

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL HELD REMOTELY
ON MICROSOFT TEAMS ON 9 FEBRUARY 2021 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
Jonathan Essex	Marsha Moseley
Robert Evans	Tina Mountain
Tim Evans	Bernie Muir
Mel Few	Mark Nuti
Will Forster	John O'Reilly
John Furey	Tim Oliver
Matt Furniss	Andrew Povey
Bob Gardner	Wyatt Ramsdale
Mike Goodman	Penny Rivers
Angela Goodwin	Becky Rush
David Goodwin	Stephen Spence
Zully Grant-Duff	Lesley Steeds
Alison Griffiths	Peter Szanto
Ken Gulati	Keith Taylor
Tim Hall	Barbara Thomson
Kay Hammond	Rose Thorn
David Harmer	Chris Townsend
Jeffrey Harris	Denise Turner-Stewart
Nick Harrison	Richard Walsh
Edward Hawkins	Hazel Watson
Marisa Heath	Fiona White
Saj Hussain	Keith Witham
Julie Iles OBE	Victoria Young

*absent

1/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [ITEM 1]

Apologies were received from Dr Chapman and Mr Lee.

2/21 MINUTES [ITEM 2]

The minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 8 December 2020 were submitted and confirmed.

3/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [ITEM 3]

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

Rachael I Lake declared a non-pecuniary interest noting that her son was an employee of Surrey County Council.

Mrs Clare Curran declared a personal interest in item 5 (2021/22 Final Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2025/26) as a director of Surrey Choices.

Mr Nick Darby declared a non-pecuniary interest noting that his daughter was an employee of Surrey County Council.

Mr Jeff Harris declared a non-pecuniary interest as he was an elected Member director of one of the Council's own Local Authority Trading Companies called Hendeca.

Mr Keith Witham declared a non-pecuniary interest as his step-daughter was an employee of Surrey County Council in the Finance department.

4/21 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS [ITEM 4]

The Chairman:

- Highlighted to Members that the Chairman's Announcements were located in the agenda front sheet, including the Queen's Surrey New Year Honours 2021 list.

5/21 2021/22 FINAL BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO 2025/26 [ITEM 5]

The Leader presented the 2021/22 Final Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2025/26 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:

- Noted the background of the budget including the fact that the Government's Spending Review 2020 was for one year only, there was no Fairer Funding Review, there were mixed messages about Covid-19 funding and its adequacy for local authorities, Adult Social Care (ASC)

funding proposals were still missing, there was an acknowledgement that mental health issues were increasing - spend per head in Surrey was among the lowest in the country - there was press speculation about the changes to Council Tax and Stamp Duty Land Tax and that there was no evidence of dealing with extra funding by adding more top tier Council Tax bands to ensure greater fairness which he had recommended.

- That for the first time the funding for the Council's 2021/22 final budget totalled over £1,003.6 million, with over £1 million daily for ASC and £500,000 daily for Children's Services; noting the 2.49% increase in Council Tax but anticipated the possibility of a 4.49% increase next year above inflation.
- Welcomed that the budget balanced without the use of reserves, which had been achieved despite the pressures of pay increases, inflation and increased demand particularly in ASC and Children's Services; but noted the use of efficiencies or cuts in recent years such as to youth centres and Sure Start Children's Centres.
- Noted that the need to make efficiency savings highlighted the Council's past inefficiencies as demonstrated in the Council's failed value for money test in its previous annual audit.
- In reference to the Council's continued focus on a strength-based approach, noted misgivings as how that was applied to care packages and that the market management of care home places implied significant cost reductions despite a time of increased demand.
- Highlighted failed inspections concerning Children's Services and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Youth Offending Services, Surrey Fire and Rescue Services (SFRS), the ambulance service and the need to take the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) contract back in-house.
- That it was difficult to tell residents that the Council was making necessary organisational savings as more senior officers earning £100,000 a year were added to the payroll, raising the total from nine to twenty-six.
- That reputation was equally important as the Council's finances, questioned the Council's reputation for providing decent services, being prudent with residents' money and being a can-do organisation.
- Noted major concern over the Council's commercial property investments, noting that the costly property review undertaken two years ago achieved little and the property joint venture with Places for People had achieved nothing.
- That the Council had spent £50 million on Woodhatch Place - with a further £90,000 for the Woodhatch travel plan to fund the necessary green arrangements - and £17 million for the Dakota building in Brooklands, the receipts on the sale of County Hall would not meet those costs and so borrowing costs would increase and there was no guarantee of the planned £3 million in annual savings as a result of the move.
- Noted the wasted costs for the past intended office purchase in Woking and the wasted cost for the Council's intended bid for unitary authority status - together reaching more than £500,000, hoped that there was not a contingency in the budget for a renewed attempt at the latter.
- Welcomed the spending on extra care homes with the promise for a better quality of life at a reduced cost, as well as the spending for Looked After Children and SFRS, the planned spending on flood defences, buses to assist the Council's climate change ambition, to address the

highway maintenance backlog and building repair - although the latter was a belated attempt to redress years of neglect.

- That for any overall increase in spend on highways, the preference was for an increase in Member allocations for their division; the £1.1 million intended increase in borrowing from the total of £35 million a year in 2020/21 would rise to £74 million a year in five years, placing pressure on other services.
- That there remained confusion on whether the Council was facilitating the planting of 1.2 million trees by 2030 or was paying and planting those itself.
- That the revenue loss for keeping libraries closed may need to come from contingency sums or from the Government as a legitimate Covid-19 cost.
- That over the next four years there was a planned further £178 million reduction needed in the Council's finances or £290 million including identified efficiencies, implying a huge rise in future Council Tax.
- Thanked officers for their work and the Council's work to stabilise the finances, welcoming some proposals but noted that there were too many issues, past failures and likely future issues so could not recommend the budget.
- Thanked Council staff and colleagues in other organisations for their continued immense work to keep Surrey safe throughout the pandemic.

Key points made by Mr Botten were that:

- Despite the difficult times during the pandemic, he welcomed the Leader's comments made about partnership working as well as the inspiring work undertaken by officers and the Communications team.
- Praised the leadership of the Council's Public Health team which had been outstanding.
- Commended the huge progression that the Council had made to get the budget back on track from the troubling position four years ago, thanking the work of talented officers, although noted the previous CIPFA report and that the Council should never have been in that negative position in the first place.
- Noted that challenging times lay ahead with the upcoming 2021 United Kingdom local elections and that it would be difficult to engage with residents fairly in the run up to it.
- Stressed the importance of the Council understanding the relationship and gap between the strategic impression that the budget would create and the impact on the frontline to households - such as flood prevention work.
- That all budgets were about making political choices, noting that a major section of previous budgets had been the delivery of extra care housing and the resolution of the Council's property portfolio.
- Noted disappointment over recurring delays in Council's property portfolio such as the empty properties across the county, with wasted resources in the Places for People property joint venture as work on fifteen sites that began in 2019 had been undelivered.
- Welcomed the Leader's relocation of the Council's civic heart to Woodhatch Place, noting that the Council could deliver property transformation when it put its mind to it and that skill and momentum needed to be transferred into its broader property portfolio.

- Noted the successes in the Transformation Programme but that it was also a way of generating efficiencies such as through the imaginative use of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block in SEND to offset the need to use reserves, despite the future impact on families and schools.
- Noted concern over possible future hidden charges, noting point 31 in the Equality Impact Assessment of 'An efficiency proposal for on street parking charges' and point 34 'We are also considering options for introducing charging for some of our processes within Children's Services'.
- Noted concerns that the budget for the Family Resilience delivered £0.2 million in savings despite the significant impact of Covid-19 on children's mental health, that Corporate Parenting received no apparent uplift despite the increasing number of care placements required, that SFRS was required to make £500,000 in efficiencies despite the investment in infrastructure; and that ASC needed to deliver £12 million in efficiencies despite the crisis in independent care homes and the fragile care market.
- Noted that the Council's phasing of the ASC precept was wise and shared the Leader's concern that the Government needed to ensure long-term and sustainable ASC funding.
- That the budget was silent on preparations for further bids for unitary authority status, noting the £250,000 in wasted costs for the previous intended bid and the damage to its relationship with the district and borough councils, as joint working had been and would be essential post pandemic.
- Welcomed the focus on public sector reform through the work on the integration of health and social care.
- Recognised progress made on the budget but did not yet recognise victory.

Mr Chris Botten moved an amendment, presenting an alternative budget proposal (included in the supplementary agenda) with amended budget recommendations, which was formally seconded by Mr Will Forster. This was:

(amended wording in bold and underlined)

2. That it is the view of the Executive Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer), that the level of reserves is adequate to meet the Council's needs for 2021/22. These reserves include the following amounts, (totalling ~~£94.9m~~ **£91.5m**) set aside specifically to provide financial resilience:
 - a General Fund Balance of £24.2m;
 - a budget contingency of ~~£20.4m~~ **£20.0m** with an estimated £33.4m brought forward;
 - a specific contingency for the impact of Covid-19 of £4.9m; and
 - a provision of £9m to meet risks in delivering the Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Block cost containment plan.
14. The total ~~£1.905~~ **£1.931** billion proposed five-year Capital Programme (comprising ~~£1,026.2m~~ **£1,052.3m** of budget and £879.2m pipeline) and approves the ~~£484.9~~ **£187.8** million capital budget in 2021/22 (Annex C).

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

- That the Council needed to spend more money on road safety.
- Noted the negative experiences had on the Local Committee which was a constant fight for highways schemes and subsequent rebuttals which was the fault of the system and its 'say no' culture.
- That alternative ways of funding had to be sought such as going to the parish council for a speed sign or a feasibility study for further road safety schemes.
- That the amendment should help address those problems concerning the funding of road safety schemes, there needed to be a serious culture change in Local Committees towards a positive approach addressing residents' petitions on road safety as one example.

As seconder to the amendment, Mr Foster made the following points:

- That the budget as unamended was unacceptable as it makes far too few road safety and transport improvements.
- That Local and Joint Committees received requests and petitions for road safety improvements yet the Council was unable and unwilling to take those on.
- That the Council's Your Fund Surrey allocation was meant to be for residents to lodge requests for community projects but instead it had requests for the Council to invest in statutory services like transport improvements such as cycle facilities and zebra crossings, as the Council was not providing those.
- Recognised that the Cabinet had made a modification to the budget which took on board some of the amendment's criticism concerning the lack of highways investment, which the Leader noted in his statement for the Council to commit to more spending on local transport projects.
- Urged Members to support the amendment so the Council could deliver further road safety measures that residents requested.

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

- Noted disappointment in the last-minute amendment, drawing Members' attention to the email sent last Friday as Cabinet Member for Highways which set out the significant additional money already provided to Local and Joint Committees.
- Noted that increases in the capital programme within the budget would pick up a lot of local schemes and the Surrey Infrastructure Programme and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) would deliver road safety in a holistic way rather than the amendment's narrow focus.
- That over the last few years the Council had allocated an annual capital budget of £200,000 for road safety improvements and in a typical year around twenty road safety highways improvements were implemented.
- That current highways monitoring had shown an average reduction of 30-40% in the number of injury road collisions at the treated site and there were over six hundred vehicle activated signs in Surrey noting warnings to drivers including hazards and speed limits, that amount was more than any other county.
- That in addition to the central pot of money for road safety improvement, the Local Committees were allocated additional money - totalling £13

million over the next three years - for highways improvements in which Members could use them as they wished in conjunction with the scoring matrix.

- That extra officers and the job creation element outlined in the amendment were not needed as there was sufficient capacity within Surrey Highways to deliver the highways priorities.
- That in addition to the highways safety improvement, the Council worked closely with Surrey Police on a comprehensive speed management strategy which ensured that speeding hot spots were carefully investigated and there were over ten average speed camera systems in Surrey - which was more than any other local authority in South East England - recent schemes included the A320 St Peter's way in Chertsey and the A31 near Hog's Back in Guildford.
- That some Local and Joint Committees were in need of a culture change, the Council did have a can-do attitude and was committed to keeping residents safe; noting that cycle training was provided to schools to around 16,000 young people in a typical year as well as pedestrian training, there were fifty school crossings near primary schools and around 12,000 young people annually took part in the Safe Drive Stay Alive Programme and there were thirty road safety outside school assessments.
- Noted that vehicle activated signs were funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), using local money for local solutions and working with officers, residents and Local and Joint Committee chairmen was the best way.
- Agreed with the direction of travel of the amendment regarding highways safety, however noted that work was already underway as highlighted by the Cabinet Member for Highways and he noted a recent meeting with Surrey Police concerning the Drive SMART programme.
- That Members set the budget and its outcomes, whilst officers put in place what was needed to deliver those.
- That the select committee system provided a constructive arena to scrutinise amendments in detail as opposed to the last-minute amendment to Council.
- Noted the additional funding that was already in the proposed budget which would enable Local Committees to advance locally identified schemes through leveraging CIL funding and so more officers were not needed.
- That at the recent informal Tandridge Local Committee the proposed budget was discussed including that as part of the budget setting process Local Committees across Surrey were being reviewed and extra funding provided.
- Commented on the financial structure of proposal noting that the amendment proposed an expansion of the capital programme and use of the contingency reserves to fund the revenue element.
- That the amendment's proposed increased capital borrowing of £26 million amounted to a total cost of £40.7 million over the forty years assuming a lifetime interest rate of 1.5% to the Council.
- That the contingency reserves was key to sustainable financial resilience to mitigate future risk and deal with unexpected pressures as local authorities in accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, were required to have an adequate level of reserves and so it was not prudent to erode that reserve level.
- Could not support the amendment which relied on contingency reserves and had not gone through the select committee scrutiny process as the

proposed budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) had gone through countless challenge and scrutiny to ensure that it was affordable and financially resilient.

- Noted that although Cabinet had approved the report formally closing down the Council's successful finance improvement programme last June, the Council must not deter from the need to continually grow its financial resilience and sustainability.
- That the amendment was a backwards step, it was not innovative and that it was not time for superfluous spending on building a new team when the Council had made progress towards a balanced and efficient budget through its Transformation Programme to face upcoming challenges.
- That at times Local Committees could be frustrating especially for residents, the amendment would not change that but looking at policies and procedures would.
- Thanked the Cabinet Member for Highways for the additional money that Local and Joint Committees would receive for next year's highways funding, the budget needed to be balanced and the amendment posed a problem for the finances of other services.
- That extra money for road safety if available was welcomed and how it was spent was vital such as addressing insufficient funding for feasibility studies and delays to CIL boards which were problems faced by Local Committees.
- Provided a local example of why the amendment should be passed as that extra money should be available for road safety schemes so that in one case a school could stop paying for a crossing attendant if a road crossing was upgraded.
- That Local Committees had a shared budget and each Member had an allocated amount for highways to be spent how they chose noting an example of funding for dropped pavements for disabled people.
- That it was a concern when a local borough council had not been supportive of when its Local Committee put in bids for CIL funding.
- Praised the work of a local borough council highways team and thanked the Cabinet Member for Highways for his local visits and assistance with making improvements to traffic flows and highways with support also from the Local Committee.
- That all Members could provide examples of local initiatives where money could be spent on road safety improvements and highlighted that it was a question of priorities and balancing existing funding, Local Committees had more funding available to them than ever before.

The Leader of the Council spoke on the amendment, making the following points:

- Noted disappointment that the amendment was not raised through the select committee system in order to give it proper consideration and scrutiny.
- The Council was investing in road safety putting more money into highways than it had done before and the budget had to balance with competing demands.

The Chairman asked Mr Botten, as proposer of the amendment to conclude the debate:

- Refuted the disingenuous statements made against the amendment, pointing out that trying to change the budget through the select committee system was difficult and would welcome a discussion with the Leader on the practicalities of having a genuine debate and facilitating cross-party support.
- That the amendment was not last-minute, noting that it was not a coincidence when that in response to it being submitted, the Cabinet Member for Highways sent out an email noting what extra investment the Council was making on roads.
- That it was well-constructed through officer advice who recommended the purchase of officer time.
- That the amendment was not an attempt at political grandstanding as it had been a continuous issue of concern, it was a genuine attempt to try to force change of policy to make it easier for Members to influence local decisions around road safety and other matters, it was an attempt to improve matters for Surrey residents.

The amendment was put to the vote with 13 Members voting For, 59 voting Against and 6 Abstentions.

Therefore the amendment was lost.

Returning to the to the original budget proposal and recommendations as published in the agenda:

Mr Jonathan Essex moved an amendment, presenting an alternative budget proposal (included in the supplementary agenda) with amended budget recommendations, which was formally seconded by Mr Robert Evans. This was:

(amended wording in bold and underlined)

2. That it is the view of the Executive Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer), that the level of reserves is adequate to meet the Council's needs for 2021/22. These reserves include the following amounts, (totalling ~~£91.9m~~ **£91.3m**) set aside specifically to provide financial resilience:
 - a General Fund Balance of £24.2m;
 - a budget contingency of ~~£20.4m~~ **£19.8m** with an estimated £33.4m brought forward;
 - a specific contingency for the impact of Covid-19 of £4.9m; and
 - a provision of £9m to meet risks in delivering the Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Block cost containment plan.
14. The total ~~£1.905~~ **£1.917** billion proposed five-year Capital Programme (comprising ~~£1,026.2m~~ **£1,026.8m** of budget and ~~£879.2m~~ **£890.5m** pipeline) and approves the ~~£184.9~~ **£185.0** million capital budget in 2021/22 (Annex C).

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

- Thanked officers for their help with the finances of the amendment.
- Noted that it called on the Council to match its scale of ambition in property investment with scaling up its efforts to further decarbonise Surrey through the proposed Surrey Decarbonisation Fund linking in the rest of the public sector including schools, NHS Trusts and its businesses as well as residents to inspire them to join the Council in tackling the biggest challenge of our lifetime.
- That it contained three modest transport proposals concerning the full electrification of the Council's vehicle fleet, the employment of dedicated cycle route planners and for more road safety and school travel officers to ensure safe routes to schools and support for twenty miles per hour low speed and traffic neighbourhoods across Surrey.
- That the building proposals included the need for the Council to escalate its ambition to retrofit all of its own buildings quickly through a four-fold increase in the revolving fund budget; and called for an energy retrofit and renewable energy in all of Surrey's approximately four hundred schools to line up the contracts and procurement needed within thirty months.
- That there were many other areas of funding that could be changed in the budget but that none of those should overshadow the opportunity for the Council and county to rapidly reduce its environmental impact and do so in ways that leaves no one behind, acting as a beacon for transformation in climate change.

The amendment was formally seconded by Mr Robert Evans, who reserved the right to speak.

Mr John O'Reilly moved a proposal, which was formally seconded by Mr Saj Hussain. The proposal was as follows:

That Mr Essex's alternative budget proposal with amended budget recommendations be referred to the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee for consideration.

In speaking to his proposal Mr John O'Reilly:

- Commended the proposer of the amendment as a dynamic member of the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee.
- Agreed with previous speakers that analysing budget proposals via the select committee system needed to be improved, although it provided a better opportunity to dedicate time and scrutinise proposals in more detail than was possible at the Council meeting.
- That £105 million of capital pipeline funding as discussed by the Cabinet was not fully itemised, money was available to be allocated.

Nine Members made the following points on Mr O'Reilly's proposal:

- Supported the proposal and elaborated on the £105 million of capital pipeline funding which was available for the Greener Future Programme, noting that it sat within the larger pipeline of £779 million.
- That the £105 million was for placeholders or indicative amounts for projects that had not yet been fully worked up and for viable projects to

come forward, including £12 million for LCWIPs, £5 million for the Council's renewable energy installation, £2.5 million for the revolving zero carbon investment fund.

- Questioned the mechanism for the carbon reduction in schools, where the investment would be going in and the schools would receive the benefit of that.
- That it was not prudent to use contingent reserve for the budget proposals.
- Agreed that schools could be a beacon for our communities concerning energy savings, however as the savings would fall within schools' own delegated budgets the Council would need to look at reaching an agreement with each school which could not be considered today and so favoured the referral to the Select Committee.
- That in approving the Mr Essex's amendment it would then automatically have to be as a modification to the budget proposal and so would have to be referred back to the Cabinet and so instead supported the amendment to refer it directly to the Select Committee.
- Supported the proposal to refer the issues within the amendment to the Select Committee as it was important that it was looked at alongside the Council's current schemes and funding in a holistic way with an extra £500,000 added to the cycle training programme for young people, £50 million for electric and hydrogen buses, the LCWIPs programme in Reigate and Banstead would be extended to Elmbridge, Runnymede and Spelthorne, the Government's Active Travel Fund and an extra one hundred schemes that Council planned on funding through the increased highways budget.
- That there was nothing wrong with the amendment which had been backed up by officers and so it should be supported, it was unnecessary and problematic that the debates on motions and amendments at Council followed political party lines.
- Was supportive of both the amendment and the proposal to refer it to the Select Committee which would consider the matter in detail noting its leading role on climate change through the Surrey's Greener Future Task Group, so long as it was not an attempt to kick the can down the road.
- Noted that it was a shame that the proposer of the amendment did not engage with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change or followed due process to take the budget proposals to the Select Committee for consideration.
- The amendment as it was presented was confusing such as in relation to figures on electric vehicles. The Select Committee would be able to fully explore and challenge the issues raised in more detail and so supported its referral.
- That the amendment was complex and so supported the referral to the Select Committee as question could be asked and discussed in conjunction with officers and Cabinet Members.

As seconder to Mr Essex's amendment, Mr R Evans made the following points:

- Hoped that the proposal to refer the issues within the amendment to the Select Committee was not about taking the budget proposals apart but would ensure serious consideration and give it the credit it deserved.
- Echoed that Leader's statement where he referred to doing what was most important for residents and the budget amendment was in line with

residents' concerns and priorities such as safer roads and cycle routes and parents wanted safer and less congested school routes.

- That the amendment was well planned and properly costed with positive officer input.
- That the amendment puts Surrey at the forefront on decarbonisation which would be a Government priority in the months and years ahead.

The Leader of the Council spoke on Mr Essex's amendment, making the following points:

- Agreed with a previous comment on the Council's debates going down party political lines and that was exactly why such proposals should be debated at the cross-party Select Committee in more detail.
- Reminded Members that over ten percent of the Council's budget or £105 million capital pipeline funding was allocated for the Greener Future Programme which provided an opportunity for such proposals once fully discussed through the select committee route with recommendations to Cabinet.

The Chairman asked Mr Essex, as proposer of the amendment to conclude the debate:

- Thanked all for the positive responses and anticipated that the budget proposals would be referred to the Select Committee for due consideration.
- Noted that going forward the planned discussion on the climate action plan and £105 million capital pipeline would provide a timely opportunity to consider the budget proposals going forward.
- Clarified that the price on the figures concerning electric vehicles came directly the Council's Highways department, noting that figures were less good as discounts were available for personal purchase of a car.
- That non-maintained schools typically operated by academies or the diocese were no longer recognised on the Council's balance due to long-lease arrangements, so did not have an incentive to invest in renewable energy despite eligibility to go to the Government for the Salix fund low interest loans.

The Chairman then requested that the amendment be put to a vote and that Members were to vote either for the amendment or against the amendment but on the understanding that the issues would be referred to the relevant select committee to consider.

The amendment was put to the vote with 15 Members voting For, 62 voting Against and 1 Abstention.

Therefore the amendment was lost and would be referred to the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee.

Returning to the original budget proposal and recommendations as published in the agenda, Fourteen Members spoke on it:

- Thanked the leader for his clear position on what the budget set out to achieve, praising the progress of the Council's Transformation

Programme and delivery of £75 million a year in efficiencies creating better and more accessible services for residents.

- Refuted the notion that there was not enough money for the Family Resilience and Corporate Parenting transformation programmes. The Council had in the past been a high spender on children's social care with poor outcomes. The capital budget sought to reverse that by supporting families through greater early intervention and providing more social care places to children including SEND children which would help keep children safe within their family.
- Refuted the alleged secret section of the budget with hidden charges in point 34 in the Equality Impact Assessment as there were key lines of enquiry for 2021/22 opportunities for finding a range of different options of where the Council would meet its efficiency targets and less than 2.5% of the Council's total efficiencies target was about charging - the Council sought to reduce the number of Section 20 agreements of the Children Act 1989, noting the small possibility of charging for bed and board.
- That coronavirus provided a large uncertainty to the budget, that although the Government had provided immediate help, the knock-on effects to residents and society from the financial strain would be long felt.
- Positively noted the balanced budget including contingency funding and reserves that had been built up over the last two years.
- That it was the quality of the £41 million budget reductions and whether they were deliverable that mattered as in relation to the Red-Amber-Green (RAG) ratings only £2 million were rated green and £12mn were rated red; the majority of reductions was not from the transformation programmes as £26 million was from policy approaches or operational savings.
- Noted that ASC was an area of concern, although the Council had been successful in making savings through strength based commissioning, it was doubtful that a further £4.4 million could be made in relation to care packages and care home charges and was worrying that there were cuts in mental health.
- Noted that Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture was an area of concern as of the £21 million of savings identified over half were rated as red. The £7.6 million of pressures due to the expected impact of Covid-19 on Looked After Children would be offset through savings using work spreading and an increased staff vacancy factor which was unacceptable.
- Noted that the £3 million in savings in SEND transport was a concern as well as the £9 million in reserve for cost containment within SEND which was a challenge for the future.
- That last year's budget and the 2021/22 budget combined were increasing Council Tax by 6.5% or three times the rate of inflation which the Council should bear in mind when it considered its residents.
- That it was challenging to deliver SEND services within the DSG High Needs Block as it was a demand led service and the Council had a statutory obligation to deliver those services so had to contributed money to an offsetting reserve - with financial pressure to be reduced via the transformation programme.
- As opposed to the use of reserves and earmarked savings, early intervention was key so that problems could be addressed before they affected statutory Education, Health and Care Plan; noting the Council's

Early Intervention Funding which had provided over two hundred and fifty mainstream schools and settings with funding for early support for over six hundred children.

- That a Learners Single Point of Access (L-SPA) had been set up in which parents and school professionals could ring five days a week to get access to early intervention and since July 2020 there had been four thousand callers.
- That all education settings had access to the graduated response team as well as access to professional expertise through the special needs coordinators at schools alongside early years advisers.
- Noting the early intervention initiatives above, refuted the suggestion of failed inspections of SEND services as the opposite was true. In the 2016 inspection there were five areas to improve, a revisit by Department for Education and NHS colleagues in May 2019 left one area of focus and that was about improving the rates of absence and the exclusion of children with SEND in our mainstream schools. The Department for Education and the NHS signed off on progress against the Accelerated Programme Plan in their December visit and so there was no longer a need to continue formal monitoring on that six-monthly progress review.
- Agreed that a longer term and more sustainable solution was needed for the funding of ASC, noting that the implementation of the ASC transformation programme had already delivered many financial benefits and improved outcomes for residents.
- That ASC's ambitious program to deliver over seven hundred units of extra care and supported living units was underway demonstrating the Council's commitment to improving services for its most vulnerable residents.
- That the Council's relationship with its providers was better than ever, that integration plans between health and adult social care were well underway and ASC had a clear and strong commitment to improve mental health services alongside partner organisations.
- That ASC had clear plans to make further improvements and bring about further benefits for residents, ensuring that nobody was left behind.
- Thanked the Leader, Cabinet and officers that had put the budget together including the focus on supporting the countryside with £4 million set aside over the next four years to be invested in public rights of way and additional sums to be invested in access to the countryside which during the pandemic was important for wellbeing.
- Welcomed the Accommodation with Care and Support programme and development of new care settings in the community to enable a shift away from residential care however noted past history in which six Surrey owned residential care homes were closed in 2017, noting the wasted resource of empty sites.
- That despite those six sites being subsequently repurposed to fulfil extra care housing and inclusion in the Council's joint venture programme with Places for People, no building had taken place or contractors finalised noting a local example of Pond Meadow in Guildford. The Council should apologise to residents for the delays and wasted money as in that time they could have been providing homes for people who needed them.
- That ASC and the Adults and Health Select Committee were discussing the provision of residential care homes and extra care, the budget was driven forward through the transformation programmes to improve

outcomes with regards to strength-based strategies towards independent living.

- That prevention and early intervention concerning mental health were key in ASC and Children's Services and the Adults and Health Select Committee was in the process of trying to lobby the Government for more money for mental health and the new GP Integrated Mental Health Service (GPimhs) solution was being rolled out in conjunction with Surry Heartlands Health and Care Partnership.
- Noted that efficiencies across the public sector were only a result of budgets being planned to be greater than were actually needed.
- Regarding elderly services, welcomed the extra care houses and other disabled houses that were planned and reminded the Council that over a fifteen year period he and another Member persuaded the Council to build those seven units and hoped that building on the planned houses commenced quickly.
- That on school building efficiency, schools had £40 million in funding which they would store and use throughout the year on their buildings and their pupils, they did not need further money as noted in the second amendment.
- Congratulated the Leader on the £20 million a year for Your Fund Surrey as well as the allocation of £500,000 to the Community Foundation for Surrey - although noted difficulty in their approval for funding.
- Noted that the £5,000 figure for the Members' Community Allocation funding for 2020/21 which had dropped significantly from previous years, was low and should be at a different level so that Members could use it to achieve more in their communities.
- Responded to a previous Member's comment on the RAG ratings concerning efficiencies, adding that the vast majority of those were red and that was a considerable concern particularly with regards to SEND and the DSG High Needs Block.
- That efficiencies were in fact cuts or savings and the planned £100 million in efficiencies in the next three or four years was a worry, noting the scale of past inefficiencies.
- That the cuts to Youth Services made last year by Council was a serious mistake with knock-on effects locally and such services were vital particularly during the pandemic in relation to mental health support.
- Raised concerns about the about the issue in the budget of the mental health for young people as it appeared to be business as usual in budget concerning mental health whereas it was a crisis exacerbated by the pandemic, noting that over one thousand young people on the Guildford CAMHS waiting list and queried the new provider that would take over from April.
- Highlighted the sheer scale of investment in SFRS within the budget, noting that a complete needs assessment had been carried out led by SFRS and supported by the Finance and Property teams; noting the ambitious program for the re-provision of training facilities, the vehicle replacement program, fire station improvements, the series of equipment replacement programs to support teams in their community work to generate better outcomes for residents, improvements to staffs' wellbeing as well as thermal imaging cameras and gas detection equipment.
- Thanked the Leader, Cabinet Members and officers for their hard work in transforming the Council over the last few years and most recently despite Covid-19. Transformation and efficiencies were not cuts but

ensured the best value for money for services such as through joint health integration commissioning and in ASC, the progress of the Council's transformation programmes was continually evidenced in Cabinet reports

- Contrary to a previous Member comment on the Community Foundation for Surrey, he welcomed the Council's extra funding to it as it had carried out an incredible amount of work over the last year within Surrey's communities by helping out with the Covid-19 Community Relief Programme. The Community Foundation for Surrey had committed to try to fund match the Council's £500,000, it was going to help with Your Fund Surrey and hopefully find revenue and provide charitable donations to groups as the Council could only provide capital. Partnerships were incredibly important and the Council's further funding demonstrated its commitment to that.

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

- Agreed with previous comments that he would like to see long-term funding from the Government to local authorities including ASC and that the Council continued to lobby for.
- Disagreed with the references to the litany of historical issues as it was distracting to the debate and work that was currently underway by Council and that it planned to undertake in the next year.
- That the Council took its responsibilities seriously, it was vital that Members dealt with the facts and encouraged Members to read committee reports as well as external reports such as the Ofsted reports and the HMI-CFRS reports on SFRS that clearly demonstrated the significant improvements made by the Council through the implementation of the Transformation Programme.
- Acknowledged that the Council could always improve, there would never be a moment where the Council could be self-satisfied due to the ever-changing complex needs of residents.
- That it was right that the Council recruited the best possible staff it could and paid a good salary adding that the number of FTE equivalent personnel employed by the Council had decreased by around 500 in the last four years.
- That there were some challenges around the Council's commercial property investments as there were in most other councils and decisions were transparent.
- That the Council needed to invest in its staffs' working environments, noting the roll out of the Agile Organisation Programme and hubs for staff.
- Agreed that there had been excellent partnership working through the pandemic and was confident that it would continue.
- That the Council did have a can-do culture and attitude.
- That the unitary authority status initiative was government led and at the Government's request the Council was no longer pursuing that discussion. The initial exploration of the initiative highlighted the need for greater efficiency in local government as noted in the KPMG report and particularly in borough and district councils.
- That there were no hidden charges in the budget, all policy changes proposed within the Council went through the select committee process first - praising the detailed scrutiny process - before it went to Cabinet.

- Recognised the frustrations expressed in relation to the management of the Council's commercial property portfolio including the delays, noting that within the next four to six weeks a complete list of the Council's vacant and surplus properties and a plan to address those would be drawn up. The Council was moving forward with the rationalisation of its property estate, noting the sale of County Hall and exit.
- Agreed with the importance of the transformation programmes and the progress made.
- Agreed that mental health was an area that needed further investment, noting the £400,000 net increase in the budget for mental health services. Mental health was a responsibility not just for the Council to deliver but also through the health system and that a Mental Health Partnership Board composed of key organisations would help drive forward the issue for both children and adolescents.
- Noted the need for further funding to improve and increase the rollout of prevention and early intervention.
- That the CAMHS waiting list would be cleared by April, so that the new alliance led by the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust would not inherit a backlog.
- Welcomed the comments in support of funding for the countryside.
- Regarding extra care housing, noted that the Council had written to Guildford Borough Council requesting the release of a restrictive covenant that it had over the Pond Meadow site at no cost to residents, which would be followed up through their Cabinet.
- That the Council had committed to build 700 extra care and supported living units to encourage people to live independently and have less reliance upon care packages. Sites had been identified and approved by Cabinet.
- Regarding the RAG ratings that it was no surprise that some of the efficiency or transformation programmes had been delayed and so were rated red, work was underway and would continue at speed in the future following the pandemic.
- That the Council had committed funding to continue with the specialist Youth Services and was looking to other partners to help with the provision of a good quality universal service.
- That it was right that the budget was a political choice reflecting the political majority whose role it was to invest in the county's residents and communities, to support vulnerable residents and to look at ways to invest in improving services to ensure the financial stability of the Council in conjunction with its partners.
- Reassured residents that the Council was there to look after their interests and the budget did that, so asked all Members to support the recommendations.

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:

Mrs Angell, Ms Azad, Mr Bennison, Mrs Bowes, Mrs Bramhall, Mr Brett-Warburton, Mr Carasco, Mrs Clack, Mrs Curran, Mr Deach, Mr Tim Evans, Mr Few, Mr Furey, Mr Furniss, Mr Gardner, Mr Goodman, Miss Griffiths, Dr Grant-Duff, Mr Gulati, Mr Hall, Mrs Hammond, Mr Harmer, Mr Harris, Mr Hawkins, Miss Heath, Mr Hussain, Mrs Iles, Mr Islam, Mr Kemp, Mr Knight, Rachael I

Lake, Mrs Lay, Mrs Lewis, Mr McIntosh, Mr Mallett, Mr Mansfield, Mr Martin, Mrs Mooney, Ms Morley, 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 Thomson, Mrs Thorn, Ms Turner-Stewart, Mr Walsh, Mr Witham, Mrs Young.

The following Members voted against it:

Mr Beckett, Mr Botten, Mr Cooksey, Mr Essex, Mr Robert Evans, Mr Forster, Mr Goodwin, Mrs Goodwin, Mr Harrison, Mr Kington, Mr MacLeod, Mrs Mason, Mrs Rivers, Mr Spence, Mr Townsend, Mrs Watson, Mrs White.

The following Members abstained:

Mrs Barton, Miss Boote, Mr Darby.

Therefore, it was:

RESOLVED:

That Council noted the following important features of the revenue and capital budget, 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 2021/22; and
2. That it is the view of the Executive Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer), that the level of reserves is adequate to meet the Council's needs for 2021/22. These reserves include the following amounts, (totalling £91.9m) set aside specifically to provide financial resilience:
 - a General Fund Balance of £24.2m;
 - a budget contingency of £20.4m with an estimated £33.4m brought forward;
 - a specific contingency for the impact of Covid-19 of £4.9m; and
 - a provision of £9m to meet risks in delivering the Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Block cost containment plan.

Proposed budget: That the following Revenue and Capital budget decisions be approved:

3. The net revenue budget requirement be set at **£1,003.6 million** (net cost of services after service specific government grants) for 2021/22 (Annex B), subject to confirmation of the Final Local Government Financial Settlement;
4. The total Council Tax funding requirement be set at **£777.6 million** for 2021/22. This is an increase of 2.49%, made up of an increase in the level of core Council Tax of 1.99% to cover core Council services and an increase of 0.5% 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 core 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 £1,549.08, which represents a 2.49% uplift. This is a rise of £0.72 a week from the 2020/21 precept of £1,511.46. This includes £139.01 for the Adult Social Care precept, which has increased by £7.55.
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:

Valuation band	Core precept	ASC precept	Overall precept
A	£940.05	£92.67	£1,032.72
B	£1,096.72	£108.12	£1,204.84
C	£1,253.40	£123.56	£1,376.96
D	£1,410.07	£139.01	£1,549.08
E	£1,723.42	£169.90	£1,893.32
F	£2,036.77	£200.79	£2,237.56
G	£2,350.12	£231.68	£2,581.80
H	£2,820.14	£278.02	£3,098.16

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 2021/22 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 £537.3 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 2021/22 budget (Annex B); and
14. The total £1.905 billion proposed five-year Capital Programme (comprising £1,026.2m of budget and £879.2m pipeline) and approves the £184.9 million capital budget in 2021/22 (Annex C).

Capital and Investment Strategies: That the following be approved:

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

The meeting was adjourned for a short comfort break at 12.58pm

The meeting recommenced at 13.11pm

6/21 CHANGES TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL'S CABINET PORTFOLIOS [ITEM 6]

The Leader of the Council presented the report noting that Mr Mel Few and Dr Zully Grant-Duff had both stepped down and had been replaced by Mrs Becky Rush, Cabinet Member for Resources and Corporate Support. Mr Mark Nuti had filled the new Cabinet Member for Communities portfolio.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families highlighted that the Council had a strong focus on equality, diversity and inclusion, and that each Cabinet Member sponsored one of the Council's inclusion networks. She noted that the Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning was the main sponsor for the Women's Network who noted at a recent meeting of the Network that there were few women cabinet members across councils and even fewer women cabinet members taking portfolios such as finance, environment and highways. She acknowledged the Leader's appointments to Cabinet Member portfolios of which more than half were women, including the portfolio holders for Environment and Climate Change as well as Resources and Corporate Support. That greater women representation was needed across the Council's political groups and recognised that on other diversity matters the Council were not doing well in terms of Member representation, she hoped that the upcoming local elections would provide an opportunity for all political groups to field a more diverse range of candidates so that Member representation could better reflect the county.

RESOLVED:

That Council noted the updated Cabinet portfolios.

7/21 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME [ITEM 7]

Questions:

Notice of twelve questions had been received. The questions and replies were published in a supplementary agenda on 8 February 2021.

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

(Q1) Mrs Hazel Watson had no supplementary question.

Mr Stephen Cooksey asked whether the Leader of the Council had been sent the same KPMG report that the Leaders of Surrey's borough and district councils had authorised and if he had could he point to the sections of the report that reflected the Leader's response where he noted that it "recognised that the current system of local government was not sustainable" and "proposed the creation of unitary councils in Surrey"; as he and others had checked the report and found no such text. He explained that the report was sent to the Leader as a courtesy and regarded the Leader's misrepresentation of its content discourteous.

In response, the Leader of the Council noted that the report had been sent from the Surrey Chief Executives who have had considerable discussions around it. He noted that all councils across the country had financial challenges noting twelve that had declared financial difficulties and the report concentrated on the ways in which Surrey's borough and district councils could share back office resources and find greater savings as well as looking at the creation of two or three unitary authorities in Surrey. He noted that he was happy to have a more detailed conversation with the Member.

(Q2) Mr Robert Evans noted that the Cabinet Member for Community Protection had consistently told Council that all was well in Surrey and questioned whether she had listened to the recent parliamentary debate and was surprised to learn that there were twenty-two buildings in Surrey that had been identified as dangerous with unsafe cladding, and asked whether she was aware that the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service's (SFRS) Chief Fire Officer had told BBC Surrey that there were no such buildings.

He asked whether the Cabinet Member would advise Council on how many and what percentage of buildings in Surrey had been properly inspected and how many were outstanding, had she or SFRS considered the dangers of wooden balconies on properties and their potential risks posed in a fire, what assurances could she give residents about their safety especially those who were living in buildings with Waking Watches.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Community Protection explained that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Building Research Establishment notify Fire and Rescue Services of changes in risk as new information became available. SFRS was ahead nationally in reviewing buildings of less than eighteen metres in height, it had proactively adopted the recommendations of the Independent Review of Building Regulations and Fire Safety (Hackitt Review) post-Grenfell, maintaining work relating to buildings with cladding and as a result Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) noted SFRS' continued engagement with those responsible for fire safety in its recent Covid-19 inspection.

The Cabinet Member for Community Protection further explained that in quarter two of 2021, SFRS was in the top quartile nationally for outcomes relating to protection in its role as an enforcing authority, which was an iterative process in relation to cladding made from aluminium composite material, high pressure laminate and expanded polystyrene systems. In response to the question on wooden balconies, such matters were being looked at as well as any other risks identified in an advisory note by the National Fire Chiefs Council and the Building Research Establishment. She emphasised that SFRS had been accurately providing information consistently, noting the constantly changing environment in which it reacted to risks as they were identified particularly in relation to the underregulated building environment which in response to recent tragic incidents was being thoroughly scrutinised and such risks were managed those accordingly. She commented that HMICFRS had commented that the work of SFRS' recent building inspections was timely and effective, despite the challenges posed by the pandemic. She implored the Member to attend the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee to refer his concerns which could be more fully discussed as well as gaining a more detailed insight into the work of SFRS.

(Q3) Mr Nick Darby asked whether the Cabinet Member for Highways was aware that the latest proposal in relation to congestion charges into London appeared to be a £5.50 boundary charge as opposed to the current proposal by the Mayor of London of a £3.50 boundary charge. He noted the reasonable suggestion by the police that they should be reimbursed that charge and asked whether the Cabinet Member could comment on the worrying increased proposed charge.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Highways noted that in recent news reports the Secretary of State for Transport quashed any ideas of a further congestion charge expansion. However he informed the Member that he recognised that the matter was a distress to residents particularly during the pandemic and that he was writing to both the Secretary of State for Transport and the Mayor of London to clarify their positions going forward on any future changes.

(Q4) Mr Wyatt Ramsdale noted that he looked forward to seeing the thirty-one programmes in action within the transformation change portfolio in 2021/22 especially on those concerning climate change. He asked whether the Cabinet Member for Resources and Corporate Support would join him in thanking all those involved in finding those £250 million of year-on-year efficiencies over the last three years, highlighting the outgoing Cabinet Member for Resources and the current Executive Director of Resources and his team.

(Q5) Mrs Clare Curran asked the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Domestic Abuse whether Members could be confident that the additional investment in mental health and ASC services was going to give sufficient capacity in those two areas to meet the additional demand that was anticipated to arise from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mrs Bernie Muir asked the Cabinet Member whether the intention was to roll out the Enabling You With Technology pilot across ASC and asked what she anticipated the major benefits to be.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Domestic Abuse reiterated the Leader's commitment to provide the best services in the most efficient way. In order to continue to fund good services in ASC, ongoing assessments were vital to make sure that those services could be provided which met residents' needs for care and support in a way that enabled them to live a full and independent life. She highlighted that ASC was providing preventative services through early intervention to support people ensuring where possible that their needs do not grow, unpaid carers and their support needs were also assessed including the provision of reliable and good quality respite care; and she highlighted the development of the draft Surrey Carers Strategy 2021-24, undertaken by the Deputy Cabinet Member for Health. She noted that ASC also looked at its internal staffing group to ensure their proper remuneration as well as the improved conditions of employment for care workers through training, qualifications and opportunities for career development – such measures would stabilise the workforce and encourage its growth. She noted that ASC worked closely with care providers in order to support them where possible to meet their costs, invest in their assets and expand their offer which in turn would ensure the stability of the care market. She commented that improved collaborative working between health and social care professionals through various initiatives, enabled residents to hold and share their own medical and social records across the system. She noted the

importance of housing in supporting health, wellbeing and independence. Through consistently undertaking the ongoing assessments noted and reviewing those, the Cabinet Member emphasised that ASC and the Council could supply a good service against the increasing pressures of demand.

The Cabinet Member explained that the Enabling You With Technology pilot launched on 25 January 2021 in Mole Valley was going well. Its objectives were to expedite patient discharge from hospital, to empower residents to live independently and well in their own homes for longer using our technological solutions, to relieve pressure on stretched hospital, locality and reablement teams; and to inform residents' ongoing support needs and plans. She explained that the aim was to roll out the pilot across Adult Social Care and the county and was looking to start a small innovation group that would pick up on key measures, areas to investigate and outcomes so that the further roll out take on board improvements.

(Q7) Mr Ken Gulati noted that one worrying aspect in relation to children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) was the extent of their travel within Surrey to school. He asked whether the Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning could indicate whether the expansion of four hundred additional specialist places would include new establishments or whether it was primarily an expansion of existing ones.

In response, the Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning explained that there was a mix of that provision, noting that there was a specification of needs in the different sectors across SEND such as communication and interaction needs or speech and language needs. She explained that out of the 1600 additional specialist places, 400 had been brought forward and that in relation to the last sector of funding for those places across twenty different settings with £500,000 in funding for each, expressions of interest had been invited from the county's education settings. The Education Place Planning team were working with those settings to establish the use of the buildings already at those settings so it was a repurposing of the capital investment.

Regarding reducing travel to school the Cabinet Member noted the importance of educating children close to their communities so that they were an integral part of them, investment in the Council's own place planning significantly reduced the cost per pupil from an independent setting for example which tended to be more expensive and did not necessarily deliver a better outcome for that child or young person.

(Q9) Mr Jonathan Essex asked whether the Cabinet Member for Resources and Corporate Support would agree with him that the Government needed to finally provide a sustainable funding solution and plan for social care instead of repeatedly relying on councils adding a social care levy on top of the basic council tax level. He asked whether she would write on behalf of the Council to request that the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care would create such a social care plan.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Resources and Corporate Support noted that she was lobbying Government and hoped for a long-term solution to ASC funding, adding that she expected to see such an update from Government by the end of the year. She responded that she was happy to take the Member's suggestion away and would work with officers and ASC to write to the Government.

(Q10) Mr Robert Evans commented that the Leader of the Council in his response noted that some aspects of Fairtrade in Surrey were continuing without required investment and later noted where it represented value for money to Surrey taxpayers. He asked whether the Leader would accept the spirit of Fairtrade in that sometimes a small additional expense was necessary to be fair to and to support some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world. He welcomed the points on Woodhatch Place, Starbucks, Selecta and other developments and whether the Leader would consider the Council's support for the upcoming Fairtrade Fortnight 2021 beginning on 22 February - at least by promoting it amongst employees and publicising it across the county via social media and the Council website.

Mr Jonathan Essex noted that in light of the Council having relocated its civic heart to Woodhatch Place in Reigate and Reigate having been awarded Fairtrade Town Status in October 2020; he asked the Leader whether the Council would commit to an employee representative playing an active role in the Reigate Fairtrade Steering Group.

In response, the Leader of the Council emphasised that the Council was supporting Fairtrade, he apologised that there had not been an annual update as promised in 2017 on the Council's status as a Fairtrade council. He noted that he was not aware that Surrey had lost its Fairtrade county status and would take away the suggestions noted above with officers.

(Q12) Mr Robert Evans noted that in her response the Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning recognised that good quality and sustained employment was vital for a good standard of living, noting the active planning and delivery of training to prepare the future Surrey workforce. He asked what measures had been made for the provision of computers and laptops for remote learning for the most vulnerable in the county. He queried where in Spelthorne and Surrey Heath might face to face courses take place as both Spelthorne College and Brooklands College - Ashford Campus had gone.

In response, the Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning noted that through the widened scope of the community hubs work and the co-design work around libraries provision, which would be drawn together along with the economic needs of communities across the different settings. She explained that the intention was to address some of the skills gaps where relevant through face to face learning and particularly concerning vocational qualifications. Regarding laptop provision to the most vulnerable in schools, that had been addressed throughout the lockdown, the Department for Education had provided direct access to those. The Council continued to provide free courses for digital skills through its partners such as the Henrietta Parker Trust. She noted that she was happy to look into the specifics around that as the co-design work was completed, noting that it was in tandem with community planning and the community hubs work as well as the *Surrey Employment and Skills Board*.

8/21 STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS [ITEM 8]

There were none.

9/21 AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - REVISED COUNCILLOR CODE OF CONDUCT [ITEM 9]

The Chairman introduced the report noting that he understood that since publishing its Model Councillor Code of Conduct on 3 December 2020, the Local Government Association (LGA) had made an amendment to the section on the registration of interests in third party organisations such as charities and community organisations. The recommendation was for Council to adopt the Code, noting the possibility of a further short report on the matter once it had been fully considered by the Governance Review Task Group.

The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee presented the report, highlighting that the changes made following the LGA's published Model Councillor Code of Conduct primarily related to the Council's appointment of two Independent Persons. He noted that the LGA was considering a further rewrite of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct in light of the amendment and as a result Council may receive a further report noting the changes.

RESOLVED:

Council approved:

1. The revised Councillor Code of Conduct.
2. The amendments to the Arrangements for Dealing with Allegations of Breaches of the Councillor Code of Conduct.
3. That in addition to compliance with the Councillor Code of Conduct, Members are expected to comply with the following codes:
 - a. Member/Officer Protocol.
 - b. Planning Code of Best Practice.
4. That the revised Councillor Code of Conduct comes into force at the next Council Annual General Meeting following a Council election.

10/21 AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE - COUNCIL EXECUTION OF CONTRACTS - PROCUREMENT RULES [ITEM 10]

The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee presented the report, he noted that the process of sealing documents when executing contracts over £500,000 was expensive and time-consuming. He explained that one reason for sealing documents was where the Council sought to enforce a contract as a deed which doubled the limitation period. He urged Council to agree the amendment to the procurement rules as it would save legal time and resource for the Council.

RESOLVED:

Council agreed that paragraph 2.7.a of the Council's procurement rules be amended at column I (contracts over £500k and over £1 million) from "Over £500k: Sealed as a deed via Legal Services" to "Over £500k: executed by authorised signatory in legal services or by seal as determined by Legal Services".

11/21 REPORT OF THE CABINET [ITEM 11]

The Leader presented the report of the Cabinet meetings held on 15 December 2020 and 26 January 2021.

Recommendations on Policy Framework Documents:

26 January 2021:

- A. 2021/22 Final Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2025/26 [Agenda Item 5 on the agenda]
- B. Admission Arrangements for Surrey's Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools and the Coordinated Schemes that will Apply to all Schools for September 2022 and Surrey's Relevant Area

Reports for Information/Discussion:

15 December 2020:

- C. Surrey's Economic Future: Our 2030 Strategy Statement and Invitation to Engage
- D. Surrey Local Resilience Forum Update on the End of the EU Exit Transition Period
- E. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Report Regarding Concerns About the Delivery of Home to School Transport

26 January 2021:

- F. Your Fund Surrey Update
- G. Disposal of County Hall Campus, Penrhyn Road, Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames
- H. Agile Office Estate Strategy
- I. Quarterly Report on Decisions Taken Under Special Urgency Arrangements: 09 December 2020 - 09 February 2021

RESOLVED:

1. That in addition to the approved recommendations under item 5 - 2021/22 Final Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2025/26, Council noted the Audit & Governance Committee's approval of the: Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators which set a framework for the Council's treasury function to manage risks, source borrowing and invest surplus cash.
2. That Council approved the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools and coordinated schemes for September 2022 (as set out in the Cabinet paper from 26 January 2021).
3. That Council noted that there had been one urgent decision in the last two months.
4. That the reports of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 15 December 2020 and 26 January 2021 be adopted.

12/21 MINUTES OF CABINET MEETINGS [ITEM 12]

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: 13.45 pm]

Chairman

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Leader's Statement – County Council (Budget Meeting), 9 February 2021

Mr Chairman, we are here today to focus primarily on the council's budget for the forthcoming year, and I'm looking forward to outlining those plans to Members and our residents this morning.

The context for this budget is challenging but also encouraging against the background of:

- a global pandemic
- a locally led response to keep residents safe and save lives
- partners in Surrey working closer together than ever before
- an uncertain financial future for the country – and the world
- and a plan for helping our communities recover from the past year that is fundamental to the future prosperity of our county.

I am justifiably proud of what this council, and its staff, has achieved over the last 12 months.

Not only in the response to COVID, which has been nothing short of incredible and something that is continuing day in day out – the national focus for our surge testing operation in Woking and Egham being the latest in a long line of challenges overcome.

But also, the way we have, as an organisation, continued in our mission to deliver our essential services and a better, brighter future for Surrey.

Better services, better support, better value for money, better resilience, better security, and fundamentally delivering an even better place for people to live and work.

To make further substantial progress in that mission, alongside responding to the biggest challenge in a generation, is testament to our staff and the clarity of our vision.

This budget encapsulates that progress and delivers the platform for recovery as we come through this pandemic.

Mr Chairman, it is important to note that it is the hard work and dedication of Surrey County Council over the last three years to get our finances in order, that means we have been able to cope with the challenges that have come this year and are well placed going into an uncertain future.

The transformation of the council during that time has put us in a strong financial position – enabling us to provide financial security and certainty in guiding Surrey and our Local Resilience Forum partners through the past 12 months.

This financial security has enabled us to meet the cost of PPE delivered to the frontline, give financial support to the care and voluntary sectors, help vulnerable residents, and provide staffing resource to help the county through the pandemic.

Alongside all of that, we have continued to deliver our vital services and protect and support the most vulnerable residents of Surrey in these most difficult of times.

It has to be said – and I'm sure many members will agree – that a few years ago, a major unforeseen issue such as COVID could have pushed Surrey to the brink. But not now.

As I mentioned earlier Mr Chairman, not only has our financial planning helped us respond to COVID but it must also help us lead the recovery for Surrey.

I will talk shortly about our huge capital investment programme that will be the bedrock of this recovery, but first I want to address the impact for individual residents.

I know that COVID has affected all of our residents in different ways – many have been heartbroken by the loss of a loved one, many will be struggling with the mental health impacts of lockdown and the stress of home schooling, and many others may be really struggling financially having seen the impact on their business or been faced with redundancy.

We have a responsibility as a council to do everything in our power to help those people where we can.

We have taken the decision this year to limit the increase on Council Tax, despite the uncertain economic future for this country.

Our stable financial position means we can limit that increase to 2.49% - or 72p per week for a Band D property.

Although any increase is unwelcome, that is half the 4.99% permitted by government and half the amount that many neighbouring authorities will be levying.

As I have always made clear, if we can't reduce Council Tax, I am absolutely determined that residents at least get the very best value for money and that their money is well spent.

I am confident that this budget does that.

Mr Chairman, this year's budget sees a slight increase in revenue spending to just over £1bn – this is the money we spend on delivering vital services to residents.

This year-on-year spending is delivering better services as we continue to transform the way we work.

Over half of that day-to-day spending - £627m - is spent on our most vulnerable residents through Adult Social Care and Children's Services, working to improve quality of life and reduce inequality.

We spend over £1m every single day on looking after vulnerable adults, and over half a million pounds every day on looking after our young people.

The pressure and demand on those services are increasing and we continue our conversations with government about the need for long term, proper funding solutions especially for Adult Social Care and for Special Educational Needs & Disabilities.

But in the meantime, we work to deliver the best possible services for those who need that support most.

These are services that most residents don't see, but they are so important in helping to reduce inequality, making sure we don't leave anybody behind and that those people that really need us are looked after and given the best possible quality of life.

But I know, as every single member here will know as our inboxes fill up with e-mails about potholes and highways matters, that those services that impact on everybody deserve serious attention too.

We will spend £140m of our revenue budget this year on Environment, Transport and Infrastructure – that’s maintaining roads, pavements and bridges, managing our wonderful countryside, delivering bus services and other public transport.

Over £30m will be spent on Public Health, ever more important in the current climate and ensuring our residents can live healthier lives.

£37m will fund our Community Protection Group (including Surrey Fire & Rescue Service) to keep our residents safe.

We spend around £65m on resources – without which our services simply could not function, things like the technology that has been essential in enabling us to continue working safely over this last 12 months.

£18m on our transformation and partnerships work, that will make not only this council more efficient in what we do but help us work more productively with partners and residents.

I must take a moment here to recognise our dedicated Transformation Programme, which has so far saved this council £74m each and every year, with a further £75m projected over the next few years, all while improving services for residents.

Our dedicated Transformation Support Unit will continue to support officers to transform our services, with the focus of ensuring every service is delivering the very best value for money for our residents.

The best service, in the most efficient way – something that local government, especially here in Surrey, is becoming better and better at delivering.

The remainder of our revenue budget includes some contingency, providing extra resilience in the face of future uncertainty, and also will enable us to deliver our ambitious capital investment.

The medium-term capital programme we set out in 2020 will continue, and even increase this year as we look to the future.

This is about investing now to protect and improve Surrey’s future.

This money will make a real and lasting difference to people’s lives and life chances and has become even more important in ensuring Surrey and its communities can thrive over the coming years of recovery from the impact of COVID.

The total capital spend in our 5-year investment plan has increased from almost £1.5bn announced last February, to almost £2bn.

This reflects our seriousness when we commit to building a county that is fit for the future.

We have already made great progress in delivering on this investment, with extra school places provided, investment in electric buses signed off, and infrastructure projects well underway.

Our capital programme includes;

The £100m Your Fund Surrey, which has launched with huge interest and involvement from residents. It will strengthen communities; it will deliver community projects and give people more power and influence in their local area.

A £33m investment into Surrey Fire & Rescue Service infrastructure – helping to deliver the Making Surrey Safer plan and modernising our fire service.

£116m will be invested in infrastructure aimed at boosting economic growth across the county – something that will have a widespread and long-lasting impact for our residents' life chances and prosperity.

£286m is earmarked for large scale infrastructure projects like in Farnham town centre and the A320 scheme, with both schemes already being developed with local residents' involvement.

We have set out an ambitious commitment to deliver a greener and more sustainable future for Surrey residents, helping us tackle the climate emergency, that includes £105m for projects including renewable energy, active travel and the move towards zero carbon; including the £48m investment in low emission buses.

Our £268m investment in schools and £74m in SEND provision will ensure our children can overcome this year's disruption and get the best possible start in life.

The £253m investment and leadership on Surrey flood alleviation schemes, including the River Thames, will protect tens of thousands of homes and businesses from further disaster and give future security and peace of mind – the current weather another reminder of why this is so important.

On top of our huge year on year increase in revenue spend on highways, a further £264m investment will boost active travel and with the impact of the imminent roll-out of the daily charge to utility companies working on our highway will make getting around the county smoother.

And £170m will be spent on accommodation for Looked After Children, Extra Care and independent living – ensuring that those residents most in need can live safely and independently and have a good quality of life.

We can and will deliver all of this, despite the impact of COVID, thanks to the good grip on our finances.

I want to thank Leigh Whitehouse and his excellent team, who have used their expertise to stabilise and transform this council's financial position.

And of course also pay tribute to Mel Few, our departing Cabinet Member for Resources, who has been instrumental in this work – delivering balanced budgets, keeping a watchful eye over every penny spent and leaving behind a solid platform that will see our residents – and this county - benefit long into the future. Thank you Mel.

Mr Chairman we have come a long way these past four years. When I had the privilege to be elected Leader of this council in 2018 I closed my acceptance speech by saying that we must have humility, an ability to learn from our mistakes, that there was a steep hill to climb but with a commitment by us, all of us, to shape services for the future with the commitment of our partners to combine our collective strength and with the commitment of our residents to play their part, we could and would succeed.

I had no idea then that we would test all of those principles with a global pandemic, but as we enter our next phase of the council, from here in Reigate, I know that we will continue to guide and support the county through these most challenging times.

That is the commitment I make to the residents of Surrey on your behalf, as we head through these next weeks and months to a brighter future.

Thank you.

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