

COUNTY COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING - 11 FEBRUARY 2014

MINUTES of the meeting of the Council held at the Council Chamber, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN on 11 February 2014 commencing at 10.30 am, the Council being constituted as follows:

David Munro (Chairman)
Sally Marks (Vice-Chairman)

*	Mary Angell	David Ivison
	W D Barker OBE	Daniel Jenkins
	Nikki Barton	George Johnson
*	Ian Beardsmore	Linda Kemeny
	John Beckett	Colin Kemp
	Mike Bennison	* Eber Kington
	Liz Bowes	Rachael I Lake
	Natalie Bramhall	Stella Lallement
	Mark Brett-Warburton	* Yvonna Lay
	Ben Carasco	Denise Le Gal
	Bill Chapman	Mary Lewis
	Helyn Clack	Christian Mahne
*	Carol Coleman	Ernest Mallett MBE
	Stephen Cooksey	Peter Martin
	Steve Cosser	Jan Mason
	Clare Curran	Marsha Moseley
	Graham Ellwood	Tina Mountain
	Jonathan Essex	Christopher Norman
	Robert Evans	John Orrick
	Tim Evans	Adrian Page
	Mel Few	Chris Pitt
	Will Forster	Dorothy Ross-Tomlin
*	Pat Frost	Denise Saliagopoulos
	Denis Fuller	Tony Samuels
	John Furey	Pauline Searle
	Bob Gardner	Stuart Selleck
	Mike Goodman	Nick Skellett CBE
	David Goodwin	Michael Sydney
	Michael Gosling	Keith Taylor
	Zully Grant-Duff	Barbara Thomson
	Ken Gulati	Chris Townsend
	Tim Hall	Richard Walsh
	Kay Hammond	Hazel Watson
	David Harmer	Fiona White
	Nick Harrison	Richard Wilson
*	Marisa Heath	Helena Windsor
	Peter Hickman	Keith Witham
	Margaret Hicks	* Alan Young
	David Hodge	Victoria Young
	Saj Hussain	

*absent

1/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Angell, Mr Beardsmore, Mrs Coleman, Mrs Frost, Ms Heath, Mr Kington, Mrs Lay and Mr Young.

2/14 MINUTES [Item 2]

One amendment to the minutes was requested:

Item No. 84/13 – re. Adjournment: Rachael I Lake requested that her name was removed because she was present for the afternoon session of the meeting.

The minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 10 December 2013, as amended, were submitted, confirmed and signed.

3/14 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS [Item 3]

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- (i) He invited the Leader of the Council to make an urgent statement in relation to the flooding issues affecting the county (Appendix A). Members were invited to make comments and ask questions.
- (ii) Her Majesty the Queen's New Year Honours List.
A list was included within the agenda. He informed Members that he had written letters of congratulations to those who had receive awards for services to Surrey communities.
- (iii) Related Party Disclosures – he reminded Members, that it was a legal requirement to complete their forms, and return them to Finance by the deadline in March.
- (iv) Members Survey – he drew Members' attention to the online survey sent to them last Friday.
- (v) He had attended a short service, held in the Great Hall on 27 January 2014, to commemorate Holocaust Day.
- (vi) That he had attended the funeral of Frederick Alistair Stone CBE, DL – Surrey County Council's Chief Executive from 1974 – 1988.
- (vii) He had also attended Sarah Mitchell's, Strategic Director for Adult Social Care leaving party at Dorking Halls.
- (viii) The Lord Lieutenant had presented Surrey County Council with a Commonwealth Flag. There would be a special flag raising ceremony in approximately one month's time.

4/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 4]

There was none.

5/14 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2014/15 TO 2018/19 / COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT FOR 2014/15 / TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY [Item 5]

The Chairman said that the papers for this item were included in the agenda and the supplementary report of the Cabinet circulated last week. He asked Members to note that the recommendations before them today, numbered (1) to (15) were set out in the supplementary report.

He said that the debate on the Budget would be conducted in accordance with the County Council's Standing Orders, with the exception that he would allow the minority group leaders five minutes each for speeches on the Budget proposals.

The Leader presented the report of the Cabinet on the Revenue and Capital Budget 2014/15 to 2018/19, the Council Tax Requirement for 2014/15 and the Treasury Management Strategy and made a statement in support of the proposed budget. A copy of the Leader's statement is attached as Appendix B.

The Chief Finance Officer presented her report to Council. A copy of her statement is attached as Appendix C.

Each of the Minority Group Leaders (Mrs Watson, Mr Johnson and Mr Harrison) spoke on the budget proposals.

Key points made by Mrs Watson were:

- Support for the level of council tax proposed but opposition to the budget as a whole
- The budget needed to be radically reshaped and more needed to be done to raise funding from the European Union
- Pleased the Administration was spending money to resurface roads and provide more school places but other areas needed additional funding
- The majority of Surrey residents did not think that the County Council provided Value for Money
- A request for a separate vote on recommendations (10) and (11)

Key points made by Mr Johnson were:

- Disappointment that the Council Tax was being increased and that the budget report indicated that further increases would be inevitable
- The aim of all Members was to obtain the best possible result for their electorate
- There was no mention of cutting costs and he hoped that next year's budget would address this (However, front line services should be excluded)

Mr Harrison moved an amendment, to the Budget recommendations, which was formally seconded by Mr Townsend. This was:

A new recommendation (15):

15. acknowledges the challenging and ambitious savings targets for the Friends, Family and Community Programme within the Adult Social Care Directorate and requires the Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and the Chief Finance Officer

to develop contingency plans to make savings in other budget areas to ensure the overall County Council budget envelope for 2014/15 is maintained.

And amend the original recommendation 15, to become a new recommendation (16)

(additional words underlined and deletions crossed through)

45 16. Requires these contingency plans to be assessed as part of the final detailed MTFP (2014/19) which the Council notes that the Cabinet will consider and approve the final detailed MTFP (2014-19) on 25 March 2014, following scrutiny by Select Committees.

So that the Budget recommendations now read:

The County Council:

(1) – (14) As per the supplementary report of the Cabinet

(15) acknowledges the challenging and ambitious savings targets for the Friends, Family and Community Programme within the Adult Social Care Directorate and requires the Chief Executive, Strategic Directors and the Chief Finance Officer to develop contingency plans to make savings in other budget areas to ensure the overall County Council budget envelope for 2014/15 is maintained.

(16) requires these contingency plans to be assessed as part of the final detailed MTFP (2014/19) which the Council notes the Cabinet will consider and approve on 25 March 2014, following scrutiny by Select Committees.

In support of his amendment, Mr Harrison made the following points:

- Concern re. the level of savings to be achieved within the Adult Social Care Budget, in particular, within the Friends, Family and Community Programme – he did not consider the savings targets to be realistic
- Other demands for funding i.e. highways repairs following the flooding, Better Care Funding and School Places
- Only the overall Budget figure was being agreed by Council at this meeting
- The Chief Finance Officer had confirmed that there were significant risks associated with this Budget
- Council tax would increase again in 2015 or there would be further cuts to services
- Other areas of concern included: (i) that the overall headcount for the County council had increased over the last two years, (ii) Information Technology costs continued to rise, (iii) Central Infrastructure costs needed to be re-examined, and (iv) the level of senior officer salaries

Seven Members spoke on the amendment, making the following points:

- That the amendment was a direct result of the Adult Social Care (ASC) discussion at the Council Overview and Scrutiny (COSC) meeting. However, following that meeting, discussions had taken place on how to deal with the pressures

- Referring to recommendation (15), the onus was on select committees / COSC to ensure that the detailed budgets were financially viable before Cabinet approved the MTFP on 25 March 2014
- Acknowledgement that the budget was tough and there would be challenges
- Government lobbying had resulted in some success i.e. the funding for the New Homes Bonus was being returned to Councils
- The number of extra responsibilities passed to County Councils since this Government had been in power
- Concern re. the detail of the budget and that the ASC budget should be realistic. There was also no contingency plan in place – should the need arise.
- Concern re. the reduction to the ASC care package budget
- Lack of understanding as to how the County Council would 'do things differently'
- The overall budget needed to be approved at this meeting and subsequently the detailed budget proposals would be scrutinised

The amendment was put to the vote, with 21 Members voting for and 52 Members voting against it. There were no abstentions.

Therefore the amendment was lost.

Returning to the original motion, 9 Members spoke on it.

Key points made in the debate were:

- The success of the apprenticeship scheme - it looks to the future and provides young people with opportunities
- Confirmation that the County Council was working hard to try and obtain European Union funding
- A reference to the Leaflet: 'More than 50 ways Surrey County Council adds Value', which was annexed to the Budget report
- The Public Value Review programme resulted in savings in excess of £30m. Also, unit costs were being reduced
- Support for Project Horizon.
- A reduction in the Adult Social Care budget would result in fewer people being employed to help those in need
- Any cuts should be shared across all budgets
- Funding for road repairs / flooding issues continued to be inadequate
- Residents would find it difficult to understand that their council tax was being increased
- Cutting the Surrey Fire and Rescue budget in Spelthorne was indefensible at this time, when large areas of the county were flooded and their services were urgently required
- An explanation as to why the County Council received a low Government grant and had to rely on raising a large part of its funding through council tax – could Surrey's Conservative MPs be lobbied to address this issue
- Due to forthcoming elections in 2015, Government promises about including council tax freeze grant in the base budget were worthless
- Increasing the council tax uplift by 1.99% was at the right level for the County Council

After the debate, the Chairman said that he would not be agreeing to Mrs Watson's request to take a separate vote on recommendations (10) and (11) and that he would be taking the Budget, including Treasury Management, as one recommendation.

52 Members voted for the Budget proposals and 21 Members voted against it. There were no abstentions.

Therefore, it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Chief Finance Officer's statutory report on the robustness and sustainability of the budget and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves (Annex 1 to the submitted report) be noted.
- (2) That the council tax requirement for 2014/15 be set at £564.0m (Annex 3, paragraph 3.5 in the submitted report).
- (3) That the 2014/15 council tax up-lift be fixed at 1.99%.
- (4) That the basic amount for 2014/15 council tax at Band D be set at £1,195.83 (Annex 3, paragraph 3.7 in the submitted report).
- (5) That the council tax for each category of dwelling in its area will be as follows:

Valuation band	£
A	797.22
B	930.09
C	1,062.96
D	1,195.83
E	1,461.57
F	1,727.31
G	1,993.05
H	2,391.66

- (6) That the payment for each billing authority, including any balances on the collection fund will be as follows:

Billing authority	£
Elmbridge	74,230,222.44
Epsom & Ewell	37,557,254.18

Guildford	64,630,646.62
Mole Valley	46,631,182.73
Reigate & Banstead	68,767,330.83
Runnymede	37,289,117.17
Spelthorne	45,013,925.65
Surrey Heath	44,379,315.63
Tandridge	43,429,951.44
Waverley	63,113,040.71
Woking	46,301,177.37
TOTAL	571,343,164.77

- (7) That the payment for each billing authority, including any balances on the collection fund to be made in ten equal instalments on the dates, already agreed with billing authorities as follows:

17 April 2014	17 October 2014
23 May 2014	21 November 2014
27 June 2014	5 January 2015
1 August 2014	12 February 2015
8 September 2014	16 March 2015

- (8) That the council tax rate set above be maintained and powers be delegated to the Leader and the Chief Finance Officer to finalise detailed budget proposals following receipt of the Final Local Government Financial Settlement.
- (9) That the £2.5m additional council tax surplus on the Collection Fund be transferred to the Economic Downturn Reserve (paragraph 68 of the submitted report).
- (10) That the County Council budget, of £1,646.7m, for 2014/15, be approved.
- (11) That the following capital programme proposals be agreed:
- to fund essential schemes over the five year period (schools and non-schools) to the value of £760m including ring-fenced grants and
 - to make adequate provision in the revenue budget to fund the revenue costs of the capital programme.

- (12) That the Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer be required to establish a mechanism to regularly track and monitor progress on the further development and implementation of robust plans for achieving the efficiencies across the whole Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) period.
- (13) That Strategic Directors and Senior Officers be required to maintain robust in year (i.e. 2014/15) budget monitoring procedures to enable Cabinet to monitor the achievement of efficiencies and service reductions through the monthly budget monitoring Cabinet reports, the quarterly Cabinet Member accountability meetings and the monthly scrutiny at the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- (14) That a robust business case be required to be prepared for all revenue invest to save proposals and capital schemes before committing expenditure.
- (15) That the final detailed MTFP (2014-19) be considered and approved by Cabinet on 25 March 2014, following scrutiny by Select Committees.

Treasury management and borrowing:

That the Treasury Management Strategy for 2014/15 be approved and that the provisions have immediate effect (Annex 2 to the submitted report).

This strategy includes:

- the investment strategy for short term cash balances
- the treasury management policy (Annex 2, Appendix B1 to the submitted report)
- the prudential indicators (Annex 2, Appendix B2 to the submitted report)
- the scheme of delegation (Annex 2, Appendix B4 to the submitted report)
- the minimum revenue provision policy (Annex 2, Appendix B7 to the submitted report).

6/14 ORIGINAL MOTION [Item 6]

Under Standing Order 12.3, the Council agreed to debate this motion.

Under Standing Order 12.1, Mrs Hazel Watson moved the motion which was:

'This Council notes the Government announcements restricting Surrey County Council's Council Tax increase, without incurring the cost of holding a referendum, to a level which will severely impact on Surrey's services to the public.

This Council believes in local government as one of the cornerstones of democracy in the UK, championing the needs and ambitions of the people it represents and that decisions made on behalf of a community are best made by those in the community.

This Council notes the Prime Minister's acknowledgement that local government is the most efficient part of the public sector.

Council further notes the General Power of Competence introduced in the Localism Act 2011 giving local authorities power to do anything that individuals of full legal capacity may do giving authorities the power to take reasonable action they need 'for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area'.

This Council supports the Local Government Association in its campaign for independence for local government based on the following principles:

- i) Councils should retain in full the proceeds of Council Tax and business rates, subject to retaining mechanisms for fairness and redistribution and that both these taxes should be determined by councils alone without central government interference;
- ii) Councils should be granted greater freedoms and flexibilities to drive economic growth;
- iii) Councils should be accountable to their electorates and not to ministers of the Crown;
- iv) The burden of statutory duties and central compliance regimes should be lifted further; and

This Council therefore resolves to work with Surrey's Members of Parliament, the LGA and other Councils to campaign for a far greater devolution of powers from central to local government.'

The motion was formally seconded by Mr Cooksey.

Mr Martin moved an amendment, which was tabled at the meeting.

The amendment was as follows (with additional words underlined and deletions crossed through:

'This Council notes the Government announcement on the council tax referendum threshold. This council asserts that it should be for councils and their residents to decide how local services are paid for, not Whitehall. The ballot box on local election-day allows for people to pass judgement on their councils.

~~This Council believes in local government as one of the cornerstones of democracy in the UK, championing the needs and ambitions of the people it represents and that decisions made on behalf of a community are best made by those in the community.~~

This Council notes the Prime Minister's acknowledgement that local government is the most efficient part of the public sector.

Council further notes the General Power of Competence introduced in the Localism Act 2011 giving local authorities power to do anything that individuals of full legal capacity may do giving authorities the power to take reasonable action they need 'for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area'.

This Council supports the Local Government Association and the County Council Network (CCN) in ~~its~~ their campaigns for independence for local government based on the following principles:

- (i) Councils should retain in full the proceeds of Council Tax and business rates, subject to retaining mechanisms for fairness and redistribution and that both these taxes should be determined by councils alone without central government interference;
- ii) Councils should be granted greater freedoms and flexibilities to drive economic growth;
- iii) Councils should be accountable to their electorates and not to ministers of the Crown;

- iv) The burden of statutory duties and central compliance regimes should be lifted further; and

This Council therefore resolves to work with Surrey's Members of Parliament, the LGA, CCN and other Councils to campaign for a far greater devolution of powers from central to local government.

Both Mrs Watson and Mr Cooksey agreed to accept the amendment to the motion and therefore it became the substantive motion.

Three Members spoke on the substantive motion, with the following points being made:

- The amendment had strengthened the original motion
- Surrey County Council needed more control over its own destiny
- Slight caution was expressed re: (iv) – the burden of statutory duties and central compliance regimes should be lifted further

After the debate, the substantive motion was put to the vote and it was:

RESOLVED:

This Council notes the Government announcement on the council tax referendum threshold. This council asserts that it should be for councils and their residents to decide how local services are paid for, not Whitehall. The ballot box on local election-day allows for people to pass judgement on their councils.

This Council notes the Prime Minister's acknowledgement that local government is the most efficient part of the public sector.

Council further notes the General Power of Competence introduced in the Localism Act 2011 giving local authorities power to do anything that individuals of full legal capacity may do giving authorities the power to take reasonable action they need 'for the benefit of the authority, its area or persons resident or present in its area'.

This Council supports the Local Government Association and the County Council Network (CCN) in their campaigns for independence for local government based on the following principles:

- (i) Councils should retain in full the proceeds of Council Tax and business rates, subject to retaining mechanisms for fairness and redistribution and that both these taxes should be determined by councils alone without central government interference;
- ii) Councils should be granted greater freedoms and flexibilities to drive economic growth;
- iii) Councils should be accountable to their electorates and not to ministers of the Crown;
- iv) The burden of statutory duties and central compliance regimes should be lifted further; and

This Council therefore resolves to work with Surrey's Members of Parliament, the LGA, CCN and other Councils to campaign for a far greater devolution of powers from central to local government.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 12.45pm and resumed at 2.00pm with all those present who had been in attendance in the morning session except for Mr Bennison, Mr Brett-Warburton, Mr Goodwin, Mrs Hammond, Mr Hickman, Mrs Hicks, Mrs Moseley, Mr Norman, Mr Pitt, Mrs Saliagopoulos, Mr Selleck, Mr Skellett, Mr Townsend and Mrs Young.

7/14 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME [Item 7]

Notice of 5 questions had been received. The questions and replies are attached as Appendix D.

A number of supplementary questions were asked and a summary of the main points is set out below:

(Q1) Mr Ellwood suggested that another provider may come forward to run Redwood and asked the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care for the service's viewpoint. He also urged the Cabinet Member to relocate existing residents as soon as possible to nearby homes in Guildford. The Cabinet Member considered that it was unlikely that an alternative provider would come forward because the building did not meet the standards of a modern quality care home in relation to assisted bathrooms. He also confirmed that the service was working closely with residents and their families to discuss their options and support them in looking for alternative provision.

(Q3) Mrs Mason referred to the Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) in a previous Administration, when the Authority had been advised to reduce their number and considered that this had not happened. **Mr Essex** asked for details on how the County Council benchmarked against other Councils. The Leader of the Council stated that Surrey County Council was open and transparent and confirmed that it benchmarked well against other Councils. He also said that the SRAs were approved by Members at County Council meetings.

(Q4) Mr Robert Evans considered that the response to his question had not answered it. The Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and the Environment responded and said that he had given a full answer, which set out the many improvements that had been made since 1968 and in particular, the last 10 years. He said that officers had been extremely busy dealing with the current flooding issues and thanked all staff involved in this current emergency. Finally, he said that Surrey County Council was the lead authority on flood risk and that a report on Surrey's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy would be presented to a forthcoming Cabinet meeting.

(Q5) Mr Jenkins asked the Cabinet Member for Community Services what measures the County Council would take if the proposals for Surrey Fire and Rescue (SF&R) in Spelthorne were unacceptable. **Mrs Mason** expressed concern about the second team and requested that these were addressed. The Cabinet Member for Community Services said that the decision relating to changes to the deployment of fire engines in the Spelthorne area had already been made by Cabinet at its meeting on 4 February 2014 and that a business case would now be developed and considered by the Communities Select Committee. She also stressed the importance of a strategic vision across the county for SF&R and confirmed that risks would be included in the strategy.

8/14 STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS [Item 8]

There were no local Member statements.

9/14 REPORT OF THE CABINET [Item 9]

The Leader presented the reports of the Cabinet meetings held on 17 December 2013 and 4 February 2014.

(1) Statements / Updates from Cabinet Members

The Cabinet Member for Community Services referred to her statement relating to the Tower Awards, which had been included in the agenda papers.

(2) Recommendations on Policy Framework Documents

A *Confident in our Future*, Corporate Strategy 2014 – 2019

The Leader of the Council said that the Corporate Strategy clearly set out the Council's priorities for 2014/15 and was intertwined with the Budget recommendations.

RESOLVED:

That *Confident in our Future*, the Corporate Strategy 2014 - 2019, as set out in Annex1 to the submitted report, be agreed.

(3) Reports for Information / Discussion

The following reports were received and noted:

- Surrey Cycling Strategy
- Quarterly Report on Decisions taken under Special Urgency Arrangements: 1 October – 31 December 2013

RESOLVED:

That the report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 17 December 2013 and 4 February 2014 be adopted.

10/14 REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE [Item 10]

The Chairman of the Audit and Governance presented his committee's Annual Report 2012/13.

RESOLVED:

That the Audit and Governance Committee's Annual Report 2012/13 to Council be noted.

11/14 MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF CABINET [Item 11]

No notification had been received from Members wishing to raise a question or make a statement on any of the matters in the minutes, by the deadline.

[Meeting ended at: 2.25pm]

Chairman

URGENT STATEMENT IN RELATION TO THE FLOODING ISSUES AFFECTING THE COUNTY

Chairman, many of our county council teams have been working hard to help keep the people of Surrey safe in these difficult weather conditions, especially vulnerable people.

I was saddened, as I am sure you all were, to hear about the death of a young Chertsey boy, Zane Gbangbola, over the weekend. A police investigation into Zane's death is ongoing, and our thoughts are with his family at this difficult time.

With more rainfall forecast over the next few days, we will continue to work closely with our partners to ensure that local residents and communities affected by flooding are supported. This includes the provision of three rest centres in Walton, Staines and New Haw and our highways teams will continue to work round the clock to clear flooded roads and fallen trees.

I would urge residents to keep updated on flood alerts and weather warnings, to use caution when out and about in flooded areas and to check on any vulnerable neighbours they think may need help.

I want to thank council staff who have been working tirelessly to support residents through what is a difficult time for many communities. We will continue to keep residents and drivers up to date via the county council website and our twitter feed.

**David Hodge
Leader of the Council
11 February 2014**

REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2014/2015 TO 2018/2019, COUNCIL TAX REQUIREMENT AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Leader of the Council's Statement

Chairman, today marks my fifth budget statement to this Council. My first statement, in 2009, came in the midst of recession. In that statement, I advised Members that local government was in its worst financial position for 50 years. Well Members, I will admit that I was wrong. Five years on and our position is tougher than ever.

But despite our difficult position - this Council is performing strongly. We are working as "one team" with our partners. We are ensuring that Surrey residents receive high quality and value for money services. We are listening and working with residents. We are making a positive difference to people's lives - day after day, week after week.

But there is no complacency! Our job gets tougher as demand for our services increases whilst resources from government continue to decrease.

You are all too familiar with the pressures we face;

- We have some of the most heavily used roads in the country
- We have a birth rate which has risen by 20% in the past decade
- And we have an ageing population where our population of over 85s is set to double in the next 20 years.

And despite all of these pressures, we continue to receive the lowest funding per head of population of any county council in the country!

This means that despite the fact that this Council has made £258m savings in just 4 years, the pressures we face continue to exceed the savings and efficiencies we've made **by £13m!** And looking forward to the next 4 years, the challenges are just as great.

Chairman, we are driving down unit costs to some of the lowest in the country. But despite this, reducing government grant and rising demand for services has given us no choice but to raise council tax by 1.99%. We know that this will be tough for some residents – something which I deeply regret. But if we are to continue to provide our essential services, such as looking after our elderly population or investing in our schools, then we have no choice.

We had said that we needed a 2.5% increase; however, we know that anything more than 1.99% would result in a referendum, costing tax payers as much as £2 million. Members, I am sure you will agree that it would be irresponsible for us to saddle the taxpayer with this cost for a 0.5% increase.

Of course, raising the Council tax by 1.99% means that we won't be able to do all the things we would have liked. But we can still provide a good service to residents in the areas that they tell us they value the most. That is roads, schools and care for vulnerable adults and children.

Over the next five years we will invest:

- £198m additional funds to ensure vulnerable children and adults are supported. This will include supporting a further 500 families through our Family Support Programme in the next year – taking the total number supported to over 1,000.
- £200m in improving roads and easing congestion. In fact, in 2014/15 alone we will improve 100km of road as part of our innovative Operation Horizon programme.
- And £327m in providing over 13,000 additional school places.

Meeting the demand of Surrey's rising birth rate is one of the biggest challenges this Council has ever faced. In 2009, we had to find 450 school places a year. By September 2014 we'll need to find 2,400 places – five times that amount! And in September 2015, a further 4,500 school places will be required!

But despite the enormity of these challenges, residents can have confidence that under this Conservative administration every Surrey child will have a school place.

Chairman, why are we making these investments? Because we are listening to our residents and investing in the areas that they tell us they value the most.

That's why we will continue to invest in apprenticeships - a priority of my leadership. Over the past year we have sponsored 540 apprentices in Surrey. This is great news for young people who are looking to get on in their chosen career. But it is also great news for businesses who are looking to secure the skilled workforce they need in order to thrive. By investing an additional £750,000 over the next financial year, we will build on this success story and sponsor another 500 apprentices by April 2015. These young people deserve our support and encouragement – they are the future of this county!

I want to take this opportunity to thank Surrey's business community, who have really got behind this initiative as part of our joint efforts to secure economic growth in the county. Economic growth is an area where our work with partners has really gained pace over the last year. I was delighted to see that last month the Office for National Statistics announced that Surrey's GVA grew by 8% in 2012.

This compares with 3.3% for the South East and 1.6% for the UK overall, meaning that Surrey's rate of growth is the highest for any county, city or region in the country! These figures show that Surrey's economy has remained resilient despite the difficult economic climate. Led by the Council's Deputy Leader, Peter Martin, we will continue to work with Surrey Connects, our two Local Enterprise Partnerships and the business community to build on this strong position.

As well as directing investment into the areas that matter to residents most, we will also continue our drive to be one of the most efficient councils in the country. In fact, during the next financial year this council will aim to deliver savings of more than £65m.

This is a significant amount of money which presents us with a real challenge, but one that I strongly believe we will meet. Why? Because this council has a proven track record of improving value for residents. Our Public Value Review programme saved nearly £300m over five years thanks to a thorough review of 29 services. Since then we have continued to make savings through smarter contracts, such as our £100m five-year Operation Horizon programme. In fact, over the past two years, Operation Horizon has already reduced capital unit costs for road maintenance by 16%!

Chairman, it is this Council's proven track record on savings that has led to us publishing our 'More than 50 ways to add value' booklet, which I'm sure every Member will have read as part of their budget papers. This booklet demonstrates that whether it is through reducing office space or doing more business online - this council will leave no stone unturned in our quest to deliver value for money to the Surrey tax payer. I have personally shared this booklet with our Surrey MPs who have been greatly encouraged by our approach.

Fellow Members, Surrey County Council has come a long way since I made my first budget statement in 2009. We have improved year on year by creating a stable financial base and by delivering a corporate strategy with a strong clarity of purpose.

But there is one key factor that will be essential in meeting the challenges that lie ahead - partnership working. Partnership working is the key to us becoming an even leaner and more efficient council. There are already many examples of where we are making savings through joined up working. For example, we have reduced costs for providing primary school places by 40% through working jointly with Hampshire County Council. At the same time our innovative procurement partnership with East Sussex is already saving both parties £0.5m per year.

Partnership working will really come to the fore in 2014/15 through our involvement in the Public Service Transformation Network. By working beyond organisational boundaries and structures we have a real opportunity to transform how we deliver services in areas such as youth justice, family support and asset management. The creation of the Better Care Fund also provides us with further incentive to bring together adult social care and health services for the benefit of residents. We cannot underestimate how important these projects are to the future of this council.

I strongly believe that through partnership working, making efficiencies through innovation and investing in the services that residents value the most, this council can continue to improve – despite the difficult financial climate.

It will not be easy - something that Select Committee's have rightly recognised through their budget workshops. But I believe it is achievable. Why? Because of the fantastic team we have here at Surrey.

Chairman, I am sure that Members will join me in thanking all council staff for their continued loyalty, commitment and service to the residents of Surrey during what has been another difficult year. I especially want to put on record my appreciation to all the staff who have been working around the clock to support residents through the recent and ongoing flooding.

Surrey County Council's staff are its biggest asset. In order to provide residents with the best possible services we have to attract and retain the highest calibre of staff. That's why we will continue to invest in staff to ensure that they have the skills to do an even better job!

In order to achieve the goals I have set out today, we will need to show strong and sometimes brave leadership. Undoubtedly, over the coming year, every single one of us will be faced with some difficult decisions. Sometimes the right decision may not seem to be the most popular. As I've always said, I'm not interested in political 'quick-wins' – I'm interested in doing what's right for the long-term future of Surrey.

The decision to raise council tax is one of these difficult choices, and not one my Cabinet has taken lightly. There will be those who question it and say why can't Surrey freeze council tax when other councils are? Of course, this Conservative administration is fully supportive of the Government's aim to improve efficiency

within councils and keep council tax low but if this Government really wants us to freeze council taxes, it needs to take account of our demographic pressures and fund us accordingly. Let it not be forgotten that Surrey taxpayers are the largest contributor to the Exchequer of any region outside the City of London. I'm sure that everyone in this chamber will agree with me when I say it's about time we started seeing some of that investment back in Surrey!

Fellow Members, to accept the Council Tax Freeze Grant would be equivalent to accepting a ticking time bomb. We may be able to maintain services for one or two years but we would be unable to invest in securing services for the long-term. That's simply not acceptable to me, it's not acceptable to my Cabinet and it certainly won't be acceptable to Surrey residents.

Surrey residents do not care for quick fixes they want long-term planning and investment that secures the future well being of this county.

Before I close, I want to thank Members for their support and the way they have engaged in the budget planning process throughout this year. Of course, there is still a final step. Select Committees will have the opportunity to scrutinise directorate level budgets at their next meeting, and this Cabinet welcomes any comments that they have. I would now like to draw Members' attention to the recommendations that the Cabinet and I are proposing on page 19 of the council papers. I would urge Members to support the recommendations because any other course of action would leave the delivery of essential services in this county in a dangerous state.

But this administration won't let that happen. We will continue to stand up for Surrey. We will continue to stand up for our residents and businesses and we will continue to make the right decisions for the long-term wellbeing and prosperity of this great county.

Chairman, I commend this budget to every Member.

David Hodge
Leader of the Council
11 February 2014

**REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2014/5 TO 2018/19 / COUNCIL TAX
REQUIREMENT FOR 2014/15 / TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Chief Finance Officer's Statement

As Chief Finance Officer for the Council, I have considered the financial management arrangements that are in place, the level of reserves, the budget assumptions, the overall financial and economic environment, the financial risks facing the Council and its financial standing. My statutory report forms part of the budget papers considered by the Cabinet last week and in your papers today. I know you will have taken the time to read it in full before this meeting.

I can confirm to Council that the Final Financial Settlement was received by authorities on 5 February and as only relatively minor changes were made; it is proposed to adjust for these through reserves rather than service budgets and details will be shared when the detailed budget is presented to Cabinet in March. Most significantly the Settlement confirmed the referendum level for 2014/15 is set at 2%; the same level as was indicated last summer and used in forming the planning assumptions you are considering today.

As I say every year, preserving the Council's financial resilience is a key long-term driver in the Council's financial strategy – that continues. I'm pleased to say that the Council's external auditor again gave an unqualified opinion on the 2012/13 financial statements and an unqualified conclusion on the Council's arrangements for securing value for money: rating us in the highest category. We propose to continue existing good practices (e.g. reporting budget monitoring within a month), which will provide assurance that the financial control arrangements remain sufficiently robust to maintain adequate and effective control of the budget in 2014/15.

I also reflect each year on progress towards delivering savings: for the fourth year in a row the current budget monitoring forecasts that none of the risk contingency will be required. This year it is therefore proposed to change this strategy: it will be reduced from £8m to £5m in 2014/15 and then, assuming this strategy is successful, removed altogether from 2015/16. However, the budget is challenging and therefore it is important that the existing rigorous process for monitoring delivery of efficiencies is enhanced throughout 2014/15 as agreed in the Cabinet budget report last week. This process will ensure robust strategic delivery plans are in place and will be led by the Chief Executive and myself. Clearly, the Chief Executive and myself will report back to Cabinet as necessary on any matters that may emerge.

The budget papers before you today, seek your approval of the overall financial envelope of the Council. Cabinet will make the final service allocations at their meeting in March. By that time, the Select Committee scrutiny process that services are currently going through, (covering existing MTFP savings and additional ones) will have been completed.

As well as significant efficiencies to deliver, the Government's austerity programme has, once again, been extended further – looking set to be with us until 2020: despite a recent economic recovery no improvement in the level of public sector funding is expected. Austerity is here to stay. Further the longer term impacts of the changes to local authorities' financing (via business rates and localisation of council tax support from April 2013) remain uncertain.

A year ago this Council re-confirmed its existing annual council tax increase strategy at 2.5% (although reducing this to 1.99% for the current financial year). However, in view of the Government's lowering of the referendum level to 2% (for a second year), the budget report before you proposes to amend this to be 1.99% throughout the MTFP period. This requires further savings but is considered a more realistic strategy in light of the tendency to lower referendum levels. Without this council tax increase, the Council would have to:

- impose a more significant Council Tax increase in 2015/16 and subsequent years; and/or
- make significant cuts to front line services.

You will have noticed that the budget report uses reserves to establish a breathing space for 2014/15. It is important to recognise that the bulk of the reserves applied here (over £20m of a total of £26m) is from the budget equalisation reserve – which represents monies carried forward from previous years deliberately to smooth expenditure across years. The overall impact on the level of reserves is relatively marginal and does not, in my opinion, adversely affect the Council's financial resilience.

The main budget assumptions used in setting the 2014/15 budget are shown in my report. Although challenging, it is my opinion that the general assumptions are sensible. However, there is risk that service demands differ to assumptions. Together with knowing that the proposed efficiencies are very stretching, it is therefore imperative that the existing rigorous process for tracking deliverability within year is maintained and indeed enhanced, as mentioned earlier.

Turning briefly to capital - the budget report proposes relatively minor changes to the existing capital programme and complies fully with the requirements of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. I am satisfied that the level of borrowing assumed in the indicators is affordable and sustainable. The Council will continue its strategy to borrow internally - thereby maximising the advantages of the continued low interest rates, whilst also watching market movements closely to optimise the switch to external borrowing.

In summary, there are considerable risks associated:

- with the increased uncertainty mentioned above
- with the achievement of efficiencies year on year
- with the volatility implicit in the level of service demands
- with the continuing austerity faced by the country
- and, with the increased tendency for Government to make late announcements of funding levels.

Despite these risks, in view of the mechanisms in place to monitor progress over the whole MTFP period, I consider that the budget proposals recommended by the Cabinet are robust and sustainable.

Thank-you.

Sheila Little
Chief Finance Officer
11 February 2014

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

TUESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2014

**QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED UNDER THE PROVISIONS
OF STANDING ORDER 10.1**

CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE

(1) MR GRAHAM ELLWOOD (GUILDFORD EAST) TO ASK:

The forthcoming closure of Redwood Care Home in Merrow appears to have been forced upon elderly and vulnerable patients and relatives alike with indecent haste by Shaw Healthcare. This has caused distress to patients and anxiety to relatives.

In appreciating that the home is run on a commercial basis I nevertheless seek, on behalf of residents and relatives, clarification of the following issues please:

1. Why did Surrey County Council (SCC) not insist on Shaw fulfilling their contractual obligations until the end of July instead of the now target date for closure of 31 March 2014?
2. Why did SCC staff come across as badly briefed, according to relatives, and not in possession of all the facts at the meeting on 9 January 2014?
3. Why is a replacement provider not being sought? The building being unfit for purpose has been quoted but it's the same building used for several years or is this a side effect of the poor Care Quality Commission (CQC) reviews in recent years.
4. Why can more reassurance not be given to patients and relatives that every effort to relocate these vulnerable adults, including dementia sufferers, to the Guildford area will be a priority?

Unfortunately, one effect of the way this closure has been handled has been to generate negative responses from many relatives and patients.

In consequence, I seek assurance that every effort will be made from now on to explain clearly to patients and relatives what is going to happen and that this will be done with the utmost care and understanding.

Reply:

Question 1 response:

- 1.1 The Redwood Contract was awarded to Shaw on the basis of a competitive tender in June 2011. The company tender was evaluated by a panel of Surrey County Council officers as well as representatives from user and carer groups. The company bid for the tender with a price that they believed was viable. The contract price per bed is in excess of the price that SCC usually pay for a nursing home bed. The contract was awarded on tender evaluation criteria of 50% quality and 50% price.
- 1.2 Shaw's actions were taken on the basis that they believed they were unable to provide an ongoing quality service to safeguard residents' welfare, as required in their contract. This arose, inter alia, from their continued inability to attract and retain staff of a suitable calibre resulting in the Care Quality Commission's Inspection report on Redwood instituting Enforcement Action on Shaw.
- 1.3 Shaw were unable to provide assurances or confidence that this breach would or could be rectified in order to allow the contract to continue.
- 1.4 Given that the home is currently failing to meet some essential standards and remain financially viable, there is a balance of risk between prolonging the process of closure and securing the ongoing welfare and quality of the home as both residents and staff choose to leave. Shaw will need to balance this risk against the ability to sustain a quality service care from remaining experienced staff.
- 1.5 We are working with Shaw towards a proposed closure programme that reflects best practice guidelines for home closures.

Question 2 response:

- 2.1 Surrey County Council was invited to the meeting by Shaw Healthcare as observers on 9 January 2014, to understand the announcement to residents and representatives first hand. The Adult Social Care (ASC) service was not expected nor in a position to present at the meeting.

We fully understand that relatives wanted immediate guaranteed outcomes from the announced proposal to close the home, including confirmation that residents would be placed in a nearby home in the centre of Guildford, and the exact numbers of beds that were available for them.

We believe that it would have been inappropriate and irresponsible at that time to give a blanket guarantee answer to individual questions without detailed discussions with each family member and the residents impacted by the closure.

2.2 ASC did respond to the overall questions, by guaranteeing that, we would meet with all residents on an individual basis to undertake a reassessment, irrespective of their funding sources. We also assured residents that, as far as it is possible, we will support them to achieve an alternative home of choice that meets individual needs and preferences.

Question 3 response:

- 3.1 The process of finding an alternative provider does not guarantee better outcomes for residents. The recently published Care Quality Commission report, and the reports from Shaw themselves have indicated a number of different reasons for the proposed closure including attracting the right calibre of staff and having to recruit a large number of agency staff. The recent Care Quality Commission's Inspection Report means that Shaw cannot guarantee a quality of excellent care that is the primary outcome essential to residents' welfare. Shaw has also advised that in managing quality risks the home has been unable to sustain full bed capacity resulting in significant financial loss.
- 3.2 Surrey County Council, through its safeguarding and quality assurance processes and our provider closure protocol, believes it is in the best interest for the welfare of residents to offer support to find an alternative home at this time. The ongoing welfare of the residents at this time is our primary consideration. Surrey County Council would not be seeking to commission nursing home beds from the home until we are sure that a quality service can be sustained.
- 3.3 Redwood is a nursing home, and unlike a residential care home, the residents' needs must be met by an appropriately registered health provider.
- 3.4 With regard to the building, general site reports indicate that although the facilities have been maintained in a good state of repair the property does not meet the standards and current design recommendations of a modern quality care home and as such has difficulty competing in the nursing home market ratio of assisted bathrooms is 10:1 falling short of current regulation standard of 8:1.

Question 4 response:

- 4.1 Where family members were unable to attend the residents and families' meeting on 9 January 2014, Shaw and ASC ensured that a family representative was contacted by phone or in person following the meeting to inform them of the consultation. Shaw sent a joint letter to residents and a family representative following the meeting.
- 4.2 Since 9 January 2014, a staff member from ASC has been on site to meet with residents and their families several times a week including evenings and weekends. ASC now have a member of staff there every

day who is also available to meet with residents and relatives after work and at weekends at a mutually convenient time. Shaw have allocated ASC some office space at Redwood and there is a sign on the notice board listing times that ASC staff are on site and contact details of ASC staff.

- 4.3 Dedicated key workers have also been on site to discuss individual care needs with individuals and their families and review any change in needs. Friendship groups have also been mapped to minimise any distress that may be caused by separating friendships groups.
- 4.4 There has also been regular contact with many family members to answer their individual queries, discuss their options and support them in looking at a new care home and in some cases organising a move to a new provider.

CABINET MEMBER FOR ASSETS AND REGENERATION PROGRAMMES

(2) MRS CAROL COLEMAN (ASHFORD) TO ASK:

Under Item 7 at the full council meeting on 10 December 2013, I asked a supplementary question to question number 6, regarding the equipment used in council properties to aid the disabled, namely hearing loops to assist the hard of hearing.

I brought to the attention of the Cabinet the importance of having the equipment properly maintained, and that the staff that were expected to use them should have appropriate training, which in my experience was not always the case.

I asked that whoever had responsibility for equalities within the council, to investigate my concerns and that the issues highlighted were resolved. To date, I have not been contacted by anyone on either point. Could the Cabinet Member please advise me of what, if anything, has been done with regards to this issue, and what importance this council places on making themselves accessible for those Members of the community (1 in 6) who are hard of hearing?

Reply:

The specific incident cited of a Surrey library hearing loop equipment failure, which was raised as part of a supplementary question at the County Council in December 2013 is currently being looked into.

We can confirm that hearing loop equipment is on a cycle of maintenance, in accordance with that recommended by the supplier. As this equipment is specialist, this is not something that Surrey County Council do in-house. However, Surrey County staff are trained in this equipment usage such as to assist customers on site.

In terms of this as a wider issue, we will look at the equipment inspection process to see if it is resilient enough or if there are additional inspections that need to happen. The training available for staff working in public facing areas will also be considered for review.

To help inform officers of how to best support those with accessibility issues, a meeting is scheduled for 10 February 2014, with the Surrey Coalition for Disabled People. This is primarily to understand if we can do more to support those with specific difficulties especially around accessing services within our core public facing buildings.

LEADER OF THE COUCIL

(3) MR ROBERT EVANS (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK:

Of the 58 Conservative councillors elected to Surrey, how many are in receipt of an additional allowance, over and above the general allowance paid to all Members?

Reply:

Details of the roles within the Scheme of Allowances which attract a Special Responsibility Allowance are published on the Council's website. Allowances are currently received by 37 of the Conservative councillors.

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS AND ENVIRONMENT

(4) MR ROBERT EVANS (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK: (2nd question)

Has the Council leadership been able to research and study the findings after previous floods in Surrey - in particular 1968. If so, what lessons have been learnt and or ignored? Why was no-one from Surrey County Council (SCC) prepared to go on BBC Radio Surrey to defend the County's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment plan?

Reply:

Although many residents in Surrey remember the significant flood event in 1968 technology and resources at that time were not as focused on recording, maintaining and sharing data and knowledge as we are today. In these circumstances the Surrey Local Flood Risk Strategy is informed and influenced by the still significant events that initially occurred in autumn 2000 and continued throughout that winter. During that period, currently considered the worst flood event for which records are held, over 500 properties were flooded across Surrey. In the winter of 2002/03 the Chertsey area experienced severe fluvial flooding and in August 2006 two months of

rainfall fell in just six hours in north-west Surrey, again affecting over 500 properties.

The council used the information and knowledge from all these severe weather events to better plan and manage its various responses and, working with other risk management authorities, deal with identified priorities throughout the county. Our efforts at that time were further enhanced by the Pitt Review in response to further serious flooding that occurred across England in the summer of 2007. The subsequent report, in June 2008, made 92 recommendations that helped change the way that local flood risk is managed and ultimately led to the introduction of The Flood and Water Management Act in 2010.

This Act made the County a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) responsible for managing the flood risk associated with surface water runoff, ordinary water courses and groundwater. These responsibilities are in addition to the duties also imposed on the council as Highway Authority.

The LLFA has a duty under the Act to:

1. Produce a local flood risk management strategy
2. Create an asset register
3. Carry out an investigation where significant flooding occurs
4. Create a Sustainable Drainage Approval Body (not yet enacted)

In these circumstances, the County Council has and will continue to respond to flooding issues throughout the county providing practical support and assistance with partner organisations where possible. The Council is also ensuring that flood information is obtained, maintained, shared and communicated widely with other flood risk management authorities, and internal and external stakeholders, for future reference and action where appropriate.

Following the flood events over Christmas and in the interim the council has been evaluating the data to confirm whether official 'investigations' are required at approximately 20 sites across the county where significant flooding has occurred. Any individual investigation of this nature will require the involvement of all the relevant flood risk management authorities concerned in order to provide appropriate conclusions.

The Council's operational response to the severe weather events and emergency situation over Christmas and the New Year included officers from a variety of services, together with staff from our service provider partners who successfully delivered on the ground. Many of the individuals concerned worked throughout the holiday period and over subsequent weekends, and continue to do so, to ensure services to Surrey residents were generally maintained. I would like to acknowledge the work done by all parties and thank the individuals and services concerned.

I can also confirm that, following a public engagement exercise, the Surrey Local Flood Risk Strategy has been updated and Cabinet will receive my report on 25 March 2014. In these circumstances I, and officers, support the aims and objectives of the strategy and I am always available to respond to requests for information.

CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES

(5) MRS CAROL COLEMAN (ASHFORD) TO ASK: (2nd question)

Residents in the division that I represent, Ashford in Spelthorne, are very concerned about the plans to replace the two current fire stations with a new station which would lead to the loss of one full time crewed fire engine for the borough.

Can they be assured that all options to make the required financial savings were investigated, and that the decision to make savings by reducing the fire cover in Spelthorne was the only possible one that could be taken?

Front line services should be the last place to look for savings, so can the Cabinet please tell me what other options were investigated, as that is not clear from the papers at the Communities Select Committee nor the Cabinet meetings that I attended.

- How many staff are employed in Surrey Fire & Rescue, and how many of these are front line staff (fire fighters)?
- How many vehicles in the service are front line operational, along with the total number of vehicles, and what is the cost and value of those that are not i.e. managers cars?
- At the Cabinet meeting, a fire officer asked if the Cabinet would consider making the required savings by terminating the contract for outsourcing SF&RS work, but that was not addressed by the Cabinet. Could we please have a response to that question?

These are the questions that residents need to know have been looked at before the decision is taken to reduce the fire and rescue cover in an area.

Reply:

I would like to thank Mrs Coleman for taking the time to raise these points.

Whilst I note the contents of the questions that she has raised it must be remembered that the matter to which she refers which is the changes to the deployment of fire engines in Spelthorne was, in fact, presented to the Cabinet on 4 February 2014. The Cabinet is responsible for all executive decisions and leads on the preparation of the Council's policies and budget and makes recommendations to the County Council on the major policy plans and the budget. It is the role of Cabinet to take decisions within this framework of plans and procedural rules approved by the Council, including

key decisions, of which this was one. To that effect therefore, this matter has progressed through that established framework which has allowed scrutiny (at both Communities Select Committee and Cabinet) and for due diligence and consideration of the matters pertinent to the matter at hand to be fully considered.

Our values are crucial in delivering our corporate strategy, and are what we draw on to make a difference for Surrey residents. During the Cabinet meeting, it was stated that the revised proposal was as a direct consequence of the Council actively listening to what people had said during the consultation and in particular the fact that whilst one fire station was acceptable, one fire engine was not which is why there will now be two 24/7 fire engines remaining in Spelthorne to support a Surrey wide response. The provision of a new and modern, fit for purpose fire station and the creation of 18 new part-time jobs in Spelthorne is a significant investment in the borough.

In coming to a decision on this issue the Cabinet has taken account of all relevant matters. The relevant matters in this context included the statutory requirements (the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004, the Civil Contingencies Act, 2004) the Fire and Rescue National Framework for England, the Public Safety Plan, the policy considerations, the impacts of the options proposed on service provision, the medium term financial plan, any relevant risks, the results of the consultation and the public sector equality duty. All five options were clearly laid out in the Cabinet paper.

With regards to the bullet points listed, the total number of personnel employed by SFRS is 797, of which 720 are frontline staff which provide an operational response. This includes officers at various levels of the organisation, all of which provide a blue light response to emergencies. These can be broken down further:

Wholetime fire officers	591
Retained / on-call fire officers	101
Control operators	28
Support Staff	77

For bullet point 2 regarding the number of vehicles in SFRS, this information is available but does require a detailed briefing which is available to all Members should they wish to avail themselves of this.

With regard to the question asked by the fire officer as to whether the contract could be "*terminated... for outsourcing SF&RS work*" my colleague Kay Hammond, in her capacity as Cabinet Associate Member for Fire and Police Services, answered the question at Cabinet and rightly stated that it is a statutory requirement for the Fire and Rescue Authority to be able to discharge its functions under all foreseeable circumstances, including times when there are employment disputes. That is why there is such a contract in place.