

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL HELD  
 REMOTELY ON MICROSOFT TEAMS ON 8 DECEMBER 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 OBE	

\*absent

**55/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [ITEM 1]**

Apologies were received from Mr Ellwood, Mr Kemp and Mr Mansfield.

**56/20 MINUTES [ITEM 2]**

The minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 13 October 2020 were submitted and confirmed.

**57/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [ITEM 3]**

Dr Andrew Povey declared a non-pecuniary interest as he was a trustee for the Surrey Hills Society.

**58/20 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS [ITEM 4]**

The Chairman:

- Highlighted to Members that the Chairman's Announcements were located in the agenda front sheet.
- Invited Mr Chris Botten to say a few words regarding a former County Councillor, John Orrick, who sadly passed away last month.

Mr Chris Botten paid tribute to John Orrick, noting that:

- He served as the County Councillor for Caterham Hill for the previous two terms of office and he was a role model on how to be a local councillor truly dedicated to serving his residents and he would be missed.

**59/20 LEADER'S STATEMENT [ITEM 5]**

The Leader made a detailed statement. A copy of the statement is attached as Appendix A.

Members raised the following topics:

- Paid tribute to staff for their extraordinary efforts in spite of the challenging circumstances of the pandemic and that local solutions worked best.
- Noted that the announcement of the Spending Review 2020 came too late in the year for local government, it was a short-term one-year settlement which made future planning difficult.
- That local government was unloved and underfunded by central government, highlighting that there was no funding to address the issue of adult social care on a permanent basis and the Green Paper remained delayed.
- Noted that councils could increase Council Tax by 5% composed of 2% for general funds and a further 3% ring-fenced for adult social care; despite the difficulty for some in affording the current level of Council Tax and the public sector pay freeze.

- Queried how the shelving of plans to build Crossrail 2 due to the withdrawal of the Treasury's funding, would affect Surrey in the future.
- Asked the Leader to provide reassurance that the £42 million write-down of the Eco Park Shepperton investment was not a real loss and whether that cost would be recouped in full.
- Welcomed the Report of the Mental Health Task Group and the Mental Health Summit, that enthusiasm must be translated into real action with early intervention a priority.
- Noted the end of an era with the closure of County Hall and wished all a Happy Christmas and best wishes for 2021.
- Stressed major concerns including the challenging national funding picture, the large shortfall in adult social care and the effect of a no-deal Brexit on workforce sustainability.
- Paid tribute to teachers and headteachers in the county who were on the Covid-19 frontline.
- Emphasised the importance of the All-Age Autism Strategy rollout and called for a joint approach between Cabinet Members and the Adults and Health Select Committee, with input from Members; noting the positive collaboration with the London South Bank University.
- Noted disappointment that the recent consultation on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) funding for 2021/22 was difficult to find.
- Welcomed the Leader's focus on addressing the challenges of poverty and the failure of Universal Credit to meet the needs of many families, urging that more needed to be done to address child poverty and engage with families to ensure that children would not go hungry over Christmas.
- Asked the Leader to confirm whether the Council had full sign-up from the health sector and schools on the Climate Change Strategy and if those partners were included in the delivery plan.
- Thanked the Leader for his wide-ranging statement on key focus areas and responsibilities that the Council continued to undertake despite Covid-19.
- That 2020 had been dominated by the challenges of Covid-19 and asked whether the Leader agreed that the vaccine rollout from Pfizer-BioNTech was a huge matter of national pride as the UK was the first in western world to have developed, fully tested and approved a vaccine in less than a year.
- Noted excitement on the move to a new headquarters back into Surrey, thanking the Leader and the Cabinet for their impetus.
- Requested that teachers and those in education had a higher priority in the vaccine rollout programme than what they appeared to have at present.
- That the Spending Review 2020 outlined the government's ambitious plans and hoped that Surrey would take advantage of the opportunities within the review such as the £4 billion Levelling Up Fund to invest in infrastructure and for Surrey to facilitate its own ambitious economic and green recovery.

## 60/20 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME [ITEM 6]

### Questions:

Notice of sixteen questions had been received. The questions and replies were published in a supplementary agenda on 7 December 2020.

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

**(Q3) Mrs Tina Mountain** noted the positive additional provision of Extra Care Housing in Epsom and Ewell by Surrey County Council, noting the inadequacy of local community provision and closure of the Wells Centre by the Borough Council. She asked the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health whether she agreed that the new provisions showed that the Council listened to its residents by providing for its elderly and vulnerable.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health agreed with the importance of raising the profile of the work that Surrey County Council was doing on providing accommodation for the most vulnerable residents across the county. She would continue to ensure the delivery of a substantial amount of supported accommodation in Epsom and Ewell as it was an area of high demand.

**(Q4) Mrs Clare Curran** noted that the Community Impact Assessment (CIA) was a remarkable piece of work. One significant insight of the report was the impact of the pandemic on mental health and she asked whether the Leader could expand upon the way in which all providers were preparing to meet the inevitable surge in accessing mental health services.

The Leader of the Council recognised that there would be significant growth in the demand for mental health services over the coming months and years. He explained that early intervention was vital, the Council would be re-procuring the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) contract from next April which would bring greater capacity into the system and there would be a further rollout of mental health advisers in schools.

He noted the significant piece of work being undertaken by the mental health improvement board on mental health provision across the system and the further resources allocated to resolve the waiting list for mental health services, particularly on CAMHS. The Council and the system needed to continue to work together closely to address the provision of mental health services by ensuring adequate funding and capacity.

**(Q5) Dr Peter Szanto** asked the Cabinet Member for Transport on what else the Council was doing to support sustainable travel in addition to walking and cycling initiatives.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport explained that Cabinet in November had approved £49 million to accelerate the introduction of the Surrey Ultra-Low and Zero Emission Scheme, of that £32 million would be allocated to removing around eighty of the most polluting buses off Surrey's network, £6.3 million would be allocated to community transport and £9 million for bus priority measures which were essential to reduce private vehicle use and increase sustainable transport.

**(Q6) Mr Mike Goodman** asked if the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change could explain how residents could apply for the grants listed in the response.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change noted that it was easy for residents to apply to the Green Jump Surrey Programme by contacting the delivery partner, Action Surrey, by telephone on 0800 783 2503 or via their website.

**(Q7) Mr Tim Hall** thanked the Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning for her reply and asked whether the food vouchers for free school meals for disadvantaged families would be distributed via schools, and he also asked how people could access the Surrey Crisis Fund.

Mrs Clare Curran noted that she had been doing her best to publicise the availability of the Surrey Crisis Fund in her division but commented that it was not clear in any of the publicity as to who families should turn to in the first place, so had pointed them in the direction of the Coronavirus helpline. She stressed that clarity was needed as many families were not used to approaching agencies and asking for help.

In response the Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning noted that the County Council did have a comprehensive plan to feed children over the Christmas school holidays. She noted that there was a delegated decision made on 30 November 2020 on the use of the Covid Winter Grant Scheme which was allocated to upper tier authorities for the purchase of food, paying utilities bills and essential supplies and the Scheme was not restricted to vulnerable households in receipt of benefits; as many families were in the system for first time. She explained that tranche one had been paid early in December, the second and third tranches of funding would follow once the data was analysed and could be then distributed to cover the period up to and including the Easter school holidays. She explained that partnership work was being undertaken in conjunction with the Surrey Local Resilience Forum, headteachers, school catering systems, as well as the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) to develop the proposal.

The Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning clarified that the first port of call for struggling families was the Surrey Crisis Fund which could be contacted via telephone on 0300 200 1008 Monday-Friday 9am-5pm, it was also contactable online as well as through the Citizens' Advice Bureau.

She noted that school leaders and welfare leads considered that vouchers were an effective means of targeting food support during the school holidays and work was also being undertaken with foodbanks as well as district and borough colleagues. She noted that more work needed to be done with district and borough colleagues on the use of the allocated funding.

She concluded that other families who would not be targeted for extra support for children on free school meals could be targeted via the Surrey Crisis Fund and that data from early years providers identified low income families entitled to free education and childcare for two year olds and three and four year olds on pupil premium, enabling further support.

**(Q9) Mrs Hazel Watson** asked whether the Cabinet Member for Transport would inform himself on the funding allocated to Mole Valley's highways by looking at Mole Valley Local Committee's Highways Forward Programme 2021/22 – 2022/23; which showed the inadequate amount of funding available for road safety schemes including the twenty miles per hour speed limit scheme.

Mr Jonathan Essex noted that across the country around twenty million people lived in twenty miles per hour speed limit areas and he asked the Cabinet Member for Transport to confirm what the comparable figure was for Surrey. He also asked whether appropriate locations for twenty miles per hour speed limit schemes would extend beyond the individual sites listed in the response and into neighbourhood areas.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport explained that the budget noted in the question was what Mole Valley Local Committee had decided to allocate to locally approved highways schemes. As noted in the response, Mole Valley had a significant amount of funding and he had again increased the funding available to Local and Joint Committees - who were responsible for allocating that funding to their chosen priorities.

The Cabinet Member for Transport responded that there were twenty miles per hour speed limit schemes planned in neighbourhood areas such as Guildford, which was currently going through consultation. He fully supported twenty miles per hour speed limit schemes in neighbourhoods where appropriate such as around schools and high pedestrian areas, as opposed to a blanket scheme across the whole of the county.

**(Q10) Mr Robert Evans** noted that in the last ten years Surrey's population had risen by over 60,000 to nearly 1.2 million people which meant more homes, businesses and residents to protect. Over that same period one third or approximately two hundred full-time equivalent (FTE) firefighters in Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) had been cut. He asked whether the Cabinet Member for Communities was concerned with the cuts and whether she blamed the Council or central government for those.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Communities explained that the State of Fire and Rescue - The Annual Assessment of Fire and Rescue Services in England by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire and Rescue Service, provided a rounded assessment of every Fire and Rescue Service in England with the inspections focussing on three pillars: effectiveness, efficiency, and people. Effectiveness concerned the operational service provided to the public including prevention, protection and response, efficiency concerned how well services provided value for money, allocated resources to match risk and collaborated with other emergency service partners and people concerned how services looked after their employees.

She explained that HMICFRS's assessments and inspections were designed to enable the public to see how each Fire and Rescue Service was performing across a number of key areas including changes over time, as opposed to focussing on the number of FTE firefighters employed which did not itself correlate to appliance availability. She noted that it was important to also look at the number of flexible part-time contracts and that the Fire Brigades Union had agreed to a reduction of crewing figures from five to four within that ten-year period. She explained that SFRS had built in resilience

for both large scale and long duration incidents and business continuity plans which ensured the deployment of staff into positions which they were able to deliver.

**(Q11) Mrs Angela Goodwin** asked whether the Leader would share the evidence that showed the difference that the Council's funding was making to reduce the demand for help for people being discharged from hospital, to support the rise of individuals suffering from domestic abuse as well as ensuring the safeguarding of vulnerable adults, and to address the increase in individuals seeking help due to the breakdown of unpaid carer arrangements.

In response, the Leader of the Council noted that he had given a full answer to the points raised in the original question and suggested that Mrs Goodwin may want to investigate the matter further through the Adults and Health Select Committee.

**(Q12) Mr Jonathan Essex** noted that the freedom of information (FOI) request within the original question stated that in January 2020 delays in achieving hot commissioning of the gasification facility and or full service commencement beyond March 2020 would unlikely be affordable by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). He asked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change to confirm whether that position was still the case and if it was, what the cost implications were for the Council of going beyond that commissioning deadline.

In response the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change noted that the information was confidential and was happy to share it with Mr Essex outside of the public domain.

**(Q13) Mrs Hazel Watson** noted that given the 'Climate Emergency' declared by the Council last year, would the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change revisit the emails sent to her that showed that the officers from the Land and Property Service had already reviewed the site in Dorking that she was proposing for planting an urban forest as part of the Council's initiative to facilitate the planting of 1.2 million trees by 2030.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change found her original question disingenuous as she was not prepared to break lockdown to make the visit. The Miyawaki Forest principle that Mrs Watson requested needed more maintenance than a normal planted woodland. She noted that she would visit the site with officers in due course but could not guarantee that it would be brought forward as there were other suitable sites across the county.

**(Q14) Mr Robert Evans** asked whether the Leader was aware and or concerned that many councils seemed to be making it increasingly complicated to apply for postal votes for the upcoming 2021 local elections, especially for those without internet access.

Mrs Fiona White sought clarification on whether European Union citizens who were registered to vote in the UK would be able to take part in the 2021 local elections next May and to ensure that there was sufficient publicity if that was the case.

In response, the Leader of the Council noted that the Chief Executive of Runnymede Borough Council and Returning Officer was working closely with Surrey County Council's Chief Executive and Returning Officer for the 2021 local elections. He explained that preparations were underway to ensure that polling stations would be Covid-19 safe by assigning a marshal to every polling station, there would be adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) for polling staff and voters would be instructed to wear masks. He noted that he was not aware of extensive difficulties for people to register for postal votes which could be done online, by post or directly in local council offices; and was happy for Mr Robert Evans to provide him with specific instances of difficulties experienced.

The Leader of the Council referred Mrs White to the GOV.UK website concerning the requested information.

**(Q15) Mr Jonathan Essex** noted an incident concerning parking which could not be controlled due to double yellow not being enforced, he had shared a list of sites for the Cabinet Member for Transport to address. He asked the Cabinet Member for Transport to confirm that as his response indicated a safety-first approach, whether a missing sign at the entrance of a local twenty miles per hour speed limit area could be installed.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport would follow up the specific incidents that had been reported if Mr Essex could share the reference numbers.

**(Q16) Mr Jonathan Essex** asked the Cabinet Member for Transport to confirm whether the decisions on spending the capital budget to implement the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPS) would be taken via the Local and Joint Committees or whether they would be taken centrally.

The Cabinet Member for Transport responded that next year's capital budget was a draft version at present. He noted that Surrey was successful as it had received the third highest award from the Government's Active Travel Fund. He noted that a number of the LCWIPS including Woking were going to be funded from that Fund. He explained that the money might be allocated centrally or via the Local and Joint Committees, but that the Local and Joint Committees would have full involvement in the process.

#### **Cabinet Member Briefings:**

These were also published in the supplementary agenda on 7 December 2020.

Members made the following comments:

**Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families:** on the Children's Single Point of Access (C-SPA), a Member noted that following the visit by the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee to the C-SPA last year, she asked how it had been coping with the increased amount of contacts and referrals received during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In response, the Cabinet Member noted that in spite of Covid-19 the C-SPA had carried on with transformation improvement since the Select

Committee's visit by establishing a Learners Single Point of Access (L-SPA) which would co-locate with the C-SPA at Quadrant Court, Woking. Furthermore, she noted that concerning business as usual activity the C-SPA had experienced a thirty percent increase in calls compared to the same time last year - they were taking five hundred calls or one thousand three hundred emails weekly. Despite the increase, a 95% rate of answering calls within twenty seconds had been achieved and it continued to meet the two-day working average response rate for progressing contacts to social care or on to early help services even with the greater volumes. She summarised that in the last six months over five thousand five hundred assessments had been completed which was over one third greater than the same time last year and in 94% of those assessments those children were seen even during the early pandemic and PPE issues. She noted that caseloads had increased initially in some cases doubling but had reduced to around fifteen. It remained vital to ensure the wellbeing of staff with support from partners to reduce caseloads via triage. She thanked officers, the interim Director of Children's Services and the frontline team for their work and welcomed the select committee back for a future visit.

A Member noted the three district and borough councils in Surrey which did not support a unified care leaver offer and asked the Cabinet Member what Members and officers could do to encourage those outstanding councils to join the offer.

In response, the Cabinet Member noted the difficult 2018 Ofsted report on Children's Services and the voices of Surrey's young people in care and care leavers who received the unequal offer in different parts of the county. Since that inspection, colleagues across the county had been encouraged to support care leavers via a Council Tax exemption. She commended the work of the Member for Woking South who championed the matter, Woking Borough Council was the first in Surrey to agree the Council Tax exemption for care leavers until the age of twenty-five. She noted that in the last two years Surrey County Council had agreed to that exemption, with all but three district and borough councils following suit. She commented that it would be beneficial if those councils signed up to that exemption so that it could be reported for the next Ofsted inspection that Surrey had a standard offer for care leavers, ensuring the provision of the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities.

**Deputy Cabinet Member - Support for the Leader:** on libraries, a Member sought assurance that divisional Members would be actively involved regarding any changes to the library service over the coming year.

In response, the Deputy Cabinet Member assured Members that they would continue to be consulted on any future changes concerning local library service provision and was happy for Members to contact him discuss particular matters. He noted that as part of the empowering communities' transformation project including co-designing library spaces, there would be roadshows around the county.

**Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning:** provided more information in response to previous comments made by Members. Regarding the All-Age Autism Strategy she noted that the consultation closed on 21 September 2020, workshops were being run during December and that a children's partnership board had been established to ensure the involvement of

children and young people and would meet for the first time in January 2021. She was pleased to be taking the Autism Strategy forward as an all-age approach, recognising the diverse treatments and conditions within Surrey's SEND cohort and noted that the Council was planning additional specialist place provision and making capital investment in SEND education settings. She explained that as no new government funding for SEND had been allocated in the Spending Review 2020, she would continue to make representation to government for funding which reflected the increased demand and additional responsibilities for local authorities.

To the point made earlier on the consultation she noted that Cabinet received a report on 24 November 2020 on Surrey Schools and Early Years Funding 2021-22 and explained that Schools Forum was the body that made a number of decisions around the funding formula for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and the High Needs SEND block. The next meeting with the Schools Forum was scheduled for 10 December, and in January there would be further discussion on the best use of top-up funding and independent support for pupils, so that schools would have their own flexibility to address the needs rather than the current formulae where funding follows the child retrospectively. She noted that the Chairman of the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee could look to bring consultation proposals on to the Select Committee's forward workstream. She provided assurance on the preparations that were underway as the allocated money from the funding formula would not apply until September 2021.

**Cabinet Member for Resources:** on the point that residents might expect a 4.99% increase in Council Tax which was composed of a 3% adult social care precept on top of a basic Council Tax increase of 1.99%; a Member sought clarification on the increase which was contrary to the Leader's comment in his statement noting that the increase would be well below 5%.

In response, the Cabinet Member explained that at the time of writing no decision had been made on the Council Tax increase, subsequently the Leader confirmed in his statement that the increase would be less than 5%.

**Cabinet Member for Transport:** on the number of requests received for highway tree planting, a Member welcomed that data but noted that it was the experience of many applicants in Epsom and Ewell for their request to be rejected, application fees cost £25 and were non-refundable. The Member asked the Cabinet Member to publish the total number of applications as well as the statistics on the number of successful and unsuccessful applications. He also asked whether the Cabinet Member had an annual target for the number of successful applications, both as a total number and as a percentage of the applications made.

In response, the Cabinet Member noted that the Council was proactive in facilitating the planting of 1.2 million trees led by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, with many of those facilitated on Surrey's highways. He noted that he was happy to discuss the specific statistics requested in more detail with the Member outside of the meeting, as it appeared as though the statistics requested mixed the two different projects - one for residents concerning highway tree planting and one for the Council to facilitate the planting of 1.2 million trees in Surrey.

A Member noted the positive progress made on the conversion of streetlights to LED technology and asked the Cabinet Member if there were any plans to revisit the night-time switch off in certain roads, as a result of the reduction in electricity consumption.

In response, the Cabinet Member noted that there were no plans to revisit the night-time switch off as it reduced costs and carbon emissions.

**Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change:** on the Epsom Community Recycling Centre (CRC) trial which would come to an end at the end of the calendar year, a Member asked what the plans were beyond that from January next year.

In response, the Cabinet Member noted that the trial had been successful apart from a small number of residents that booked but did not arrive to deposit their rubbish. She explained that the trial was being reviewed and she would provide the Member with further detail as soon as possible as to whether it would continue.

## **61/20 STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS [ITEM 7]**

Mr Eber Kington made a statement on a leaflet issued across Epsom and Ewell which angered residents as it attempted to deflect responsibility away from Surrey County Council and onto the Borough Council and local residents regarding the queues to the Epsom CRC. It was a shame as that error of judgement diverted positive comments away from the new booking system to the CRC which had reduced queuing.

## **62/20 ORIGINAL MOTIONS [ITEM 8]**

### **Item 8 (i)**

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

Under Standing Order 12.1 Mrs Fiona White moved:

#### **This Council notes:**

That it recognises that child poverty, especially child food poverty, is a systemic problem, not a temporary one which can be solved with short term measures.

It further recognises that the key objective that no-one is left behind must start with our youngest children.

It recognises too that breakfast clubs and other on-site initiatives delivered through schools make a huge difference not just to pupil wellbeing but also to the quality of learning and other outcomes.

#### **Therefore resolves to:**

1. Encourage all schools to set up breakfast clubs by making a one-off capital allocation to those schools which require it to amend premises or provide equipment, to enable schools to make breakfast provision

2. Ask officers to produce a report on child poverty in Surrey, so Council can fully understand the impact and scale of the problem
3. Consider setting aside in the next revenue budget sums to enable an action plan falling out of that report which could meaningfully address the impact of child poverty on learning and wellbeing and
4. Lobby government to consider reforms to the welfare system which address the fundamental causes of child poverty, such as the failures of the Universal Credit system and the inadequacy of the minimum wage.

Mrs White made the following points:

- That the purpose of her motion was clear, it was for the Council to recognise the issue of child poverty in Surrey and resolve to do something about it.
- That although Covid-19 had brought the issue of child poverty and free school meals into focus, child poverty had been a growing problem for a long time.
- That the numbers of people in Surrey claiming Universal Credit was rising.
- That the children's vision for Surrey was to deliver better opportunities of outcome for children and young people. Hungry children could not make the most of their education, so targeted action was needed to address the matter through the provision of breakfast clubs.
- That it was vital to accurately record the extent of child poverty in Surrey but to also provide action on the issue, unlike the amendment the motion was proactive through putting sums aside for an action plan before the next revenue budget was set.
- Recognised that the Council could not solve the issue of child poverty alone, the motion proposed that it lobby the government to consider reforms to the welfare system which did not adequately support families, noting the failings of the Universal Credit system and insufficient minimum wage.
- Supported the addition in the amendment to lobby government to continue to fund local government appropriately to mitigate the social effects of Covid-19.
- That overall, the amendment did not add much substance to the motion, it contained a lot of self-congratulatory wording and lost sight of the motion's simplicity which resolved to take positive action to address the issue.

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

- Noted that the motion was uncontroversial so he hoped that Members would support it.
- That the principles and actions were self-evident, ending child poverty and feeding children were moral imperatives and must be a priority for the Council.
- Stressed that by ensuring every child was well fed, children could get the most out of their education and school breakfast clubs were an important enabler.

- That children had a multitude of stresses in their lives so called for the Council to take one of those worries away from them so they could fulfil their potential.

Mrs Mary Lewis moved an amendment which had been published in the supplementary agenda, which was formally seconded by Mrs Julie Iles.

The amendment was as follows (with additional words in bold/underlined and deletions crossed through):

**This Council notes:**

That it recognises that child poverty, especially child food poverty, **including food, fuel, digital, housing and transport poverty which impact the whole family**, is a systemic problem, not a temporary one which can be solved with short term measures.

It further recognises that the key objective that no-one is left behind must start with our youngest children.

It recognises ~~too that breakfast clubs and other on-site initiatives delivered through schools make a huge difference not just to pupil wellbeing but also to the quality of learning and other outcomes.~~ **that system-wide initiatives delivered through early years settings, schools, health settings, family centres and elsewhere make a huge difference not just to child wellbeing but also to the quality of learning and other outcomes.**

**Therefore resolves to:**

- ~~1. Encourage all schools to set up breakfast clubs by making a one-off capital allocation to those schools which require it to amend premises or provide equipment, to enable schools to make breakfast provision-~~
2. Ask officers to produce a report on child poverty in Surrey **to assess data from the Community Impact Assessment and on-going work with the DWP, Citizens' Advice Bureau, Surrey Welfare Rights Unit and the Community Foundation for Surrey to produce a report on poverty in Surrey, so Council can fully understand the complexity, scale and impact on children of poverty in Surrey, including the wider cohort of families now experiencing poverty.**
- ~~3. Consider setting aside in the next revenue budget sums to enable an action plan falling out of that report which could meaningfully address the impact of child poverty on learning and wellbeing and-~~
4. Lobby government to consider reforms to the welfare system which address the fundamental causes of child poverty, such as the failures of the Universal Credit system and the inadequacy of the minimum wage **to continue to fund local government appropriately to mitigate the social effects of Covid-19, especially those affecting children and families.**
5. **Support the work of the One Surrey Growth Board in seeking to support post-Covid economic recovery and to provide the quality jobs and training that can offer a long- term solution to the issue.**

6. **Support the new Executive Director of Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture to lead a Council wide response to the report on child poverty in Surrey and to address the issue of poor outcomes for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, including working with schools to provide an Inclusive curriculum that supports the most disadvantaged and developing the Helping Families Early initiative with partners, built on the principle that 'everyone can do something'.**
7. **Support the Leader as Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board to continue its work in addressing and prioritising this issue.**
8. **Support the First 1000 Days initiative with Health/County Council integrated commissioning to improve life chances of babies and young children (now in its second year).**
9. **Welcome the £2.2 million winter package funding received by Surrey CC from central government and the work being done with partners to use it to target support to those in most immediate need, alleviating food and fuel poverty.**

Mrs Lewis spoke to her amendment, making the following points:

- That as Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families she welcomed the sentiments made by the proposer and seconder of the motion.
- Noted deep concern on the effects of poverty on children and families in Surrey, agreeing with the proposer that the Council's guiding principle of no-one is left behind, must start with our youngest children.
- Noted the First 1000 Days initiative, emphasising that early development was a strong predictor of academic achievement - poverty affected babies in the womb through the mother's health.
- Stressed that the motion was too simplistic by only focussing on child food poverty and the quick fix of breakfast clubs. Child poverty was a complex issue not only composing of food poverty, but also fuel, housing, transport and digital poverty which all led to significant health inequalities in children which Covid-19 exacerbated.
- Explained that child poverty was a systemic issue which required a long-term system-wide partnership response, which the amendment outlined.
- That one positive of Covid-19 was the collation of a large amount of data on struggling individuals, families and communities collated in the CIA. Such data provided a tool for the Council, borough and district councils and partners including health colleagues to provide targeted support.
- Noted the vital work that the Deputy Chief Executive was leading with key partners to assess data from the CIA and key partners to provide a comprehensive report on child poverty.
- That the C-SPA had been working to address child poverty by contacting struggling families through community connectors such as family centres.

- That Covid-19 profoundly affected families' finances with further difficulties ahead. The work of the One Surrey Growth Board (OSGB) on economic recovery was key, as economic growth, facilitating skills training towards higher paid jobs and stable employment, were the only long-term solutions to family poverty and as a result, child poverty.
- That the amendment referenced many workstreams already underway in the county, to tackle systemic poverty.
- Asked Members to support the new Executive Director of Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture to lead and promote a Council-wide partnership response to the report on child poverty, which links to the statutory duty under Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 to improve the wellbeing of children.
- Welcomed Surrey's £2.2 million allocation of the Covid Winter Grant Scheme from government and the immediate support that offered.

The motion was formally seconded by Mrs Iles, who made the following comments:

- Supported the proposer of the motion in raising awareness of child poverty but noted that the scope of that motion was too narrow, focussing solely on child food poverty and it did not recognise that a system-wide effort was required to address the issue.
- That it was important that the amended motion included the need to lobby government to continue to fund local government appropriately to mitigate the social effects of Covid-19.
- That the wording in the amendment was not self-congratulatory as it recognised the huge work already underway by the Council and its partners on addressing poverty.
- That the amendment's reference of the CIA, OSGB, Health and Wellbeing Board and First 1000 Days initiative, provided information on what the issues were and where they were appearing.
- That her earlier response to a Member question noting the Covid Winter Grant Scheme, demonstrated the power of a coordinated response with school leaders and partners.
- That as part of the above Scheme, food vouchers were effective in providing targeted food support during the school holidays, alongside the targeted provision of Christmas hampers to families such as in Chertsey via the food bank.
- That one workstream within the First 1000 Days initiative was the closing of the outcome gap to ensure that every child irrespective of background could reach their full potential. Poverty was a key driver of poorer development and outcomes in children on free school meals at the end of their reception year.
- Noted that she was proud of the work done to maintain early years funding and to support the supply chain especially those serving Surrey's most disadvantaged population areas - with evidence provided to the parliamentary team investigating the issue.
- That Cabinet received a report on 24 November 2020 on Surrey Schools and Early Years Funding 2021-22 which detailed an increase in all funding rates in the funding formulae and the increases in the funding rates of free school meals provision at early years.

- That work was underway in Surrey's Schools Alliance for Excellence network to address the outcome gap for the disadvantaged cohort and work was underway with sector leads and includes the Education Endowment Foundation to target outcomes at secondary school level, curriculum access and the rollout of an early literacy and language programme.
- Welcomed the arrival of the new Executive Director of Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture to drive the system-wide focus on making sure that no-one is left behind and the tackling of economic and health inequalities.

Mrs White did not accept the amendment and she made the following comments:

- That she could not accept the amendment as the additional wording referred to business as usual without any real action.
- That the problem with the amendment was that it weakened the original motion - as resources were needed to address the issue - by deleting points one and three regarding a one-off capital allocation for breakfast clubs and setting aside sums for the next revenue budget.
- Regarding the deletion of point four on reforms to the welfare system, she noted that the issue of child poverty would never be addressed unless the benefits system was reformed, and the national minimum wage reflected the real cost of living.
- That it was vital to lobby the government to continue with the funding to mitigate the social effects of Covid-19, but there needed to be a permanent solution by providing adequate local government funding more generally.
- Pointed out that the Council and government were ruled by a political majority, so they were in a strong position to lead on the issue.
- That the Council should continue with its business as usual work, but she called on it to concentrate on the issue of child poverty.

Eleven Members spoke on the amendment and made the following comments:

- That the amendment was a disingenuous attempt to deflect attention away from the real initiative of providing breakfast clubs, the motion was not narrow in focus but was specific and proposed change.
- Whilst the motion noted the need for a one-off capital allocation to encourage all schools to set up breakfast clubs or to amend premises or provide new equipment; it did not take into account the ongoing costs required such as staffing so it was hoped that such funding would follow subsequently.
- Noted that the motion and supporting speakers made good points on calling for action on child food poverty, but that those suggestions such as having breakfast clubs in all schools were short-term and were not targeted at children and areas with the most need.
- That the amendment proposed long-term solutions to the systemic problem, a real solution to child food poverty was a thriving economy with more jobs. Covid-19 had significantly impacted the economy and it was an opportune time to support businesses to get back on

their feet and to get people back into secure and high-quality employment by providing skills training.

- Agreed that the original motion was too narrow in its solutions to a complex issue, noting that there was a large amount of work going on by the Council and partners with long-term strategies.
- That nutrition was important, but the issue of child poverty could only be solved by several different strategies as families all faced different problems.
- Stressed that early intervention, driving high quality early education and supporting parents into higher paid employment via educational training had vital roles in addressing child poverty and breaking the cycle of inequality.
- That the early years strategy helped to ensure that no-one would be left behind, the focus must be on inclusion to reach out to those families who had not come forward for support such as through encouraging deprived families to take up the funded early education for two-year-olds (FEET) entitlement. There was also a sustainability fund to support those early years settings to withstand the impact of Covid-19, targeted on settings serving population areas with the most disadvantaged families.
- That barriers must be broken down to enable families to better support themselves which in turn would address child poverty. Empowerment and education were key and the broad focus of the amendment sought to tackle the systemic problems around the issue.

*Mr MacLeod left the meeting at 11.58 am*

- That although the amendment provided a more systematic approach, he supported the motion as there was nothing wrong with it. He called for cross-party cooperation on the issue of child poverty, whilst continuing with the work underway by the Council on the different strands of poverty.
- That a systemic approach needed focus as well as vision with action on the ground, agreeing with the focus on early intervention but noted that the Council had shut many Sure Start children's centres and therefore breakfast clubs could be an alternative initiative that could make a difference by maximising the educational potential of all children in Surrey.
- Noted caution on the previous comments that a strong economy was a solution to poverty, due to the uncertainty around Brexit.
- That it appeared as though there was a lack of information for families and individuals needing help and requested that a summary of contact details for key organisations and partners which offered support be provided.
- That the amendment recognised that struggling families often did not have one crisis such as child food poverty, but also faced fuel, digital, housing and transport poverty affecting the whole family.
- That breakfast clubs only worked during school hours and for those aged five and upwards, they were one initiative within a patchwork of multi-agency approaches to the systemic issue of poverty.

*Mr MacLeod re-joined the meeting at 12.07 pm*

- Supported the amendment as the motion was too narrow in focus, it did not take into account the efforts being made to address the wider problem of poverty, poor nutrition for children was one symptom of that overall problem.
- That the amendment would strengthen the motion if it did not delete the elements that were key to making a difference through immediate action, such as setting aside sums in the next revenue budget to enable an action plan from the report requested on child poverty, lobbying the government to consider reforming the welfare system, or the provision of breakfast clubs.
- Noted concern that while many elements of the amendment were commendable and should be pursued by the Council, the longer term and broader objectives lost sight of the motion's simplicity and immediate call for action that was achievable in a reasonable time frame.
- Noted the condescending comments made by some Members against the motion with arguments deflecting from the issue of child poverty by noting that a thriving economy was the solution to poverty.

The Chairman asked Mrs Lewis, as proposer of the amendment to conclude the debate:

- She noted that a system-wide patchwork approach with partners was key to address the systemic issue of poverty, noting narrow past failed initiatives such as Every Child Matters which was well-funded and supported but the attainment gap did not change, and the initiative to boost the uptake of free schools meals which was underclaimed due to the fear of stigmatisation.
- Similarly the focus on providing breakfast clubs and child poverty was too narrow and so the focus must be on the wide-ranging practical measures already underway with partners.

The amendment was put to the vote with 54 Members voting For, 20 voting Against and 1 Abstention.

Therefore the amendment was carried and became the substantive motion.

The substantive motion was put to the vote with 71 Members voting For, 0 voting Against and 4 Abstentions.

Therefore it was **RESOLVED** that:

**This Council notes:**

That it recognises that child poverty, including food, fuel, digital, housing and transport poverty which impact the whole family, is a systemic problem, not a temporary one which can be solved with short term measures.

It further recognises that the key objective that no-one is left behind must start with our youngest children.

It recognises that system-wide initiatives delivered through early years settings, schools, health settings, family centres and elsewhere make a huge difference

not just to child wellbeing but also to the quality of learning and other outcomes.

**Therefore resolves to:**

1. Ask officers to assess data from the Community Impact Assessment and on-going work with the DWP, Citizens' Advice Bureau, Surrey Welfare Rights Unit and the Community Foundation for Surrey to produce a report on poverty in Surrey, so Council can fully understand the complexity, scale and impact on children of poverty in Surrey, including the wider cohort of families now experiencing poverty.
2. Lobby government to continue to fund local government appropriately to mitigate the social effects of Covid-19, especially those affecting children and families.
3. Support the work of the One Surrey Growth Board in seeking to support post-Covid economic recovery and to provide the quality jobs and training that can offer a long- term solution to the issue.
4. Support the new Executive Director of Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture to lead a Council wide response to the report on child poverty in Surrey and to address the issue of poor outcomes for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, including working with schools to provide an Inclusive curriculum that supports the most disadvantaged and developing the Helping Families Early initiative with partners, built on the principle that 'everyone can do something'.
5. Support the Leader as Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board to continue its work in addressing and prioritising this issue.
6. Support the First 1000 Days initiative with Health/County Council integrated commissioning to improve life chances of babies and young children (now in its second year).
7. Welcome the £2.2 million winter package funding received by Surrey CC from central government and the work being done with partners to use it to target support to those in most immediate need, alleviating food and fuel poverty.

**63/20 ORGANISATION STRATEGY 2021 - 2026 [ITEM 9]**

The Leader of the Council introduced the report. He noted that it built upon the Council's Community Vision for Surrey 2030 through the guiding principle of tackling inequality and ensuring no-one is left behind. He explained that the refreshed Organisation Strategy was a framework for all key initiatives and workstreams in the county, such as the Community Impact Assessment (CIA) and the Surrey 2030 Economic Strategy Statement. He encouraged all to read the CIA which included a wealth of data on communities and highlighted the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on different communities in Surrey. He noted the work of the Surrey Future Economic Commission which looked at the state of Surrey's economy and how to support it going forward, which fed into the Surrey 2030 Economic Strategy Statement. He noted that there were four key

priorities in the refreshed Organisation Strategy, underpinned by six key enablers to continue to transform the Council.

A Member noted that many of the initiatives and priorities within the refreshed Organisational Strategy were commendable but aspirational and hoped they could be achieved in the near future in order to make a real difference to Surrey's residents. He noted that the CIA was an excellent comprehensive assessment with a real focus on mental health. He highlighted that he had a dilemma on the overall Strategy and its focus on efficiencies, as to whether they would transform residents' experiences or whether they were cuts. He stressed the need for the Strategy to address and focus on: inadequate government funding, the growing demand for services for children and young people with SEND, ensuring affordable housing, reducing homelessness and rough sleeping, facilitating the planting of 1.2 million trees by 2030, improving Children's Services, Adult Social Care and the fire service (SFRS) despite the major reforms achieved a few years ago, the maintenance of Surrey's highway network, working more effectively with partners to develop existing infrastructure such as community facilities and delivering services together.

In response, the Leader of the Council noted that the Council was focussed on transforming the way in which its services were delivered through measurable outcomes. The CIA would provide an effective evidence base to measure those outcomes and the refreshed Organisation Strategy was not aspirational but underpinned the work that the Council was continuing to do.

**RESOLVED:**

That Council approved the Surrey County Council Organisation Strategy 2021 – 2026, which sets out how the council will work with residents and partners to contribute to the achievement of the Community Vision for Surrey in 2030. It sets out priority areas the council will focus on over the next five years.

**64/20 ADOPTION OF THE SURREY WASTE LOCAL PLAN [ITEM 10]**

The Leader of the Council introduced the report.

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change provided a summary of the Surrey Waste Local Plan. She noted that the Council had a statutory requirement to produce local plans for minerals and waste to ensure there was sufficient capacity and to review and update those plans where necessary every five years. The existing Plan was last adopted in 2008, if the Council did not adopt the updated Plan, she noted that it would be increasingly difficult to defend planning decisions and enforcement action taken on the basis of the policies in the existing Plan, potentially resulting in unwanted speculative waste development and the regularisation of unauthorised waste activity.

She explained that the review of the Surrey Waste Local Plan commenced in 2016 with a consultation on issues and options between September-November 2016, there was a further consultation on the draft plan between November 2017-February 2018, during January-February 2019 there was

another consultation on the submission of the plan and a final consultation on the main modifications in January-February 2020. Throughout those four rounds of public consultation, views on the Plan were sought from residents, businesses and other stakeholders. She noted that Members had been kept updated and engaged throughout the process via reports to the Cabinet, the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee, the Planning and Regulatory Committee, the member reference group, and an all Member briefing during the consultation on the submission of the plan. District and borough council officers and Members were engaged in the process through a round of workshops in 2018/19 and Statements of Common Ground were signed between Surrey County Council and all eleven district and borough councils in September 2019.

The Plan presented to Council for adoption included modifications and was found sound in May 2020 by an independent planning inspector following an examination in public in September 2019 and it met all the statutory requirements. She explained that the new Plan had fewer allocated sites than the existing Plan with some sites having been removed completely. She noted that there was only one new site which was at Lambs Business Park in South Godstone, that Trumps Farm was now allocated solely for a household waste Dry Mixed Recyclables (DMR) plant, that Weylands Treatment Works had additional protections for residents in respect of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) routing that was absent from the existing Plan. She added that there were a number of existing industrial estates referred to in the Plan as Industrial Land Areas of Search (ILAS), those sites were not allocated in the new Plan but were identified as potential sites for small to medium scale waste uses subject to usual planning permission and that several of those sites already hosted a range of waste uses.

Looking to the future, she noted that the Council was progressing a joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan to address the increasing synergies between the two. She added that many other County Councils had joint plans and the joint plan was expected to go out to consultation in Summer 2021. She stressed that it was important that in the interim the new Plan was adopted to ensure that the waste planning policies used to determine planning applications were up to date.

Members made the following comments:

- Thanked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change for her support in addressing her concerns concerning Weylands Treatment Works which had been a difficult site from its conception. She noted that in the existing Plan it was accepted as one of top sites where it could develop considerably and welcomed the revision in the new Plan which included a scheme for routing HGVs routing down new roads. However, she raised an objection to that part of the new Plan as she noted that the diverting of HGVs would not happen in reality and that a site that had no infrastructure would never expand to what would be required - so she would abstain from approving the recommendation.
- Noted that he was portfolio holder in 2016 when the Plan first started its process of revision and thanked those officers involved, the Planning department, as well as the contributions from

Members to develop the Plan. In time, he noted that it would help the Council's Climate Change strategy.

- Commended the new Plan to Council which had undergone extensive consultation and external assessment.
- Endorsed the concerns made by the Member regarding Weylands Treatment Works as the access route by HGV's went through his division.
- Thanked the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change for listening to Members' concerns and hoped that the joint Minerals and Waste Local Plan would address difficulties such as the Weylands site.

**RESOLVED:**

That Council adopted the Surrey Waste Local Plan.

*Rachael I Lake abstained from the vote.*

**65/20 SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20 [ITEM 11]**

The Leader of the Council introduced the report. He commended the hard work of the Council's Select Committees, the various task and finish groups and extensive work outside of committee meetings with over one hundred meetings in the past year, as well as the work of officers. He noted that the restructuring of the Council's scrutiny function through the establishment of the four Select Committees and task and finish groups had been effective in scrutinising Council policy before decisions were made by Cabinet. He encouraged Members to use the Select Committee process to provide constructive input into the formulation of Council policy.

The Chairman of the Select Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen's Group thanked the Leader for the work he had done to support the development of scrutiny and the work on restructuring the scrutiny process initiated by the Chairman of the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee.

He thanked his fellow Select Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen for their work and supported the Leader's call for more Members to be engaged in the scrutiny process and particularly in the task and finish groups. He emphasised that scrutiny was the foundation of democracy and was delighted that Council had made advances on scrutiny, he hoped that the effective arrangements would be continued.

The Chairman of the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee hoped that the report would command cross-party support which had been a key feature of the Select Committees since they were revitalised. He noted that effective structures and arrangements could be established, but what mattered for success in the scrutiny process was the contributions of Members in those roles. One advantage of the new system was the cross-party representation including the positions of Select Committee Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen and non-partisan collaboration within the Select Committees to hold executive to account. There was more work to be done, but he noted the significant progress made since last year. He paid credit to the Leader for his support and the realisation of his commitment that no significant proposals would go to Cabinet until they

went through the Select Committee system. He highlighted that a few years ago the activities of Select Committees focussed on noting actions and asking for periodic updates, since the restructure last year the change had been fundamental via the scrutiny of strategy, policy development and establishment of task and finish groups. The new scrutiny system had improved the governance of the Council by holding the Cabinet to account to the benefit of Surrey's residents.

**RESOLVED:**

That Council noted the contents of the Scrutiny Annual Report.

**66/20     AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - REPORT OF THE GOVERNANCE REVIEW TASK GROUP [ITEM 12]**

The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee introduced the report. He noted that the Governance Review Task Group took an open approach to interviewing a range of Members and officers to evaluate the effectiveness of the Council's scrutiny function. He noted that significant progress had been made on the Council's scrutiny function and welcomed the strong support from the Leader of the Council, Group Leaders and the Chief Executive.

He reported that scrutiny was now clearly valued by officers and Members than had been previously, in particular non-Cabinet Members realised that they had a significant opportunity to direct Council policy before final decisions were made by Cabinet.

He outlined one recommendation which was that there should be a standing agenda item on scrutiny at each Council meeting for Select Committee Chairmen to provide updates on the work of their Select Committees and for Members to ask questions.

**RESOLVED:**

That Council noted the report by the Audit and Governance Committee on 26 November 2020.

**67/20     AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - REPORT OF THE MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT WORKING GROUP [ITEM 13]**

The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee introduced the report. He noted that the report was to some extent an interim position as the Local Government Association (LGA) was expected to publish its revised recommendations following consultation on the LGA Model Member Code of Conduct, which was not known at the time of the review. He anticipated that minor amendments would be brought forward to Council following the publication of the LGA's Model version.

**RESOLVED:**

That Council approved:

1. (a) The appointment of two Independent Persons.

1. (b) That Mr Akbar Khan and Philippa Harding be appointed as the two Independent Persons.
2. The revised Arrangements for Dealing with Allegations of Breaches of the Member Code of Conduct.

## **68/20 REPORT OF THE CABINET [ITEM 14]**

The Leader presented the report of the Cabinet meetings held on 27 October 2020 and 24 November 2020.

### **Recommendations on Policy Framework Documents:**

#### **27 October 2020:**

- A. Organisation Strategy Refresh [Agenda Item 9]
- B. Surrey Waste Local Plan: Adoption [Agenda Item 10]

### **Reports for Information/Discussion:**

#### **27 October 2020:**

- C. Delivery of Care Leavers Accommodation, A Library and Family Centre in Caterham Hill
- D. Decision on the Route to Market for Two Extra Care Housing Schemes
- E. Prudential Ride London-Surrey

#### **24 November 2020:**

- F. 2021/22 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy
- G. Accelerating the Introduction of Ultra Low / Zero Emissions Buses and Community Transport Vehicles into Surrey
- H. Transformation of Accommodation Based Care and Support for Working Age Adults: Delivering Supported Independent Living Options
- I. Quarterly Report on Decisions Taken Under Special Urgency Arrangements: 13 October – 08 December 2020

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That Council noted that there had been no urgent decisions in the last three months (quarter).
2. That the reports of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 27 October 2020 and 24 November 2020 be adopted.

## **69/20 MINUTES OF CABINET MEETINGS [ITEM 15]**

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.

The Chairman concluded the meeting with some closing remarks: he acknowledged the positive news of the Covid-19 vaccine rollout, wished farewell to County Hall and welcomed the move to the Council's new

headquarters in Woodhatch, Reigate and wished all a Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year.

[Meeting ended at: 13.10 pm]

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**Chairman**

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## Leader's Statement – County Council, 8 December 2020

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Mr Chairman, Members, we come together, still virtually, still in the grip of a pandemic that began almost ten months ago, but with light visible at the end of the tunnel.

Without question this year has been a year like no other.

It has undoubtedly been challenging for everyone in different ways – restrictions on our freedoms, fundamental changes to our normal way of life, a lack of social contact.

For some it has been even more challenging, facing financial uncertainty, job insecurity, serious health problems and, of course, and the loss of friends and family.

The impact will be long lasting, and we have a big role to play in helping people, communities, and the County recover.

Throughout the multitude of challenges this year has thrown at us, Surrey has come together.

Our local communities have stepped up and shown remarkable generosity and care for their neighbours and those less fortunate.

Partners across Surrey have come together as the Local Resilience Forum to guide the county through these uncharted waters.

The County Council, the police, health services, Surrey Fire & Rescue, the districts and boroughs, the voluntary, community and faith sector, universities and schools, and thousands and thousands of volunteers.

Surrey's Public Health team has shown remarkable leadership right from the moment we had the first UK contracted case in February, through to being identified as one of the national leaders ahead of the Test and Trace rollout, and now to that daily scrutiny of local data to ensure the right decisions are made for our communities here in Surrey.

As a council we are well integrated with our NHS partners in the county and we will stand with them and support them as they embark on the herculean task of mass vaccination roll out.

I look forward to taking up that vaccine myself in due course in the new year, and in the meantime we must all play our part in helping dispel lies, conspiracy theories and misinformation to ensure our communities are protected and we can all return to our normal way of life as soon as possible.

Mr Chairman, I also want to take this opportunity to recognise the work of our staff through this most difficult of years.

As well as the remarkable work undertaken by our NHS colleagues nationally, we must pay tribute to our care workers here in Surrey. They have always had huge dedication to their work, but it has been highlighted this year even more so.

Selfless, caring, exceptionally skilled – these people really are the best of us.

Our key workers across the council have been incredible throughout this pandemic, working throughout lockdowns, redesigning services quickly to make them COVID secure and available to residents, and many volunteering to be redeployed in different roles wherever needed, be it handling calls on the community helpline to packing food boxes or go to our most vulnerable.

I hope they find time this Christmas to - at the very least – to switch off and reflect on the magnificent effort they've put in this year.

Mr Chairman, even though our primary focus throughout 2020 has been responding to this pandemic and protecting our residents, we have pressed ahead as a council in not only continuing to deliver the services our residents rely on but working hard to make sure they are better than ever.

We started this year with ambitious plans for the organisation and for Surrey as a place, and we've continued to pursue those ambitions throughout the year.

That has only been possible because our finances have remained strong thanks to our hard work over the last couple of years. That has meant we have been able to provide the financial bedrock for the Local Resilience Forum, and continue to deliver services to residents, with a balanced budget planned for 2021.

As you have already mentioned Chairman, we are moving the Council offices back into the County having secured an offer for the building and delivering on my pledge when I became leader to get our staff closer to the residents and communities we serve.

We've progressed with our transformation of Children's Services, which OFSTED have confirmed as having substantially improved. Further visits are planned next year which we are looking forward to with fresh impetus, with the arrival of Rachael Wardell as our new Executive Director, who I am sure will lead us to be even better.

We have progressed the Making Surrey Safer plan, bringing Surrey Fire & Rescue Service up to modern standards, working to prevent more incidents and respond to the challenges of today's society. Our first fire engine response times for critical emergencies is averaging 7 minutes and 55 seconds, well within the 10 minute response target.

We have also focussed on the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion agenda, particularly with our staff to ensure that we listen to the voices of people who have previously not been heard and putting this at the heart of our policy making.

Another thing I'm particularly proud of this year is the council's Climate Change strategy which we published in the summer, that will guide our work on tackling the climate emergency which I will go into more detail about that shortly. I very much hope that all of our partners, including the District and Borough Councils, will join us in promoting that strategy.

We have continued with our ambitious investment in our residents and our future, acting on the promises we made back in January when we announced our capital investment strategy and are progressing a number of initiatives including:

- **Your Fund Surrey** – with a £100m to strengthen communities and give residents more power and influence
- **Tackling climate change** and green infrastructure to deliver a greener and more sustainable future
- **Schools and SEND provision** by increasing school places, ensuring our children can overcome this year's disruption and get the best possible start in life closer to home, reducing the need to travel long distances.
- **Highways investment** of £114m this year on maintenance and improvements as well as promoting active travel to make getting around the county smoother
- **Flood alleviation** schemes across the County to protect tens of thousands of homes and businesses from further disaster and give future security and peace of mind

- **Extra Care sites** to ensure our elderly residents can keep independence for longer and grow old safely and with dignity.

Our ambitions for Surrey as a place have not dimmed. We're looking to the future and continuing that transformation as we head into 2021.

As I've already mentioned Mr Chairman, our collective hard work and dedication over the last two years to get our finances in order, mean we have been able to cope with the challenges that have come this year and are well placed going into an uncertain future.

A few years ago, a major unforeseen issue such as COVID may well have pushed Surrey to the brink, but thanks to the transformation undertaken in this organisation, we can continue to provide services and a better future for our residents.

Our ambitious programme of investing in our communities will continue, and has become even more important in ensuring they can thrive over the coming years of recovery.

I believe our residents can trust Surrey County Council to guide the county through these challenging times and deliver a brighter future.

We are now in our budget setting period. The draft budget went to Cabinet in November and we are asking residents for their thoughts and priorities via a survey, to engage them in the process and be wholly transparent as to how their money is spent.

We will continue to transform our services to ensure every efficiency can be made and every service is delivering the very best value for money.

It will be essential to continue that sound financial management in an uncertain, but undoubtedly challenging, medium term future as the country gets to grips with the longer-term effects of COVID and its economic impact and whilst we will need to increase council tax to fund our services, we will ensure that the increase is at the minimum level we require and well below the 5% we would be allowed to levy. This is not the time to add even more financial pressure on our residents.

As it has always been, the majority of our spending goes on protecting our most vulnerable residents, working to improve their quality of life and reduce inequality.

We spend more than £1m every single day on Adult Social Care and over £0.5m a day on Children's Services.

Most of our residents won't necessarily experience these services, but it is our duty to ensure our most vulnerable are looked after and we will continue to do that, while pressing government on sustainable ways to deliver that care.

Of course, we will continue to fund day to day spending on highways and transport, libraries, schools, waste disposal, community protection including the fire service, as well as the important governance and so-called 'back office' functions that help ensure services are delivered.

The work of the council over the coming year will be guided by our four key pillars of focus that every part of the organisation will be working to achieve.

These are:

### **Growing a sustainable economy so everyone can benefit**

This focus is particularly critical as our county recovers from COVID.

Surrey's Community Impact Assessment report highlights how the economic impact has been felt most acutely in those areas with a higher reliance on certain industries, such as aviation.

The number of people claiming Universal Credit or Job Seeker's Allowance has increased by over 300% in some areas of Surrey.

We must support people and businesses across Surrey to grow again, and re-prioritise infrastructure plans to adapt to changing needs and demands.

If we can deliver the right conditions for our industries to grow – better connectivity, infrastructure, a better and more affordable place to live and work – the possibilities for our county are endless.

We are an ambitious organisation, for an ambitious county. We are making Surrey a county that is fit for the future.

The second priority area is:

### **Tackling health inequality**

As already touched upon, we have a close and positive relationship with our NHS partners, particularly through Surrey Heartlands. We will continue our driving ambition to reduce health inequalities, particularly in life expectancy, and make sure nobody is left behind.

We can do this by accelerating health and social care integration, to reduce demand on services while improving health outcomes for residents as well as supporting a strong economy.

We must also increase our focus on addressing mental health. This year has brought into sharp focus the fragility of mental health for many more of our residents, and this is a key area of work for our Health & Wellbeing Board. We will build on the foundations of the recent mental health summit that the county convened and establish a mental health improvement board to ensure that we engage all partners in driving our prevention and early intervention agenda.

The third priority area is:

### **Enabling a greener future**

This year we have published our Climate Change Strategy and our Tree Strategy side by side.

We are serious about tackling the Climate Emergency and our action over the last year in this area speaks for itself.

We acted quickly during the summer to harness the increase in active travel, making it safer and easier for people to walk or cycle in our town centres, and have recently been allocated even more funding to develop active travel schemes further.

Our infrastructure projects such as Farnham Town Centre are focussed on improving air quality and reducing polluting congestion.

We have begun our programme of replacing every single one of Surrey's streetlights in environmentally friendly LEDs.

And just last month we agreed a huge, almost £50m investment in ultra-low emission buses to help get people around this county in a clean and efficient way.

We are absolutely investing in a greener future.

Finally, Mr Chairman, but no less importantly, we are:

### **Engaging with our communities**

This is something that I've been talking about since I had the privilege to become to become Leader of this council and has progressed further and faster in the last few months.

We want to reinvigorate our relationship with residents and make this part of the council's culture, build on the incredible partnership work we have seen at first hand during the pandemic and support our communities to tackle local issues, while making it easier for everyone to play an active role in the decisions that will shape Surrey's future

We've already started this in earnest.

It is really important that our residents have a clear and easily accessible route to influence policy making and decisions that affect them, beyond local government elections every four years.

Let's work together, strengthen our communities and create a better place to live.

Mr Chairman, I know that we have a brighter future ahead of us. We will overcome COVID, we will rise to the challenge of recovery and we will continue to make Surrey the best place to live, to work and to grow a business.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.

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