

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL HELD AT THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, KINGSTON UPON THAMES, KT1 2DN ON 4 FEBRUARY 2020 COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM, THE COUNCIL BEING CONSTITUTED AS FOLLOWS:

Tony Samuels (Chairman)
Helyn Clack (Vice-Chairman)

*	Mary Angell		Naz Islam
	Ayesha Azad		Colin Kemp
	Nikki Barton		Eber Kington
	John Beckett		Graham Knight
	Mike Bennison		Rachael I Lake
	Amanda Boote	*	Yvonna Lay
	Chris Botten		David Lee
	Liz Bowes		Mary Lewis
	Natalie Bramhall	*	Andy MacLeod
	Mark Brett-Warburton	*	Ernest Mallett MBE
	Ben Carasco		David Mansfield
	Bill Chapman		Peter Martin
	Stephen Cooksey		Jan Mason
	Clare Curran		Cameron McIntosh
	Nick Darby		Sinead Mooney
	Paul Deach	*	Charlotte Morley
*	Graham Ellwood		Marsha Moseley
	Jonathan Essex		Tina Mountain
	Robert Evans		Bernie Muir
	Tim Evans		Mark Nuti
	Mel Few		John O'Reilly
	Will Forster		Tim Oliver
*	John Furey		Andrew Povey
	Matt Furniss		Wyatt Ramsdale
	Bob Gardner		Penny Rivers
	Mike Goodman		Becky Rush
	Angela Goodwin		Stephen Spence
	David Goodwin		Lesley Steeds
	Zully Grant-Duff		Peter Szanto
	Alison Griffiths		Keith Taylor
	Ken Gulati	*	Barbara Thomson
	Tim Hall	*	Rose Thorn
*	Kay Hammond		Chris Townsend
	David Harmer		Denise Turner-Stewart
	Jeffrey Harris		Richard Walsh
	Nick Harrison		Hazel Watson
	Edward Hawkins		Fiona White
*	Marisa Heath		Keith Witham
	Saj Hussain		Victoria Young
	Julie Iles		

*absent

1/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Angell, Mr Furey, Mrs Hammond, Miss Heath, Mrs Lay, Mr MacLeod, Mr Mallett, Ms Morley, Ms Thomson and Mrs Thorn.

2/20 MINUTES [Item 2]

The minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 10 December 2019 were submitted, confirmed and signed.

3/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were none.

4/20 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS [Item 4]

The Chairman:

- Highlighted to Members that the Chairman's Announcements were located in the agenda front sheet.

5/20 2020/21 FINAL BUDGET REPORT AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY [Item 5]

The Leader presented the 2020/21 Final Budget Report and Medium-Term Financial Strategy and made a statement in support of the proposed budget. A copy of the Leader's statement is attached as Appendix A.

Each of the Minority Group Leaders (Mr Darby and Mr Botten) were invited to speak on the budget proposals.

Key points made by Mr Darby were that:

- There was greater stability this year due to a balanced budget without the use of reserves which was an essential improvement and he welcomed the improvements in the Children's directorate.
- Commended the capital funding for additional care and children's homes.
- Noted the need to accelerate key project areas to improve residents' experiences whilst generating savings.
- The provision of affordable key worker housing should be considered, working closely with boroughs and district councils to have a strategic approach to housing, developing Surrey's 2050 Place Ambition for the right houses in the right places.
- Welcomed the additional funding for highways and flood defences, but more detail was needed on the £100 million for the Community Investment Fund.
- Praised the positive changes to scrutiny across the Council that were agreed last May.
- Noted that it was the role of the opposition to scrutinise the proposed budget as opposed to providing an alternative one.
- Questioned the amount set aside in the budget to address the Climate Emergency.

- That the move to Woking was positive due to the current economic and environmental costs of County Hall and promotion of agile working.
- Despite the £20 million contingency in the budget, queried whether that would be adequate due to the significant annual cuts and rationing in Adult Social Care.
- Both SEND and public health faced low central Government funding, as well as a £700,000 cut for mental health. Years of austerity had affected the Council's provision of services and of the £40 million increase in the Council's budget by 2020/21, £28 million was from a rise in council tax.
- Increased funding was short-term as there was a forecasted £160 million deficit by 2024/2025, noting that 'efficiencies' were cuts.
- That the Fairer Funding Review and the green paper on Adult Social Care remained outstanding making forward planning difficult.
- Proposed that there was a need for two extra Council Tax bands at the top end covering those who could afford to contribute more, savings from this would fund services and provide relief for those in lower tax bands.
- Commended the budget, but expressed concern on criticisms from CIPFA and the Council's auditors around areas lacking significant Government funding.

Key points made by Mr Botten were that:

- There was a challenging context concerning inadequate local government funding which created a burden on the Council to address the ongoing concerns of residents, including the difficulty in getting the right care packages for SEND and elderly relatives.
- Praised the Council's Transformation Programme, but queried whether transformation was reaching the front line where services were rationed despite significant demand.
- The capital investment programme was of huge importance to residents, particularly the £270 million flood prevention scheme.
- The continued integration with Public Health was beneficial and the Executive Director for Children, Families, Lifelong Learning involvement in health commissioning for children was welcomed.
- Raised concerns with the lack of effective transformation on the ground, noting cost pressures the transformation project on Spans and Layers which generated a £500,000 cost pressure.
- The proposed £14 million efficiencies in SEND were worrying when individuals struggled to see educational psychologists and speech therapists.
- Highlighted that elderly care packages, and learning disability and autism services were cut by £4.6 million apiece and a saving of £700,000 was needed for the recent transformation programme on the reorganisation of Section 75 concerning mental health - compared to the £100 million investment in the Community Investment Fund.
- Noted the premature savings on the total spending of £12.3 million in Adult Social Care but welcomed the Local Learning Fund of £1 million for schools to access resources for SEND.
- In response to the recent petition to Council on the Fire Service, a positive interim report on the service had been released, but the £1.5 million in efficiencies was problematic as staffing levels remained a challenge.

- Felt that the protection of the most vulnerable in the Council would be compromised by the efficiencies needed within the transformation programmes.
- Commended the competence of the proposed budget but noted the remaining ethical challenges.

Twelve Members spoke on the Budget proposals and the following key points were made:

- That despite future uncertainty over local government funding, the budget was a clever balance with a sensible level of reserves especially utilising the low interest rates by having a large capital programme. Commended greater investment in highways, local projects and the additional £70 million funding for schools including non-academies.
- That the budget was not developed through cross-party consultation and was concerned that local projects were not a priority to the Council, such as the major development in Farnham, Brightwells Yard. That development had not been audited and traffic reduction and air pollution issues in Farnham were not budgeted for and actions to address pollution in Farnham remained outstanding.
- Praised the budget as being reflective of the immediate requirements of communities and highlighted the approximately £3 million significant capital investment in public rights of way to ensure traffic avoidance and improved access, enabling five hundred miles of paths to be brought back into use. The twelve thousand finger posts, bridges and overgrown vegetation needed constant maintenance to ensure public safety, thanking the volunteers.
- Commended the ambitious but financially sustainable budget without the use of reserves in which each of the select committees scrutinised effectively despite the short time frame and hoped for a resolution to the Eco Park.
- That the proposed budget was a wasted opportunity to change Surrey due to the limited amount and resources set aside to address the urgent Climate Emergency, there was no mention of the promised £84 million for Surrey's Greener Future despite the doubling of reserves.
- Queried the millions set aside for ambiguous areas in the budget such as the Feasibility Fund and Other Pipeline Schemes.
- Questioned the significantly low spending on public health, whilst £200 million for road maintenance was prioritised with no funding for new bus routes or for improving road safety for cyclists and pedestrians.
- That it was concerning that SEND where Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) were not properly resourced or implemented on a timely basis, and the transition for people with learning disabilities and autism were identified as needing to make 'efficiencies' or savings as they were underfunded.
- Highlighted the necessity in ensuring the Property Service was fully resourced as it was crucial to achieve savings targets across the Council.
- That a cultural shift was needed to commit to significant carbon reductions as the budget inadequately addressed the Climate Emergency, no additional funding was set aside to train specialist officers in areas like greener travel.
- Sought confirmation that the Council's executive would negotiate with the current landlord of Midas House to secure an appropriate

contribution to aid the Council in raising the building's energy efficiency from the low E rating.

- Felt that in some areas rights of way were diminishing and that it was essential that investments in the budget would be in the right places and financially sound - including the move to Midas House - to deliver good services, especially as borrowing would double in the next two years.
- That past budget regimes lacked meaningful scrutiny, positive change came after critical reports from CIPFA and the Council's external auditors. The current budget embraced transparency, long-term planning and scrutiny in some areas.
- That senior officer pay and the amount in the top pay bracket had increased since last May despite cuts across other areas. Although the senior officers were well-qualified, there must be an annual opportunity for Members to monitor senior officer pay to ensure Value for Money.
- Welcomed the optimistic budget, noting the static funding towards Public Health and highlighted a number of directorates with budgetary increases, as well as the total budget increase of £40 million and £1.4 billion of capital expenditure over the next five years.
- That the Council took climate change seriously with funding for solar farms, electric vehicles and ultra-low emission buses. The Council were in consultation across a wide range of focus groups to benchmark current progress and to ensure spending in the right areas - as a result a climate strategy would be announced in April 2020.
- That there were sufficient funds at local level with the borough council and project developers to address air quality in Farnham, through improving road conditions by enforcing a 20mph speed and 7.5 tonnage limits.

The Leader of the Council made the following comments in response:

- He recognised the difficulty of balancing the budget with confined resources and delivering the many transformation programmes to provide good services to residents.
- That there was no trade-off between addressing the Climate Emergency and supporting vulnerable residents.
- He urged all Members to aid the work on a deliverable climate strategy within select committees and working groups, to be announced in April.
- That £84 million of the budget was set aside to address the Climate Emergency and it was correct that some areas of the budget remained undefined as it was for Members - not the executive - alongside officers to allocate expenditure in the right areas.
- He did not accept that efficiencies meant cuts in SEND and public health, as it was important to allocate money effectively such as the transformation programme on prevention and early intervention. Supporting children to have more independent lives by enhancing vocational opportunities was crucial and having special learning facilities nearer to home to save transport costs.
- That he was working closely with the Executive Director for Children, Families, Lifelong Learning to establish a new single point of access for SEND children.
- In collaboration with Surrey Members of Parliament, the Council had contributed to and was actively lobbying the delayed Fairer Funding Review.

- He had spoken to the Chief Executive on the possible initiative in which residents could make voluntary contributions to Council Tax and he agreed that there needed to be a review in Council Tax bands and business rates.
- He stressed that the Community Investment Fund was a capital fund which did not negate from revenue and reminded Members of the upcoming all-Member workshop to help identify appropriate projects to promote.
- He noted the £1.6 million additional revenue from the collaborative service with West Sussex concerning fire services.
- He expressed disappointment that measures to improve the air quality in Farnham had not progressed since the Pollution Summit last November. The Council would take control of the project by providing officer time and hold public consultations, as progress had not been made at borough council level.
- That sustainability was key to the Rethinking Transport programme, there was funding for additional bus routes which would reduce emissions, congestion and social isolation - noting the Chatterbus - to enable seamless movement around the county.
- That plans were underway to improve the energy efficiency of Midas House, stating that improving home efficiency was also important.
- Although the Council was getting recognition from CIPFA, HMICFRS and Ofsted for its improvements, the real focus was ensuring the best service provision for residents.
- The Council had a statutory responsibility to pass the budget, which was a living document which would evolve.
- There was no lack of transparency or scrutiny due to monthly budget monitoring and oversight by the select committees. Members could track the progress of the budget and Council's aims through the twenty-four transformation plans.

After the debate the Chairman called the recommendations, which included the council tax precept proposals, and a recorded vote was taken.

The following Members voted for it:

Ms Azad, Mr Bennison, Mrs Bowes, Mrs Bramhall, Mr Brett-Warburton, Mr Carasco, Dr Chapman, Mrs Clack, Mrs Curran, Mr Deach, Mr Tim Evans, Mr Few, Mr Furniss, Mr Gardner, Mr Goodman, Miss Griffiths, Dr Grant-Duff, Mr Gulati, Mr Hall, Mr Harmer, Mr Harris, Mr Hawkins, Mr Hussain, Mrs Iles, Mr Islam, Mr Kemp, Mr Knight, Rachael I Lake, Mrs Lewis, Mr McIntosh, Mr Mansfield, Mr Martin, Mrs Mooney, Mrs Moseley, Mrs Mountain, Mrs Muir, Mr Nuti, Mr Oliver, Mr O'Reilly, Dr Povey, Mr Ramsdale, Mrs Rush, Mr Samuels, Mrs Steeds, Dr Szanto, Mr Taylor, Ms Turner-Stewart, Mr Walsh, Mr Witham, Mrs Young.

And the following Members voted against it:

Mr Botten, Mr Cooksey, Mr Essex, Mr Robert Evans, Mr Forster, Mr Goodwin, Mrs Goodwin, Mr Lee, Mrs Rivers, Mr Spence, Mrs Watson, Mrs White,

The following Members abstained:

Mrs Barton, Mr Beckett, Miss Boote, Mr Darby, Mr Harrison, Mr Kington, Mrs Mason, Mr Townsend,

Therefore, it was:

RESOLVED:

That the following important features of the revenue and capital budget be noted, and in line with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003:

1. The Executive Director of Resources' (Section 151 Officer) conclusion that estimates included in the Final Budget Report and Medium-Term Financial Strategy are sufficiently robust in setting the budget for 2020/21; and
2. It is the view of the Executive Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer), that a General Fund Balance of £21.3m and the level of Earmarked Reserves is adequate to meet the Council's needs for 2020/21 and a Contingency of £20.4m, will be held to mitigate against the risks in delivery of transformation efficiencies and cost containment plans in 2020/21.

Proposed budget: That the following revenue and capital budget decisions be approved:

3. The net revenue budget requirement be set at £968.4 million (net cost of services after service specific government grants) for 2020/21 (Annex B), subject to confirmation of the Final Local Government Financial Settlement;
4. The total Council Tax funding requirement be set at £765.3 million for 2020/21. This is an increase of 3.99%, made up of an increase in the level of core Council Tax of 1.99% to cover core Council services and an increase of 2% in the precept proposed by Central Government to cover the growing cost of Adult Social Care (Annex E);
5. Noted that for the purpose of section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council formally determines that the increase in Council Tax is not such as to trigger a referendum (i.e. not greater than 2%);
6. Set the Surrey County Council precept for Band D Council Tax at £1,511.46, which represents a 3.99% uplift. This is a rise of £1.11 a week from the 2019/20 precept of £1,453.50. This includes £131.46 for the Adult Social Care precept, which has increased by £29.07.
7. Agreed to maintain the Council Tax rate set after the Final Local Government Finance Settlement;

8. The Council Tax for each category of dwelling as set out in the table below:

Council Tax Band	2019/20 £	2020/21 £
Band A	£969.00	£1,007.64
Band B	£1,130.50	£1,175.58
Band C	£1,292.00	£1,343.52
Band D	£1,453.50	£1,511.46
Band E	£1,776.51	£1,847.34
Band F	£2,099.51	£2,183.22
Band G	£2,422.51	£2,519.10
Band H	£2,907.01	£3,022.92

9. The payment for each billing authority, including any balances on the Collection Fund, as set out in Annex E;
10. Delegated powers to the Leader and Executive Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer) to finalise budget proposals and recommendations to County Council, updated to take into account new information in the Final Local Government Finance Settlement;
11. The Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy for 2020/21 to meet the statutory guidelines for the use of such receipts to fund transformation and the move back into the County (Annex F);
12. The Total Schools Budget of £505.7 million to meet the Council's statutory requirement on schools funding;
13. The overall indicative Budget Envelopes for Executive Directorates and individual services for the 2020/21 budget (Annex B); and
14. The total £1.447 billion proposed five-year Capital Programme (comprising £851m of budget and £596m pipeline) and approves the £175.7 million capital budget in 2020/21 (Annex C).

Capital and Investment Strategies: That the following be approved:

15. The Capital Strategy (Annex G), which provides an overview of how risks associated with capital expenditure, financing and treasury will be managed as well as how they contribute towards the delivery of services;
16. The policy for making a prudent level of revenue provision for the repayment of debt (the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy) (Annex H); and
17. The Investment Strategy (Annex I), which provides detail on how the Council will manage commercial investments.

6/20 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME [Item 6]

Questions:

Notice of five questions had been received. The questions and replies were published in a supplementary agenda on 3 February 2020.

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

(Q1) Mrs Hazel Watson asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste if he was aware that many Surrey residents were pleased with the Council's declaration of the Climate Emergency but were disappointed with the lack of urgency and she also asked how many trees were planted since the launch of the Council's initiative to plant 1.2 million trees by 2030.

Mr Essex requested that when the climate strategy is announced in April, it included plans for what would be done throughout the financial year.

In response the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste explained that he did not accept that the Council lacked urgency as it would spend the money properly as a result of comprehensive consultations with residents including schools and businesses. The Council was also consulting with the Government on low emission buses and electric vehicle charging points. The number of trees planted across the year would be announced on 1 October and noted that the Council was proactive on the issue as it would have its own Tree Week beginning the first week of March - several thousand trees would be planted.

(Q2) Mr Robert Evans asked the Cabinet Member for Highways if he would agree that there were too many cases where roads were dug up in close succession and instances where borough boundaries were evident against London roads due to different road surfaces, which was problematic when done piecemeal.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Highways stated that he did agree some instances of reinstatement by utility companies was not adequate. The Council were pursuing lane rental which would be presented to Council later in the year for implementation, to encourage utility companies to act swiftly and competently.

(Q3) Mr Jonathan Essex asked the Cabinet Member for Adults and Public Health to promote public transport more greatly - rather than issuing taxi vouchers - to support transport for residents in care, SEND and elderly residents, which would aid the increased demand within the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS). He sought reassurance that there would be a review of the funding for increased distanced travelled as a result of the budget, after three to six months and if not to consider whether funding should be drawn from reserves.

In response the Cabinet Member for Adults and Public Health noted the Member's useful suggestions and will speak to the Cabinet Member for Highways on the promotion of public transport. She stated that the Adult Social Care service would review the provision of transport concerning residents in care, SEND and elderly residents with the VCFS within three to six months.

(Q4) Mr Robert Evans asked the Cabinet Member for Adults and Public Health if she was aware that there were about 35,000 employed in the care sector in Surrey. One third of those employed were non-British, 80% from the European Union (EU) and 8,000 were reaching retirement age and he queried the measures needed to deal with the challenges outside of the EU and the increased pressures within Adult Social Care.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Adults and Public Health commented that she was aware of the pressures around staff recruitment and retention, those issues were a priority and were being addressed in ongoing conversations with service providers.

(Q5) Mr Jonathan Essex asked the Cabinet Member for Adults and Public Health if she would commit to a best practice review to gauge a sustainable level of funding within Adult Social Care, benchmarking against what other councils spend and their outcomes.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Adults and Public Health explained that the service regularly reviewed its expenditure in line with other local authorities and would provide the Member with an update after discussing the matter within Adult Social Care.

7/20 STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS [Item 7]

Mr Robert Evans made a statement on the recent tragic car crash in his electoral division in which three British Airways employees died, highlighting the unsafe mix of commercial and civilian traffic around Heathrow.

8/20 ORIGINAL MOTIONS [Item 8]

The Chairman introduced the motion noting that although there is a presumption that there will be no motions at the budget meeting of the Council, he used his discretion allow it in accordance with Standing Order 11.6. He highlighted that the motion on the agreement of the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism was timely as Holocaust Memorial Day occurred on 27 January 2020 - which also marked the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz - Birkenau.

Item 8 (i)

Under Standing Order 12.3 the Council agreed to debate this motion.
Under Standing Order 12.1 Mr Tim Oliver moved:

“Last year, we made a commitment to ensure that no-one in Surrey is ‘left behind’. This local authority plays a vital role in representing all groups across Surrey and specifically in tackling all forms of hate crime.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) has developed a definition of antisemitism.

‘Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or

their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.'

I call on this Council to demonstrate its commitment to engaging with the experiences of Jewish communities and supporting them against the challenges that they face. I seek the Council's endorsement to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism."

Mr Tim Oliver made the following points:

- Thanked the Chairman for accepting the motion and commented that the Council's Holocaust Memorial Day last week led by the Chairman was a moving tribute.
- That it was important not to forget the senseless persecution of millions, particularly as prejudice, discrimination and inequality remained prevalent in society.
- That a society which celebrated diversity was crucial to expel bigotry.

The motion was formally seconded by Mr Botten, who made the following comments:

- That he was brought up in a time where there was a casual use of anti-Semitic language.
- Inherent prejudice remained in society, whether more overtly through fascistic emblems and Holocaust denial on social media, or presented more subtly through subtexts.
- Institutions that failed to call out anti-Semitism colluded through their silence, adopting a common definition allowed society to continually recognise what anti-Semitism meant and would show explicit resistance to it.

Eight Members made the following comments:

- On behalf of the Jewish community in Surrey, thanked the Leader and Mr Botten for the motion.
- That it was unfortunate there was a need for the motion in 2020, explaining that he experienced anti-Semitism as an adult only once becoming politically active.
- That the international community shared the responsibility to tackle all hate crime faced by ethnic minorities, who must be protected against the worrying rise of violent extremist political ideologies.
- Society must challenge prejudice and lead in education to promote tolerance, by adopting the IHRA definition of anti-Semitism already endorsed by 31 member countries, the Council would set an example that it was committed to fighting such prejudice.
- Praised the recent service for Holocaust Memorial Day in the Council and thanked all those involved in its organisation.
- Supported all examples of anti-Semitism by IHRA and stressed that for the Council to ensure that no one was left behind, motions on Islamophobia and other discrimination definitions should be brought forward.

- Apologised for the Labour Party's failings to address the issue despite its historical Jewish movement and hoped that the new leader of the Labour Party adopted the IHRA definition.
- Stated that it was crucial to understand the strength of others' religions and give them full support.
- Supported the adoption of the definition but expressed concern that it focused on Jewish people rather than all minorities who had suffered from a rise in hate crime since Brexit. One side of the fight should not be chosen, as harmony was built on recognising the plight of oppressed people both Palestinians and Jews in Israel as an example.
- Commented that all should be respected irrespective of their faith.
- Stated that it was important not to forget the untold stories of the millions killed in the Holocaust by openly declaring the abhorrence of anti-Semitism.

The Chairman asked Mr Tim Oliver, as proposer of the original motion, to conclude the debate.

- He urged cross-party support on the motion and recognised the need to address all forms of prejudice.
- That Cabinet had recently had training on equality and diversity - which would be rolled out to backbenchers and the wider organisation - whereby understanding unconscious bias was fundamental to stop discrimination.

The motion was put to a vote and received unanimous support.

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** that:

Last year, we made a commitment to ensure that no-one in Surrey is 'left behind'. This local authority plays a vital role in representing all groups across Surrey and specifically in tackling all forms of hate crime.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) has developed a definition of antisemitism.

'Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.'

I call on this Council to demonstrate its commitment to engaging with the experiences of Jewish communities and supporting them against the challenges that they face. I seek the Council's endorsement to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism.

9/20 CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY [Item 9]

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families introduced the report. She highlighted a key part of the Member role profile which was 'to fulfil

the responsibilities as 'corporate parent' of Looked After Children, accepting responsibility for children in the Council's care'.

Members and officers should have high ambitions for their corporate children and the 2018 Ofsted report rating of Requires Improvement for the care given to Looked After Children and Care Leavers Surrey was disappointing. She thanked members of the Corporate Parenting Board who sought to address the negative rating and noted the recent report from the Children's Commissioner which identified the positive development of corporate parenting and the strong leadership from Board members.

The Strategy reflected the current work of the Board and had been endorsed by the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee. The Council would send a clear message of its commitment as a corporate parent if it agreed the Strategy and it was important to have a clear strategy document for key partners across directorates to understand their obligations under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 - to promote the 'best interests' for children, 'keeping them safe' - and the subsequent Statutory Guidance to the Act (2018).

The cross-party membership of the Board incorporating foster carers, harnessed a variety of talents and she thanked the Leader of the Residents' Association and Independent Group for his recent attendance at a Board meeting, noting that permanent representation would be advantageous.

Members made the following comments:

- Praised the work of the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families for her work as chair of the Board, as concurred within the recent Report of the Non-Executive Commissioner for Children's Services which noted the 'strong lead from members and the chair of the board' in the Strategy's positive development.
- That all children should be supported equally, Looked After Children should never be far from the thoughts of all within the Council and urged Members to read the introduction and the key points of the Strategy in green text.
- As a member of the Board, highlighted the crucial work by the chair and the importance of the Strategy which pointed out Members' responsibilities as corporate parents. That all Members should pay close attention to the list of ten 'must dos' identified by the Board in respect of their actions and behaviours, ensuring that children were at the forefront of the Council.
- Stated that being a 'corporate parent' was a legal and moral duty of all councillors across boroughs and districts in Surrey, with over one thousand Looked After Children and for Members to reflect on the point of 'would this be good enough for my child?'
- That the Board was composed of a passionate group of members and officers, chaired superbly by the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families and supported by the Executive Director for Children, Families, Lifelong Learning. Urged Members to review what being a corporate parent meant personally and how they could contribute to the Strategy, noting the Celebration Fund for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.
- Queried the frequency of the Corporate Parenting Report to be received by the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture Select Committee

and whether it could be automatically circulated to all Members as corporate parents.

- That it was a privilege to be a member of the Board, praising its chair and the Board showcased the best of the Council.
- Emphasised the importance of recognising the responsibilities of all as corporate parents across the county, exemplified by Surrey County Council's endorsement of the provision of Council Tax Relief for Care Leavers in Surrey in October 2019 - supported by ten of the eleven borough and district councils in Surrey. The provision of wider opportunities was essential for Looked After Children and Care Leavers such as through linking with the Chamber of Commerce on the facilitating work experience in schools. Waverley Borough Council offered free swimming classes and access to its leisure centres for Looked After Children, Care Leavers and foster families.
- Having seen the enthusiasm of officers and Board members at a recent Board meeting, the Leader of the Residents' Association and Independent Group would be delighted to attend future meetings and become member.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families was pleased to take back praise to members of the Board and the key officers involved in the strategy, highlighting the Director - Corporate Parenting, the Executive Director for Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and the Policy, Planning, and Projects Manager. Commended the work of boroughs and districts noting that coordination was needed across Surrey and there were positive responses to the letter sent out by the Corporate Parenting Board to five hundred elected councillors. The Council's Corporate Parenting Report would incorporate many aspects relating to Looked After Children and Care Leavers and she would provide the Report to all Members as well as the Select Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Council adopted the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

10/20 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS [Item 10]

The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report, noting the revisions to the Financial Regulations last updated in December 2018 as a result of changes to the Council's organisation structure through its various transformation programmes.

RESOLVED:

That Council approved the changes in the revised Financial Regulations.

11/20 APPOINTMENT OF LOCAL COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN [Item 11]

RESOLVED:

That Edward Hawkins was duly elected as the Chairman of the Surrey Heath Local Committee for the remainder of 2019/20.

12/20 REPORT OF THE CABINET [Item 12]

The Leader presented the report of the Cabinet meetings held on 17 December 2019 and 28 January 2020.

Reports for Decision:

- A. Admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools and co-ordinated schemes for September 2021
- B. 2020/21 Final Budget And Medium-Term Financial Strategy

Reports for Information/Discussion:

- C. Quarterly Report On Decisions Taken Under Special Urgency Arrangements: 1 October – 31 December 2019

RESOLVED:

- 1. The County Council approved the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools and co-ordinated schemes for September 2021.
- 2. The recommendations regarding the 2020/21 Final Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy had already been approved under item 5.
- 3. That Council noted that there had been one urgent decision in that quarter.
- 4. That the reports of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 17 December 2019 and 28 January 2020 be adopted.

13/20 MINUTES OF CABINET MEETINGS [Item 13]

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

[Meeting ended at: 12.14pm]

Chairman

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Full Council 4/02/20 – Budget Statement – Leader of the Council

Mr Chairman, we come together for the first Council meeting of 2020 having laid out the most sensible, sustainable and ambitious budget proposals in Surrey for years.

Our work as an organisation over the past two years has been tireless, and that hard work, leadership and innovative thinking from both council officers and members throughout Surrey County Council must be acknowledged and praised.

Around half a million pounds every working day has been saved through greater efficiency and financial management, over the last two years.

Thanks to that work, we are able to present this balanced, forward-thinking budget, that will deliver real progress and benefits for the people of Surrey – both now and in the future.

Our finances are now on a stable footing and our transformation programme well underway. Not only will we continue to deliver efficiencies for our budget, but as importantly we will be improving outcomes for residents.

Quite simply, we are doing things better.

Ofsted and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire and Rescue Services have recognised this progress recently in our Childrens Services and Fire service, and we're determined to keep raising the bar across all our services.

Our net revenue budget this year has slightly increased to a total £968.4m, which includes over £20m relating to inflation and £55m of service pressures, with £38m of efficiencies identified, largely through transformation.

There is still uncertainty in future funding settlements from government and still growing pressures on many of our services.

We are not complacent. We are looking to the future to identify challenges as well as opportunities, as we move forward as a leading authority.

We are proposing to increase Council Tax by 1.99% this year, to support our sustainable funding base for future years and mitigate against the current uncertainty in medium- and long-term local government funding.

We will also use this increase in Council Tax revenue to deliver real tangible benefits for the Council Tax payer in Surrey.

Our capital investment programme will now enable us to start delivering our ambitious projects, making journeys around the county smoother, protecting homes and businesses, increasing education and care capacity and supporting our local economy.

I will speak about this in greater detail shortly.

We will also be taking up the 2% increase in the Adult Social Care precept, proposed by central government, to help manage the pressures on the Adult Social Care budget.

This is an area that needs a national solution and now with a more stable government in place, I hope we will see a long-term plan evolve to deal with these pressures in a more sustainable way.

We want to play a part in developing those plans as we feel that local government holds the key to many of the potential solutions.

This will form a key part of our engagement with central government, as well as seeking long term funding settlements for local government to enable us to plan our future vision with greater certainty.

Our greatest area of day-to-day spending by far is on supporting our most vulnerable residents – the elderly, those with special educational needs or disabilities, and children in care.

We spend over £1m every single day on Adult Social Care.

And around half a million pounds every day on looking after children.

These are services that many Surrey residents may never have any direct experience of, and whilst it is our statutory responsibility it is also our moral and civic duty to support those people with greatest need.

Through greater integration with our health services and an approach that prioritises independence where possible, we are hopeful that the outcomes for

these residents will improve considerably and provide a more sustainable future for the whole County.

Mr Chairman, Surrey is always considered to be an affluent County, with many of our residents enjoying a comfortable quality of life. However, there are also many pockets of deprivation – many people struggling with poor health, lack of opportunity and without the advantages in life of others.

It is our mission to reduce the inequality in Surrey, particularly in life expectancy, by targeting services and improving access to the many opportunities in this great County.

We must deliver on our Health and Wellbeing strategy whether that's through supporting lifestyle changes, a focus on preventing people falling in to a chronic condition whether that's a physical or mental illness, by much earlier intervention and by delivering new models of care, including easier GP access and earlier screening.

This mission cuts across all our departments and services and is a key pillar of our Organisation Strategy and partnership working that came to the previous Council meeting in December.

Our Environment, Transport and Infrastructure portfolio is perhaps the more 'universal' area of our revenue spend – the things that nearly all our residents see and experience pretty much every day.

It is this area that will focus on our Greener Future ambitions, rethinking the way we provide and use transport in the County and improve the way we maintain and enhance our countryside. That means a thorough review of our existing infrastructure and more particularly our public transport system. If we are to persuade our residents to get out of their vehicles we must provide an alternative means of transport. That requires us to use public money to strengthen and enhance our bus and train services and that is exactly what we shall do.

Transformation funding will be used to support the development and delivery of much of this important work. We will identify and use the best technology, invest in renewable energy, and work to change behaviour, to ensure that Surrey is fit for the future.

It is essential that we have the right level of capacity and resource in place within the organisation to deliver our ambitions set out in the medium-term financial strategy. As members will have seen the main areas of capital investment being around place-based projects such as highways improvement, flood alleviation and renewable energy sources.

The ambitious capital programme outlined, sets this budget apart from previous years.

We are looking to invest hundreds of millions of pounds in a series of projects that will deliver real benefits for the people of Surrey but also deliver year-on-year efficiencies and resilience long into the future.

An extra £92 million on improving our 3000 miles of roads and pavements.

£84 million on projects to protect the environment and help tackle the Climate Emergency, including a Solar Farm, Ultra Low Emission vehicles and electrification of transport services including buses and school transport.

£270m to protect over 30,000 homes and businesses from the risk of flooding – enhancing the environment, attracting investment and keeping residents safe.

£100m to regenerate high streets and invest in local communities. Funding that needs to support projects that our communities actually want and not projects that we think they need. We will genuinely engage with them in partnership to ensure that we collectively deliver real local initiatives.

£31m to provide 883 additional places for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, including a new SEND school.

A further £70m to provide additional school places and improve school facilities across the county.

£7m in the first phase of a programme to deliver 725 specially adapted homes for elderly residents, to increase independence and hopefully reduce hospital admittance.

This, alongside already identified capital investment, takes the total capital spend over the next five years to £1.4bn, and signals our absolute intent to deliver a better place for all Surrey residents.

As already mentioned, a huge amount of work has gone into these budget proposals to ensure they are designed to help us deliver the key priorities of our organisation strategy for the next five years.

This budget focuses on tackling Surrey's inequality, supporting independence, working in partnership, embracing Surrey's diversity, creating a greener future, supporting our local economy, delivering a more joined up health and social care system and leading a digital revolution in the County.

We are very clear in our purpose and we now have the tools to deliver it.

Mr Chairman, let me finish by again paying tribute to the tireless work that has gone into getting this Council in a stable place financially. It is no mean feat and it has provided a solid platform for us to improve lives and create a better place for everyone.

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