how will the future estimated response times for the Banstead area compare to the current Surrey Response Standard?
- d) How would reliance on London fire crews change if the closure went ahead?
- e) There was a previous incident (a fatal fire) that happened several years ago in Banstead where the attendance times was well over 10 minutes as the closest



appliance was in Epsom. The current appliance in Banstead was relocated from Epsom. If the proposed change goes ahead and there is a similar fire in Banstead then could this happen again?

**RESPONSE:**

- a) The current lease for Banstead Fire Station ends in 2025.

Banstead Fire Station sits within a larger site that also contained the former Banstead Police Station. The Police are seeking to dispose of the site as the Police Station is no longer required for long term operational requirements. In March this year Surrey Police offered to extend the lease by a year, to allow Surrey County Council (SCC) to deliver its alternative provision. However, due to the programme of works, SCC will only currently need a one-year extension.

Following the launch of this consultation, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) was made aware that an extension to 2026 had been offered by the owners, however this does not provide a long-term solution in terms of fire and rescue cover and would have still required this proposal to be included in this Community Risk Management Plan which covers from 2025 to 2030.

This would also still leave a fire station that is not fit for purpose. Examples of how the fire station is not fit for purpose include:

- There is no drill yard for crews to train in. Therefore, they have to visit other fire stations to undertake practical training - resulting in them not being in the Banstead area during these periods as it currently stands.
- There are some difficulties surrounding how those working at Banstead currently store their Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to reduce the risk from fire related contaminants, and the potential impact to their health.
- The facilities here are not ideal for different genders and therefore this is not a workplace appropriate for the growing diversity of SFRS's workforce.

Therefore, the plan is still to commence with relocating the crews and equipment to Godstone Fire Station within the existing timeline.

A great deal of work went into looking for a suitable site to enhance fire and rescue cover and respond to risks within our communities. Our scoping work showed us that Banstead is not the most appropriate area for that fire station in order to provide the best equity of fire and rescue cover for Surrey as a whole. The most appropriate location is Whyteleafe. However, SFRS and SCC Land and Property Teams could not find a suitable location in Whyteleafe.

The new ambulance site in Banstead was deemed not appropriate due to emergency response times. The site is closer to Epsom Fire Station, which already has a good level of fire and rescue cover and low response times

which are well under the 10 minutes average to critical incidents. The move to Godstone Fire Station allows for a better equity of fire and rescue cover for the whole county, as well as ensuring that Banstead specifically is still protected.

Other options near the Whyteleafe area included:

- The former Dormers Care Home.
- The former depot at Beech Grove.
- The detached playing field adjacent to Marden Lodge School in Caterham.

The other three options were also concluded as not suitable due to current leases and access issues.

- b) Our Surrey Response Standard is to respond to critical incidents in an average of ten minutes - the Surrey Response Standard is for the whole county. SFRS are not intending to change the Surrey Response Standard as a result of this CRMP.

The current average to critical incidents to Banstead Village is 7 minutes and 15 seconds.

After moving the crews and equipment to Godstone Fire Station, SFRS's average time to critical incidents would be 8 minutes and 47 seconds to Banstead Village. This is still within our Surrey Response Standard.

The move to Godstone Fire Station will have an impact in other parts of the county, for example, the area of Warlingham West will change from an average response time to critical incidents of 9 minutes and 44 seconds, to 8 minutes and 6 seconds.

It is important to differentiate between risk and response times. As reflected in SFRS's Community Risk Profile (CRP), a greater level of risk exists within the areas north of Godstone, than in Banstead. Placing resources into areas of greater risk, means that response times to incidents that are more likely to occur are reduced.

The purpose of a CRMP is to provide a fire and rescue service based on risk.

- c) The services priority is still to prevent emergencies from happening in the first place and SFRS will ensure a full programme of prevention and protection activity will still be delivered to the Banstead community.

The services ten-minute average response standard for critical emergencies across the whole of Surrey remains unchanged and the estimated response time to Banstead Village meets that standard.

- d) It is a requirement of CRMPs that they should not rely on other fire and rescue services, this proposed plan is no different. There is no reliance on London

Fire Brigade. Fire and rescue services regularly support each other as part of the Fire and Rescue Services Act mutual aid. Our aim remains to send the nearest and most appropriate fire and rescue response to an emergency.

The crews and equipment are moving, not being removed, and the services minimum availability of fire engines (20 in the day and 16 at night) will not change.

Please note that the proposal is not whether or not the closure of Banstead Fire Station goes ahead because the fire station is closing in 2025 and there are no other appropriate locations, as previously mentioned. The consultation asks what residents views are on this so that the service can look at this feedback and plan for some mitigations and solutions for residents where possible.

- e) It is not appropriate for us to discuss a hypothetical incident - a lot of things can impact a response to an incident. For example, crews could be at another incident, out in the community helping a vulnerable resident or undertaking crucial training.

In relation to the tragic incident in 2021 that you are referring to: our investigations have made it clear that what was key to this very sad incident, was earlier detection of the fire. This is why the service is ensuring a programme of prevention and protection activity can still be delivered to the Banstead community after this change. However, the response time at this incident was an operational learning and fire engines are now fitted with satellite navigation as a result.

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

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

I understand that, where Surrey County Council contracts childminders, they are paid termly, in arrears.

Please explain why they are paid termly and not monthly, which makes budgeting by individuals easier.

What do neighbouring councils do in this regard?

**RESPONSE:**

In Surrey we have over 1,000 childminders registered with Surrey County Council to deliver funded entitlement to 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds. In line with our group providers such as pre-schools and nurseries, we offer up-front payment before the start of each term in advance. Providers, including childminders, can put in a request for an estimate payment based on the number of funded children they are caring for. This payment equates to 60% of the amount for the entire term with the balance being paid just after head-count forms are returned which is usually about two weeks into

the term. If any new children start after the start of term headcount, forms can be completed and payment for these for the entire term is made the following month after receipt of the forms.

We have had a small but vocal group of childminders who have requested monthly payments, and we are looking into whether this might be possible, however it would be too costly for us to operate two different payment processes alongside each other, and the majority of providers prefer the current model. The rationale for monthly payments seems to be that childminders struggle to budget for monthly bills when they are paid termly upfront or that a large payment each term can affect their benefits as it skews income.

Other Local Authorities use various payment schedules - some similar to ours or monthly but few are as flexible as our methodology.

**CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES,  
LIFELONG LEARNING AND TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

#### **5. FIONA DAVIDSON (GUILDFORD SOUTH-EAST) AND TREFOR HOGG (CAMBERLEY EAST) TO ASK:**

The Adults and Health Select Committee, and the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee, met jointly on 10 May 2024 to receive a report from MindWorks on their proposed plan to address the large backlog of children with neurodiverse conditions waiting for diagnosis and treatment in Surrey. The two Select Committees heard from school heads and from parents who expressed their concern that the current complex and bureaucratic system will produce increasing problems for society if young people are not helped to find their way through it. MindWorks personnel expressed their inability to manage the backlog in its current form and that they are unlikely to be able to do so within the current plans and approach without further investment and reform, leaving thousands of children and young people undiagnosed and untreated. We were not reassured that MindWorks - as the leading responsible agency in Surrey - has a strategy to handle the current situation, with the result that families and schools are being badly let down and will continue to be left behind. The MindWorks consortium appears to lack the strong leadership, direction and management that are fundamental to successfully navigating current circumstances.

The Select Committees jointly ask:

- a) Can the Cabinet Member exert all the influence and pressure she can to ensure that MindWorks actively listen to and respond to the needs of families and schools, although they alone cannot repair a broken system?

The Select Committees also believe the NHS, Children's Social Care and Education must work at every level to address the issue of growing numbers of children, young people and families who are not receiving the support they need to manage neurodiversity. This is not just an issue in Surrey. The education system in particular is not working, is out of date and out of sync with the concerns of modern-day families with children who have neurodiverse conditions.

The Select Committees jointly ask:

- b) Can the Leader work with other authorities and to urge the Government to make this the highest priority for our future society to give these children the best opportunities in life and ensure they are not left behind?

**RESPONSE:**

- a) As Members will be aware, I absolutely share the Select Committees' concerns about the large backlog of cases and long waiting times for diagnosis and treatment in Surrey for children with neurodiverse conditions. I do recognise the significant increase in need, which was not anticipated at the start of the contract and that this has combined with staffing pressures and diminishing resource to exacerbate the issue for Surrey and Borders Partnership (SABP). Senior leaders across the partnership are working closely with the MindWorks service to find a way to meet the needs of children and young people and their families and to make the service more sustainable and are working with SABP on the development of their transformation plan for their services for children. It is imperative that in producing the plan, Mindworks listens to the experience of schools, families and young people. Partners are also continuing to focus on providing a wide range of early support across settings to address issues before they escalate and try to reduce demand.
- b) The Leader recognises that this issue does not just affect residents of Surrey and that challenges face mental health systems across the whole country and addressing these is a key priority for him too. Through his work with national groups such as the Local Government Association, the County Councils Network and close working with Surrey's Members of Parliament and other national leaders, he will continue to lobby for a review of the system and for additional resources to deliver the service that Surrey residents expect and ensure that this Council's ambition that 'no one is left behind' is fulfilled.

**DAVID LEWIS, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES**

**6. ROBERT EVANS OBE (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK:  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Question)**

Since the start of this council term in May 2021, how many residents have made claims to Surrey County Council for pothole damage to vehicles e.g. tyres and how many of the claims have been accepted?

What is the total amount paid out?

**RESPONSE:**

Calendar Year	Total Claims Received	[Of the total claims received] Total Claims Settled	[Of the total claims received] Total compensation paid
From 6 May 2021	263	14	£4,230.30
2022	734	82	£21,454.59
2023	3418	473	£160,391.20
To 15 May 2024	1204	12	£4,435.15

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

**7. CATHERINE POWELL (FARNHAM NORTH) TO ASK:  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Question)**

I fully support the provision of additional Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) places in Surrey, as I am sure do all Members, however, unless the planned new SEND schools and places provide the right provision in the right place, opportunities to improve outcomes for our children and young people, whilst also reduce costs to this Council, will be lost.

Please can the Cabinet Member confirm that the on-going review of the SEND capital programme includes:

- a) An up-to-date review of the types of places that are required to support children and young people in Surrey.
- b) A strategic review of where the places should be provided to minimise travel time for pupils, improving outcomes and reducing the cost to this Council.

Both are important in addressing outcomes for children and young people with SEND but they are also key in addressing the on-going increases in the cost of Home to School Transport.

**RESPONSE:**

Surrey's sufficiency projections for specialist school places (including Special Educational Needs (SEN) Units and Resourced Provision in mainstream primary and secondary schools, and specialist schools) for pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) uses the same basic demographic projections as for mainstream pupils and these are underpinned by the same birth, population and housing data.

Pupil movement trends are also determined in a similar way, using information from the school census alongside the Council's pupil level information. However, whilst the proportion of pupils aged 4 to 19 years with an EHCP attending a mainstream educational setting is included as part of our mainstream projections, the requirement generated by those pupils whose needs mean they require a specialist school place is projected separately. Additional information relating to a child's

additional needs or disabilities, such as primary need and designation of specialist provision attended, are fed into these projections.

Specialist provision need is analysed for each of Surrey's four quadrants (North East, North West, South East, South West of the county), as well as at district and borough level (Elmbridge, Epsom & Ewell, Guildford, Mole Valley, Reigate & Banstead, Runnymede, Spelthorne, Surrey Heath, Tandridge, Waverley and Woking) across the county. This is because the projections involve a significantly smaller number of pupils and schools, compared to mainstream.

Projections draw from a wider range of the type of educational provision for pupils with EHCPs, from mainstream school SEN Units or Resourced Provision, specialist schools, alternative provision, Further Education Colleges, and places at non-maintained or specialist independent settings.

Specialist sufficiency planning is also informed by detailed local knowledge enhanced through consultation with parents and carers and good relationships with local schools. This supports the strategic approach to evidence-informed place planning. In Surrey, as is the case nationally, specialist school provision does not just meet the needs of learners in the immediate surrounding district or borough, so it has a far wider intake than most mainstream schools.

Using this specialist sufficiency planning allows for growth in specialist provision in local communities for pupils where demand is shown, therefore reducing the travel times for pupils where possible.

The Council's strategy prioritises increased availability of inclusion and specialist provision (SEN Units and Resourced Provision) in mainstream schools and academies concurrently to necessary expansion of specialist school places to create a sustainable continuum of provision that is sustainable and responsive to local children's needs in the long term.

Additional Needs and Disabilities (AN&D) Transformation Programme portfolios are subject to an annual 'health check' whereby performance to date against key strategies, budget allocations, organisational priorities and plans are reviewed in detail against benefits realisation. For the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) capital programme and the Alternative Provision (AP) capital programme, this was conducted between November 2023 and April 2024.

The review of all planned and committed schemes included detailed analysis of delivery viability and cost against updated national benchmarking with the Council's lead technical consultant, AtkinsRéalis. As well as examination of projected need in the medium to long term against planned growth to the current state-maintained specialist education estate with key stakeholders, which also will impact travel times for pupils where provision is noted as needed.

To conclude the programme's annual review, options for Cabinet's consideration and decision in late June were modelled, costed, and assessed against the Council's adopted AN&D Strategy (Inclusion and Additional Needs Strategy, Ofsted Local Improvement Plans and Safety Valve Improvement Plan) informing necessary reprofiling of capital spend to deliver the programme in full, to best meet local need and ensure the Council's Safety Valve compliance.

Surrey's High Needs trends continue to be a significant outlier compared to the county's ten closest statistical neighbours and All England benchmarking (Department for Education High Needs Benchmarking Tool 2023/24, per 1,000 children of the overall 2-18 population), which leads to too many young people with additional needs being separated from their peers. This requires a planned step change for how the Council and key partners provide support for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities concurrently with the Capital Programme's delivery, achieving necessary changes to commissioning trends which are financially viable.

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

### **8. JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK: (2<sup>nd</sup> Question)**

This question concerns the differences between the current road condition and how Surrey County Council's contract identifies and repair defects between a) roads with a flexible (tarmac) road pavement and b) those with a rigid (concrete) road pavement.

- a) Please provide the respective lengths of a) tarmac and b) concrete roads looked after as part of the Surrey Highways Contract, broken down by borough/district council area.
- b) Please provide the current maintenance deficits, broken down as noted above, by road pavement type (tarmac and concrete) and by borough/district council area.
- c) The latest cost comparison of how much it costs to maintain our current stock of concrete as opposed to tarmac roads to the same standard (per km length). Does it cost more to keep concrete roads up to the same standard in terms of how it feels to drive on that road?
- d) Are there different criteria for identifying road maintenance defects on tarmac roads and concrete roads? Specifically, at what point does the condition for an eroding or crumbling joint in a concrete road become a defect?
- e) How are potholes and other maintenance defects in concrete roads treated differently from those on our tarmac roads?

### **RESPONSE:**

- a) We do not have a record of concrete roads but estimate that 5-10% of Surrey's roads are concrete, some of which are covered with a flexible surface. We are in the process of surveying our unclassified roads with a



system called RoadAI which provides a suggestion for surface type which may give us more comprehensive data in this area over time, however it can be difficult for the system to identify concrete roads which have been overlaid with a flexible surface. The more urban boroughs and districts, such as Epsom & Ewell and Spelthorne, have higher proportions of concrete roads than other boroughs and districts.

- b) We do not distinguish between flexible and concrete roads when logging defects for repair and as per the response to a) we do not currently have all concrete roads mapped therefore we are not able to provide the information requested.
- c) The fine milling process of concrete restoration is comparable with major maintenance using standard asphalt material and should provide ride quality similar to that on conventional flexible asphalt roads. Based on the average costs from the 2023/24 programme, fine milling costs approximately £700,000 per km and treating flexible roads costs approximately £550,000 per km. The other main treatment options for concrete roads are full reconstruction which costs approximately £1,200,000 per km or micro asphalt which is significantly cheaper than the other options but has a substantially reduced treatment life. We continue to push contractors and academia to identify alternate more cost-effective treatments for concrete roads.
- d) Our [highway safety inspection defect matrix](#) does not differentiate between flexible and concrete roads in that they are determined by dimension alongside a determination of risk based on the location and type of traffic using the location. It will be typical for crumbling joints to not meet intervention levels as the asphalt overlay will be thin and therefore it will not meet the dimension consideration. Rather than being considered as “Safety” defects these would be considered as “Condition” defects and would be looked at within the “planned” maintenance programme rather than as part of the “reactive” safety defect service. The planned maintenance treatment would be to affect a repair to seal the joint to prevent water ingress.
- e) Potholes on concrete roads are generally treated with asphalt (tarmac), the same as flexible roads. The most common solution to crumbling joints, treated as part of a planned maintenance programme, is to seal the joint with an acrylic resin screed.

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

**9. CATHERINE BAART (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK:  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Question)**

When a road is to be closed due to roadworks, who decides who will receive a letter informing them of the closure - is it the County Council or the contractor?

What criteria are used to decide who should receive a letter informing them of the closure?

Who is responsible for putting out “Business Open as usual” signs where the road is closed, and signs to redirect vehicles trying to reach businesses?

What does Surrey County Council (SCC) do to minimise disruption by road closures to those businesses on roads too minor to be listed on the Roadworks bulletin?

**RESPONSE:**

The County Council’s Works Communication Team send out all communication for SCC works on Surrey roads, including planned closures. In certain instances, the contractor will supplement this by putting leaflets out the day before the work starts reminding residents and other stakeholders that work is due to start and not to park on the road, for example.

The Works Communication Team use their expertise and experience when deciding on who receives a letter or notice of planned work. Relevant divisional councillors are always included in the notification of closures. Email distribution lists are also utilised, which include relevant internal and external interested stakeholders such as emergency services, bus operators etc. Beyond that, the criteria includes the following aspects:

- How the road is categorised, mainly in terms of traffic volumes. For example, a non-traffic sensitive road, with few houses on it, that has lots of alternate diversion routes for drivers is likely to require a smaller scale letter drop. Conversely, a traffic sensitive road (one that is a major route, and closing it is likely to have a big impact on the surrounding area - so works are generally carried out at night), would have a larger scale letter drop that included the road where the work is taking place and other nearby roads and/or residents that may be affected by the closure, noise etc.
- Officer knowledge of the stakeholders in the location that might be impacted, supported by research using One Network / Maps to identify stakeholders / businesses.
- The location of the planned work. For example, work near to a school would require additional action, such as an email to the school, as well as them receiving the letter drop.

Business as usual signs are placed on site by the Works Communications delivery team. Signs used to redirect traffic will be part of the agreed diversion route and placed on site by the contractor.

The Roadworks bulletin includes SCC work taking place on all categories of road, major and minor. This means that all SCC’s works with a permit in place when the weekly report is run (every Thursday at midday) are included in the Roadworks bulletin. Regarding utility works, any with a permit and on traffic-sensitive streets or where a road closure is needed are also included in the bulletin. Utility works on minor roads which do not require a road closure do not appear on the bulletin, however Advance Warning signage is usually placed on site in advance of the works and works promoters will often be asked by SCC to letter drop local affected residents and businesses.

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

**10. CATHERINE POWELL (FARNHAM NORTH) TO ASK:  
(3<sup>rd</sup> Question)**

There are some schools across Surrey that have been allocated significantly lower numbers of pupils than their Published Admissions Number (PAN). Sometimes these are close to other schools that have recently increased their PAN or have over offered.

What steps can Surrey County Council take to ensure that communities in areas that are less able to travel, particularly in the 21 Key Neighbourhoods, do not end up losing their local schools?

**RESPONSE:**

We are currently updating and refreshing the School Organisation Plan and the Sustainability Strategy which will underpin further work with schools across Surrey. It is anticipated that this work will be completed by the end of the autumn half term. The [Sustainability Strategy 2022](#) sets out Surrey County Council's commitment to working with schools to develop innovative solutions that enable small and rural schools and communities to continue to thrive and flourish.

As schools receive per pupil funding and plan staffing and resources based on their published admission number (PAN), if there are too many school places in an area, schools become vulnerable to financial difficulties. Therefore, Surrey County Council shares forecasts annually with schools across planning areas to consider increasing or reducing the number of places in an area.

The [School Organisation Plan](#) sets out our place planning principle and methodology for the period 2022-32. It highlights the contrasting challenges in the school age population of Surrey, from a falling birth rate and surplus primary places to the peak birth rate from 2012 entering the secondary sector.

Department for Education guidance [Making significant changes to an academy: January 2024 \(applies from April 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) states: "it is for local authorities, academy trusts and local partners to balance the supply and demand of school places, in line with changing demographics locally".

We will continue to:

- Share forecast information with all schools annually providing further analysis and information where needed.
- Facilitate meetings in planning areas where surplus places are forecast.
- Share information and provide guidance where schools are considering amalgamating, federating or joining a Multi Academy Trust (MAT).

- Work with all schools to provide sufficient school places across Surrey so that all children and young people have access to local education provision to achieve high quality outcomes.

It should be noted that admission arrangements are determined annually and must comply with the [School admissions code 2021](#) but the local authority is not the admission authority for all schools. The local authority may respond to consultations on admission arrangements however schools that are their own admission authorities, such as Academies or Voluntary Aided schools, are not required to consult to increase their PAN. The local authority must allocate places in order of parental preferences, meaning parents receive an offer at the highest preference school at which a place is available. Parents only receive a centrally allocated school place by the local authority if there is not a place available at any of their preference schools.

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

**11. CATHERINE BAART (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK:  
(3<sup>rd</sup> Question)**

Under the current Home to School Transport policy, Surrey County Council says that it cannot offer a guaranteed concessionary place on Surrey County Council organised transport that is paid for by the family. The alternatives are either a concessionary place paid for by families but subject to removal at any time with no notice, which is a source of anxiety for families; or a guaranteed place on council organised transport paid for by Surrey County Council.

Please explain the rationale for not offering families the option of being able to pay for a guaranteed place on Surrey County Council organised transport.

Could this option be available in special circumstances?

**RESPONSE:**

We can only guarantee places on transport for those eligible in accordance with the statutory guidance which is reflected in our current transport policy. Those applying for concessionary seats are only offered one if there is spare capacity. As a result, the seats are offered on a heavily subsidised basis. This means that families do not pay the true cost of a seat; the true cost would be prohibitive to families and therefore we cannot guarantee a place on Surrey organised transport.

We will only remove the availability of concessionary seats if they are required for families who are eligible for assistance and when there is no other option for them. In these circumstances we try to provide as much notice as possible.

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

**12. CATHERINE POWELL (FARNHAM NORTH) TO ASK:  
(4<sup>th</sup> Question)**

Retention and recruitment of Surrey foster carers is absolutely crucial, and we all need to do all we can to support this.

The Surrey Foster Carers' Charter was developed by the Surrey County Fostering Association as one way to support retention and recruitment by demonstrating the Fostering Service and Surrey County Council's commitment to supporting them and the children in their care, as well as monitoring performance in key areas to ensure that excellence can be celebrated and areas for improvement can be addressed.

Please can the Cabinet Member commit to ensuring that:

- a) The Surrey Foster Carers' Charter that is rolled out is the same Charter that was presented to the members of the Corporate Parenting Board and the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee by the Surrey County Fostering Association and has their full support.
- b) The surveys sent by out the Fostering Service to monitor performance have full buy-in from the Surrey County Fostering Association and cover all the characteristics included in the Charter in an agreed, consistent and transparent manner.

**RESPONSE:**

We know that one of the biggest influences on foster carer retention is how valued and respected they feel by the network around the child. We have been pleased to work collaboratively with the Surrey County Fostering Association on developing and agreeing a Foster Carers' Charter that sets out commitments and principles for how we will build relationships, treat each other with respect and work in partnership in the best interests of children.

I thank Councillor Powell for highlighting at the earliest opportunity that the version of the Charter that had initially been uploaded to our website had some differences to the version agreed by the Corporate Parenting Board and the Select Committee. This was a most unfortunate oversight caused by human error which arose when the text of the Charter was made suitable for publication on the council website and in leaflets. The website content was corrected within twenty-four hours, and the text on leaflets and posters amended. I am pleased to reassure Councillor Powell that the Charter that is being rolled out has the same content as that formally agreed by the Corporate Parenting Board.

I can also confirm that the Fostering Service has been in regular contact with the Surrey County Fostering Association to seek their feedback on the content of the annual survey. The service has also sought advice and support from our Resident Intelligence Unit on the most effective ways to structure the survey to maximise responses and be able to analyse the responses. I can confirm that the survey

questions seek responses on all the key commitments of the Foster Carers' Charter. At each stage of drafting the Surrey County Fostering Association has been asked for their feedback. The third draft of the survey was sent to the Association Executive committee on 13 May following a very constructive meeting with Members on 7 May.

The survey will be one of a number of ways in which we will measure the impact of the Foster Carers' Charter in practice. We will also collate performance data and Key Performance Indicators, identify themes from feedback, reviews, complaints and allegations, and from formal inspection/evaluation of services. The Fostering Service continues its dialogue with the Surrey County Fostering Association about proposals to implement and measure the Charter in a proportionate and effective way.

## **MARISA HEATH, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT**

### **13. CATHERINE BAART (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK: (4<sup>th</sup> Question)**

What percentage of senior officers at Surrey County Council have now had Carbon Literacy Training?

How successful is the process of incorporating Carbon Literacy Training into induction for new staff? Is it reflected in performance reviews?

Does the ambition for Carbon Literacy Training for senior personnel extend to people in devolved positions resulting from commercial contracts (e.g. at Ringway)?

### **RESPONSE:**

Surrey County Council (SCC) delivered their first Carbon Literacy Training on 9 August 2022, and has since delivered a further 16 courses. 194 staff members, which is approximately 1.5 % of SCC staff have received the training with a focus on senior management, including all of the Corporate Leadership Team in 2022/23 as well as teams with the highest impact. In addition, 13 SCC Elected Members have also received the training.

SCC was awarded Bronze Carbon Literate Organisation status in 2023 to recognise commitment to Carbon Literacy Training.

All SCC staff have access to the short introductory Climate Change e-learning module on Olive. This is not a mandatory training course for staff inductions, but it is listed as highly recommended. A high number of staff have completed this training with 4,202 participants between January 2022 and 1 May 2024. Participation in the Climate Change e-learning module is not mandated to be included in performance reviews at this time.

The future aim is to train all direct reports to the Corporate Leadership Team. Training of staff that are not directly employed by SCC is not currently planned, but we will keep this under review.