

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL HELD AT
WOODHATCH PLACE, 11 COCKSHOT HILL, REIGATE, SURREY, RH2
8EF, ON 12 OCTOBER 2021 COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM, THE COUNCIL
BEING CONSTITUTED AS FOLLOWS:**

Helyn Clack (Chairman)
Saj Hussain (Vice-Chairman)

Maureen Attewell	Eber Kington
Ayesha Azad	Rachael Lake
Catherine Baart	Victor Lewanski
Steve Bax	David Lewis (Cobham)
* John Beckett	* David Lewis (Camberley West)
Jordan Beech	* Scott Lewis
Luke Bennett	* Andy Lynch
* Amanda Boote	Andy MacLeod
Liz Bowes	Ernest Mallett MBE
Natalie Bramhall	Michaela Martin
Stephen Cooksey	Jan Mason
Colin Cross	Steven McCormick
Clare Curran	Cameron McIntosh
Nick Darby	Julia McShane
Fiona Davidson	Sinead Mooney
Paul Deach	Carla Morson
Kevin Deanus	Bernie Muir
Jonathan Essex	Mark Nuti
Robert Evans	John O'Reilly
Chris Farr	Tim Oliver
Paul Follows	Rebecca Paul
Will Forster	George Potter
* John Furey	Catherine Powell
Matt Furniss	Penny Rivers
Angela Goodwin	John Robini
Jeffrey Gray	Becky Rush
Alison Griffiths	Tony Samuels
Tim Hall	Joanne Sexton
David Harmer	Lance Spencer
Nick Harrison	* Lesley Steeds
Edward Hawkins	Mark Sugden
Marisa Heath	* Richard Tear
Trefor Hogg	Chris Townsend
Robert Hughes	Liz Townsend
Jonathan Hulley	Denise Turner-Stewart
Rebecca Jennings-Evans	Hazel Watson
* Frank Kelly	Jeremy Webster
Riasat Khan	Buddhi Weerasinghe
Robert King	Fiona White
	Keith Witham

*absent

55/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies for absence were received from John Beckett, Amanda Boote, John Furey, Frank Kelly, David Lewis (Camberley West), Scott Lewis, Andy Lynch, Lesley Steeds and Richard Tear.

56/21 MINUTES [Item 2]

The minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 13 July 2021 were submitted, confirmed and signed.

57/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

Hazel Watson declared a pecuniary interest regarding item 8: Original Motions, 8 (iv) concerning the motion standing in the name of Robert Evans as she has links with an organisation that owns the freehold of a significant number of residential blocks some of which have cladding.

58/21 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS [Item 4]

The Chair noted:

- Farewell to former Members Tom Sharp CBE - a correction was made to his surname in the supplementary agenda front sheet (published 11 October 2021): removing the 'e' - and Heather Hawker MBE DL, leading a moment of silence to remember them.
- That under the Ministry of Defence Employers Recognition Awards Scheme: Guildford Borough Council, Runnymede Borough Council and Veterans & Families Listening Project based in Camberley, were all awarded Silver; Spelthorne Borough Council was awarded Gold - all four were personally mentored by Canon Peter Bruinvels.
- That Surrey County Council was one of only two local authorities in the United Kingdom to have its Gold award revalidated and she was proud to chair the Surrey Civilian-Military Partnership Board. The Council was now formally recognised as an Employer of Choice with the Military and by the Ministry of Defence.
- That the Council had been reaccredited with the Charter Plus award for Member Development, following an assessment day on 30 September.
- That to mark Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022, the Council was proud to be taking part in the Queen's Green Canopy tree planting initiative and she invited all Members to take away a small free tree after the meeting.
- That she promoted her engagements as highlighted in the agenda front sheet via her Facebook page and encouraged Members to contact her over any concerns or proposals for visits to their divisions.

59/21 LEADER'S STATEMENT [Item 5]

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

Trefor Hogg arrived at 10.18 am

Michaela Martin, Catherine Powell and Joanne Sexton arrived at 10.31 am

Members raised the following topics:

- That the Spending Review 2021 must inject new funding to address the funding issues within adult social care so the burden does not fall on the public through: the Council Tax adult social care precept, long-term efficiencies and the rise in National Insurance through the Health and Social Care Levy; the Council must lobby Surrey's Members of Parliament (MPs) and publicise the issues.
- That an open and transparent debate concerning the County Deal was needed between the Council and Surrey's eleven Borough and District Councils, working with residents to find practical solutions.
- That an urgent review of the system, to be implemented immediately, was needed to address the issues within Children's Services, resolving cases and putting families first.
- Highlighted that the Leader did not mention the cost of living crisis, which would worsen with the increase in National Insurance and would affect poorer and younger residents, as well as the twenty pounds cut to Universal Credit from fifty-five thousand Surrey residents and rising food and energy costs; the Council must lobby the Government.
- Noted the sixty-two public consultations on Surrey Says and that not one was on the County Deal which the Leader should implement.
- Congratulated the Leader in relation to the Council joining the UK100 Climate Network in July concerning the transition to clean energy and net zero carbon emissions.
- Sought assurance that the Council was committed to reframing its economic priorities to align with its climate goals for 2025 and 2030, in detailing the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan for 2021 – 2025 (Delivery Plan) the one Surrey growth and greener futures plans must be aligned into a single plan for Surrey.
- That the Council's ambition for a strong economy must not conflict with the move towards a green economy, the Council must take a stand against aviation expansion whilst decarbonising Surrey.
- Hoped that the new Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Member of Parliament (MP) for Surrey Heath, might positively affect the role of local planning in Surrey, asked the Leader to request an answer from Rt Hon Michael Gove MP as to the delivery of the promise not to build on greenbelt land and to request the mandating of climate change responsibilities to the Council matched with the funds and powers enabling the Council to deliver a new county-wide green deal for Surrey.
- That the Leader did not refer to public transport in his statement, asked whether the Leader recognised that the improvement of public transport was essential for levelling up to prevent the younger, older and vulnerable residents from being left behind.
- Asked whether the Leader was aware that the details concerning the Health and Social Care Levy Bill would not be announced until April 2022, that any interim payments would not be paid directly to the Council, that the Levy would not be effective until October 2023; therefore payment was several years away.
- Supported the Leader's proposals for more powers to be devolved to Surrey through a County Deal, enabling economic diversification and localised training; sought the Leader's assurance that more powers granted would benefit the county and to recognise that it was beneficial for all to engage with the proposals.

- Queried whether the offer of subsidised taxis for officers to and from the nearby train stations to get to the Council's offices at Woodhatch Place and Dakota was the best green and financial option particularly in light of the Council's green ambitions noted in item 8: Original Motions, 8 (ii).
- That as exemplified by the cuts to Universal Credit, the poorest and most vulnerable in society were becoming increasingly irrelevant, with many working families under the taper rate paying a higher marginal tax rate than higher earners.
- Hoped that the Leader would agree that a mixed market system was the only way to provide essential care for those in residential care homes.
- That following the consultation on the future of eight residential care homes for older people in Surrey, sought the Leader's assurance that the same number of beds in Surrey currently would be provided in the future.
- Noted the additional SAP system support fee of £700,000 payable in January 2022 as part of the £30 million Unit4 ERP project, asked whether there would be any additional cost to be funded by the Council Tax payer as a result of the project being delayed until April 2022.
- Highlighted the recent inquest into a child's death by the coroner in relation to the negative provision in support provided by a Surrey special educational needs (SEN) school in Hindhead and sought assurance that all children were safe in such an environment.

David Harmer arrived at 10.45 am

Fiona Davidson arrived at 10.56 am

60/21 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME [Item 6]

Questions:

Notice of thirty-three questions had been received.

The questions and replies were published in the supplementary agenda on 11 October 2021. A number of supplementary questions were asked and a summary of the main points is set out below.

(Q1) Jonathan Hulley noted that Your Fund Surrey (YFS) was an exciting initiative aimed at empowering towns and communities across Surrey and was a key plank of the county's levelling up agenda. He asked the Cabinet Member for Communities if the YFS Advisory Panel had met and if so whether any funding had been awarded.

Mark Sugden welcomed the award given to the Claygate Recreation Ground Trust and asked the Cabinet Member for Communities to convey his thanks to the YFS team in recognition of the work done on assessing the applications.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Communities was pleased to announce that the YFS Advisory Panel had met and the two applications reviewed were successful: Weybridge Men's Shed was granted £30,000 and Claygate Recreation Ground Trust was granted £35,000. He recognised the hard work done by the YFS team over the past year and thanked applicants for their patience, YFS was a ground-breaking initiative and the approval process would gain momentum.

(Q2) Nick Darby noted that officers were working with Selecta UK to move towards zero waste and asked what the timescale was for that move.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Property noted that she did not know what the timescale was for that move and noted that there was little waste as the majority of the sandwiches stocked at Woodhatch Place would be purchased by lunchtime.

(Q3) Will Forster asked how the Leader envisaged that the Council would make a decision on a County Deal such as whether it should be scrutinised by the relevant select committee and signed off at a Council meeting, and asked whether there should be a public consultation.

In response, the Leader noted that the Council, along with twenty other county councils, submitted an expression of interest and he did not know whether the Council would be successful as part of the first wave. The Government's Levelling Up White Paper was expected to be published next month and the relevant select committee would review any proposals, he did not expect there to be a public consultation concerning additional powers to be granted to the Council, the public would however be consulted on any contentious areas.

(Q4) Paul Follows noted that the National Insurance (NI) liability in Surrey went beyond the £2.4 million to the Council, there was an additional £2 million NI liability to the police and a £1.6 million NI liability for the Boroughs and Districts combined. He sought assurance from the Leader, and the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources that the Council would lobby the Government in keeping their promise that local authorities would not be out of pocket, and asked that they communicate the outcome of the issue to Members and the leaders of the Boroughs and Districts.

In response, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources noted her detailed response to Q27 concerning the Council's potential NI liability and she confirmed that the Council was lobbying and engaging with the Government on the impact of the NI liability and how it would be funded.

(Q5) Lance Spencer asked whether the Cabinet Member for Environment would agree that whilst the sums of money committed to address the climate emergency were large, they were insufficient to deliver meaningful change in communities particularly in the 46% reduction of carbon emissions in transport. A budget item for communications and engagement appeared to be missing, he asked whether the Cabinet Member would agree that a significant budget was required to foster a significant behavioural change from Members, residents and businesses Surrey to deliver the Greener Futures Programme.

Ayesha Azad arrived at 11.09 am

In response, the Cabinet Member for Environment agreed that a significant budget was needed to deliver the Greener Futures Programme. The finances were evolving and would be from a variety of different routes. She had organised a Greener Futures Member Reference Group (MRG) meeting on Thursday to review the Delivery Plan's finances and there would be a finance plan within the report on the Delivery Plan to Cabinet later in the month.

(Q6) Fiona White noted that it would be helpful if the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health could explain how successful the initiatives set out in the response had

been on the recruitment of staff, noting the worryingly high turnover rates in Surrey's social care workforce. She further asked what was being done to make staying in the sector and with the Council more attractive.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health noted the positive outcomes of the initiatives between the Council and the Surrey Care Association and that she would discuss with the Surrey Care Association what more robust mechanisms can be put in place. She highlighted that the turnover rates in Surrey within Older Peoples Services was 21.3% and for Learning Disabilities was 17.1% were below the national average, recognising the continued pressure within Adult Social Care and Children's Services, and the continued support needed.

Jonathan Essex asked how the shocking turnover and vacancy rates in Surrey's social care workforce compared to other councils across the south east and nationally.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health noted that the national figure of 30% regarding staff turnover across the social care sector was provided in her response to Q6, she would look into the rates in other counties as requested and inform Members.

(Q7) Carla Morson asked the Cabinet Member for Children and Families how for pupils in Surrey, the assessment timeframe of 216 days from referral compared with the performance of comparable authorities.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Children and Families noted that she would research into the comparative figures with other authorities and provide those where possible.

George Potter noted that the explanation given in the written response concerning the assessment timeframe of 216 days from referral was due to the detailed process involved, he noted that his own experience of the assessment timeframe as a child was considerably less than 216 days and was also less for private assessments. He asked the Cabinet Member whether that assessment timeframe was the best the Council could do or whether it had an ambition to reduce the number of days.

Lance Spencer noted his personal experience in getting the support required as the father of child with special needs. He asked whether the Cabinet Member would agree that the extended delays in the completion of assessments brought stress on the families, noting that the resident who raised the issue originally still believed that they would have to wait a further two years to get the Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) support completed.

In response to the above supplementary questions, the Cabinet Member for Children and Families noted that the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) services and services for children with additional disabilities were undergoing a transformation programme. Whilst the standard of services provided to some children was not adequate and some problems remained in the system, the Council was committed to improving the services for all children and families in Surrey. The SEND Code of Practice, which was a statutory process of assessment, was adhered to and was a lengthy process.

(Q8) Stephen Cooksey noted that the figures showed that almost one in every three applications received in August and September remained outstanding on 8

October. Of which one quarter were applications for those with Special Educational Needs (SEN), over four hundred families were awaiting a decision almost a month after the start of term and he asked whether the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning was satisfied that the improvements underway would lead to a significant reduction in the number of families awaiting a decision at the same time next year.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning highlighted that the target processing times were included in the written response to the question, the complexity and safeguarding issues as well as late referrals all affected the processing time and she provided assurances on the robust structure in place.

Lance Spencer noted that all three appeals on SEN transport arrangements were upheld by the appeals panel, he asked whether the Cabinet Member would agree that those decisions were an unacceptable waste of time and money, and to review the process to ensure that families and children are not put through further trauma.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning stressed that the appeals process was an important part of the consideration of applications, it was Member-led and followed best practice. The written response demonstrated the rigorous process followed by officers in line with guidance from the Department for Education and government funding - despite the period of turmoil from the Covid-19 pandemic.

(Q9) Hazel Watson asked whether the Cabinet Member for Environment thought that the Council's target for tree planting would be met.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Environment stated that the target would be met, so far almost 250,000 trees had been planted.

Will Forster noted that over 28,000 trees had been planted by the Council since the target was set and he asked the Cabinet Member at what year the 1.2 million target would be reached at the current rate of planting.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Environment noted that the Council had planted around 27,000 trees, a further 200,000 had been planted in partnership with the Woodlands Trust and Reigate and Banstead Borough Council - she was happy to send over the detailed list. Planting hedges and shrubbery was being considered as it was becoming harder to find space to plant trees. She noted that the target was set for ten years' time, but it would be positive if it could be met before then, other locations for tree planting were being considered.

Catherine Baart asked the Cabinet Member to provide the net figures as opposed to the gross figures concerning the number of trees planted.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Environment explained that the trees being removed were as a result of ash dieback and moth disease. Work was underway to revise the Tree Strategy in order to keep as many trees as possible such as on Surrey's highways.

(Q10) Robert Evans asked the Cabinet Member for Environment whether she shared his concern over the impact of toxic levels of air pollution in excess of World Health Organisation limits on schools and children in Surrey and whether she would research the comparative data with that given for London.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Environment noted that she would seek out the comparative data.

Jonathan Essex asked the Cabinet Member whether the Council would assess the impacts and costs of the levels of air pollution on adult social care and dementia.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Environment recognised the significant issues around air pollution, a list in the written response was provided on the work underway to reduce air pollution in Surrey to ensure a greener and healthier county.

(Q11) Robert King asked the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure to update residents through social media channels more effectively on the routes noted in his question.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure would speak to the Council's Communications team.

(Q12) Jonathan Essex asked whether the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure would agree that the necessary infrastructure should enable a shift towards greater public transport use not an expansion of road capacity, in line with the draft Surrey Local Transport Plan 2022-2032.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure noted that additional road capacity did not equal poorer climate change outcomes. The Government's Aviation 2050 strategy which set the targets for sustainable travel access to airports, aligned with the Council's climate change policies and its fourth Local Transport Plan (LTP4) on improving sustainable access to Heathrow Airport via Southern Railway access, and improving the reliability of train services to Gatwick Airport.

Alison Griffiths arrived at 11.32 am

(Q13) Catherine Baart noted that in relation to transparency, she asked the Leader whether a list of the organisations represented on the boards would be provided and whether the reports would be made available in accordance with the Chatham House Rule.

In response, the Leader explained that the meetings of the boards were not intended to be held in secret, he envisaged that in the future where appropriate they could be webcast and any decisions made would be scrutinised by the relevant select committee; he would provide a membership list of those boards and key information such as recommendations. He clarified that there would be an Integrated Care Board and an Integrated Care Partnership, not an Inclusive Care Board as noted in the question.

(Q15) Keith Witham welcomed the positive outcomes of energy efficiency and cost savings from the LED street lights replacement programme and asked the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure whether there were any other examples of current or future innovation concerning Surrey's highways.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure highlighted the use of new biofuels which were 50% more efficient on site, the use of electric plant

equipment and charge points such as at Brooklands, the installation of smart highways such as on the A22, the average speed camera rollout and the possibility of wind turbines on infrastructure such as street lights.

(Q16) David Lewis asked the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure whether it was correct that the Lane Rental Scheme only applied to traffic sensitive roads which covered 8% of Surrey's roads and if so what was the criteria for additional roads to become traffic sensitive roads.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure confirmed that the Lane Rental Scheme applied to 8% of Surrey's highways which was above the Government's national guideline. He explained that traffic sensitive roads were those most prone to congestion if there was disruption on the network and were roads of a high impact such as A roads. He stated that he was happy to take the Member through the process.

(Q17) Luke Bennett asked the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure what the process was for Members and residents to propose or flag areas where the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) schemes would work in their divisions.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure noted that if there were any particular schemes to be included in the LCWIP, there were several workshops held in partnership where Members could provide feedback and he noted that issues should be raised through the relevant Local Committee.

(Q20) Jeremy Webster asked the Cabinet Member for Children and Families when he could see the details of the Surrey forward plan for child poverty.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Children and Families confirmed that an update on the Surrey poverty plan would be provided at the next meeting of the Council.

(Q21) David Harmer noted that in order for the Council to utilise its resources most effectively, it would be helpful to understand what the world might look like in 2030, 2040 and 2050. He asked the Cabinet Member for Environment whether she would agree on setting up a study to produce scenarios, assess progress and adjust policies.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Environment noted that she would look into the possible study as it was vital to know what areas to invest in.

(Q23) Mark Sugden asked the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources whether the work outlined concluded the Finance Improvement Programme and Finance Academy.

In response, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources noted that she was sure Members would join her in congratulating the Finance team in winning those awards. Phase one of the Finance Improvement Programme concluded in June 2020 as reported to the Cabinet, following that report phase two was initiated and the Council's Finance team was committed to continuous improvement, best practice and value money in all levels of the organisation.

(Q26) Jordan Beech asked the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health what was being done in Surrey to encourage the vaccine uptake in the remaining unvaccinated population.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health noted the large volume of work undertaken to encourage the uptake of the vaccine across Surrey, particularly in young people where social media campaigns were a success. Uptake was monitored closely on the Surrey Local Outbreak Engagement Board and she welcomed Members to join a future meeting.

(Q29) Lance Spencer asked whether the Cabinet Member for Environment agreed that the Council had the responsibility to lead, enable and inspire residents to get involved in working out their role in delivering net zero carbon emissions. The consultations were not getting sufficient traction and he asked whether the Cabinet Member would commit to working cross-party to find better ways to communicate the vital messages going forward.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Environment agreed with the Member, noting that her upcoming motion - Item 8: Original Motions, 8 (ii) - sought Member support to engage with residents. Whilst more work needed to be done with engaging with residents, she commended the engagement work by officers and would work cross-party with Members to consult with residents.

(Q31) Robert King welcomed the words on heavy goods vehicle (HGV) signage on the A320 but noted disappointment that the Council was not doing more. He asked the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure to relook at the business case concerning any improvements to the level crossing on the B388.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure reiterated that the level crossings were managed and operated by Network Rail, he would have another discussion with them. Any funding offered - to be matched by Network Rail - would need to fit into Network Rail's timescale for improvement works.

(Q32) Jonathan Essex asked the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health whether there were any plans to scrutinise the passage of the Health and Care Bill through Parliament, in light of Surrey Heartlands to be a pilot for the changes and so it would be useful to understand what had worked well or not.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health noted that research had been undertaken on the Bill and that the scrutiny of the proposed changes sat with the Health and Wellbeing Board - if required she was happy to provide any further information.

(Q33) Robert King asked the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning for assurance that she would keep him and the Member for Addlestone updated on the matter of school transport for SEN children.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning confirmed that she would keep both Members updated and welcomed the cross-party support provided by both Members.

Cabinet Member Briefings: these were also published in the supplementary agenda on 11 October 2021.

Liz Bowes arrived at 11.50 am

Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure: on buses, in light of the rumours that the Bus Recovery Grant (BRG) was facing serious cuts, asked whether the Cabinet Member had received information on the matter and whether he could update Members.

In response, the Cabinet Member explained that the Government, in its letter to Surrey, outlined a two thirds reduction in the BRG funding for local authorities. Surrey's BRG funding was £574,000 up to April 2022, the BRG funding was used to support the bus industry with figures averaging 65% compared to 2019 figures pre-pandemic. He had written to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in the Department for Transport outlining the serious concerns resulting from the reduction with no prior consultation. The reduction affected all local authorities and he would share the response from the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State.

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources: noted that the full year £19.5 million deficit against the revenue budget was concerning but was not dissimilar across local authorities. It was requested that the wording concerning the 'Twin Track' approach to address the deficit, to be translated in Plain English as with the wording of future Member Briefings.

In response, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member explained that the 'Twin Track' approach saw two separate approaches run simultaneously looking at the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the budget for the next financial year. Acknowledging the funding, Covid-19 and demand-led pressures, the work on the budget for the future years beyond 2022/23 was being brought forward and work was underway across the directorates. She confirmed that her future Member Briefing would be written in Plain English.

Cabinet Member for Property: on portfolio rationalisation, a Member sought the definitions for natural capital, HGR and garden licences.

In response, the Cabinet Member explained that HGR referred to Halsey Garton Residential Ltd which was one of the Council's subsidiary companies, garden licences were strips of land adjacent or behind gardens rented from the Council; and working in conjunction with the countryside team and the Cabinet Member for Environment's team, natural capital referred to the potential 115 assets which could be moved over to the countryside estate to provide space for the planting of trees and to support the Greener Futures Programme.

Cabinet Member for Environment: on commercial waste, asked whether the Cabinet Member was aware that recently the waste sub-contractors closed the waste stations in Surrey without prior notification, concerning commercial waste. Whilst it was a non-statutory service, the Cabinet Member's assurance was sought that such an issue would not happen again in the future and noted several complaints received on the issue which coincided with the recent fuel delivery shortage.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Environment noted that officers acted swiftly on the matter once aware, as of today Epsom, Leatherhead and Slyfield Community Recycling Centres had resumed receiving commercial waste. The issue had been raised with the waste contractor, she highlighted the Waste Transformation Project and importance of partnership working concerning communications and engagement.

Cabinet Member for Children and Families: on the National Transfer Scheme, asked whether the Cabinet Member could confirm how Surrey compared to neighbouring local authorities with its responsibility for the care of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

In response, the Cabinet Member explained that the Council participated in the voluntary National Transfer Scheme on a good will basis. The Council was of the view that the Scheme should be mandatory, and as part of the Scheme it recently took two young brothers into its care.

Cabinet Member for Communities: on Your Fund Surrey, noted that highways were excluded from the funding and asked the Cabinet Member to revisit the criteria for Your Fund Surrey to see whether there was any flexibility on the matter as that would allow residents in his division to put together a bid for YFS funding.

In response, the Cabinet Member noted that YFS took a flexible approach in reviewing applications from residents. He explained that highways were a grey area which he would look into. The ethos of YFS was that residents should be able to carry out their projects by themselves.

61/21 STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS [Item 7]

Eber Kington made a statement on flooding in Ewell Court, Auriol and Cuddington in July, highlighting Avon Close where forty homes were flooded. He thanked the emergency services and officers in the Council's Emergency Management and Resilience Team for their compassionate and efficient response, notably the Head of Emergency Management and the Deputy Head of Emergency Management.

Catherine Powell made a statement on a local school issue in Farnham North, she noted that every child should receive thirty-nine weeks of education annually and highlighted two cases where children were missing out on full time education as a result of transport issues. She proposed a lessons learned exercise in the October half term to make systemic changes to prevent similar incidents going forward.

The meeting was adjourned for a comfort break at 12.13 pm.

The meeting was resumed at 12.18 pm.

62/21 ORIGINAL MOTIONS [Item 8]

Under Standing Order 11.5 using her discretion, the Chair reordered the original motions to the following:

Item 8 (iv) - Robert Evans

Item 8 (i) - Bernie Muir

Item 8 (ii) - Marisa Heath

Item 8 (iii) - Catherine Baart

Item 8 (v) - Lance Spencer

Item 8 (iv)

Having declared a pecuniary interest Hazel Watson left the room for the item

Under Standing Order 12.3 the Cabinet Member for Communities, Mark Nuti, moved a proposal. The proposal was as follows:

That the motion below by Robert Evans be referred to the Cabinet for more detailed consideration.

This Council notes:

With great concern the on-going national and local issue regarding incidences of faulty cladding on buildings and other related defects, which have come to light since the tragic Grenfell Tower fire of 2017, which claimed seventy-two lives.

That in November 2018, the government banned the use of all combustible materials on the walls of new high rises meaning the problem has now extended beyond aluminium composite material (ACM) cladding to include fire breaks between floors and other building features, including wooden balconies and panels. However, it did not legislate for building owners to take action nor provide sufficient compensation funds to cover all situations.

This Council further notes:

That the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) and the UK Council of Mortgage Lenders agreed the industry External Wall System (EWS) fire review and certification process resulting in what is known as an EWS1 form, without which many lenders are now refusing to provide mortgages, leaving many Surrey leaseholders in severe financial crisis and with homes that are dangerous and often unsaleable.

Council therefore welcomes the appointment of Surrey Heath MP, Rt Hon Michael Gove as secretary of state for Levelling up, housing and communities, charged with steering the Building Safety Bill through Parliament and urges him to recognise and address the unfairness of developers or management companies placing the cost of repair works on the shoulders of the leaseholders.

Additionally, Council is deeply concerned that this is all having a detrimental impact on the mental and physical health of many residents in Surrey, who have put considerable, personal and financial investment into becoming part of the home owning democracy, only to find that the large development companies are demanding huge repair costs and/or the cost of waking fire watches.

Furthermore, Council believes Surrey councils have a responsibility and arguably a 'duty of care' to its residents and therefore should not stand by and leave action to the government alone and now needs to step in and take unilateral action where legally allowed to.

This Council therefore calls on its leadership to support all those in Surrey affected by this scandal and to resolve to:

- I. Formally raise the issue with H M government through Mr Gove and the County's other MPs.
- II. Support other local authorities and the LGA's initiatives with the government in exploring ways in which local councils can be empowered to support their residents and ensure building regulations are complied with, or retrospectively repaired, at no cost to the leaseholder.

- III. Ask the boroughs and districts, in conjunction with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service as a matter of urgency and if they have not already done so, to perform an audit and consultation to establish the potential scope of the cladding, EWS1 and snagging issues of all habitable buildings.
- IV. Urge the County's boroughs and districts to explore ways to delay approving planning applications where the applicant has outstanding snagging or EWS1 certification issues and include a condition to be discharged on all future planning applications to provide an EWS1 form before first occupation.
- V. Sign Surrey County Council up to the End Our Cladding Scandal campaign.

Robert Evans made the following points:

- That since the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017 which exposed the dreadful situation affecting thousands of people in Britain and despite assurances at previous meetings of the Council, large numbers of purpose-built flats in Surrey were at risk of similar fire safety failures such as in relation to faulty cladding.
- That despite the Government's provision of £400 million to replace faulty cladding on social housing on buildings over eighteen metres tall, there were many buildings in Surrey below that height that could not get an External Wall System (EWS) fire review or certificate.
- Urged the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to remedy the fire safety defects in buildings in his own county, noting that the £400 million provided by the Government fell short of the estimated £15 billion needed to fix the defects in residential buildings.
- Welcomed the support by the Cabinet Member for Communities and the Leader - who was in discussions with the Secretary of State.
- Highlighted the proposal for the Council to support the End Our Cladding Scandal campaign, for the Government to pay for repairs and reclaim money from responsible parties.

In speaking to his proposal the Cabinet Member for Communities:

- Welcomed the motion and in light of the White Paper on fire reform due later in the month and the future Building Safety Act, proposed that the motion was referred to a future Cabinet meeting.
- Sympathised with tenants facing large bills for safety work on their properties and stressed that Government legislation was needed to remedy the situation.
- Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) worked closely with the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) who believed that serious building defect costs should not end with leaseholders and it called for the improvement in building regulations.
- Surrey was given sixty-six properties to review on the higher risk residential buildings (HRRB) list, with a further twenty-seven added to the review by SFRS and full physical audits over above the guidelines were due to be completed in November.

- Assured the Council that when required SFRS used its statutory power to make sure that safety measures were in place and where appropriate to take remedial action to keep Surrey safe.

Robert Evans confirmed that he was in support of the referral of the motion to Cabinet.

The proposal to refer the motion was put to the vote and with 61 Members voting For, 1 voting Against and 1 Abstention.

Therefore it was:

RESOLVED:

That the motion be referred to the Cabinet - specifically to the next meeting in October.

Robert Evans left the meeting at 12.32 pm

Item 8 (i)

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

Under Standing Order 12.1 Bernie Muir moved:

This Council notes that:

- Surrey County Council would like to thank all public transport staff, including the frontline staff, who have all worked extremely hard on a daily basis over the last eighteen months to maintain the vital rail network across Surrey during the pandemic, and in the face of such adversity.
- It is crucial to review our public transport networks – both bus and rail – to ensure as far as we practicably can that these networks continue to support our economy and growth ambitions, meet the needs of our communities, and ensure we reach net zero in Surrey.

This Council further notes that:

- Any reduction in services across the network is contrary to national, regional and local strategies. Specifically, the County Council's emerging Surrey Transport Plan, the Rail Strategy approved earlier this year and the Climate Change Strategy; all of which promote public transport ahead of car use, whilst providing a framework to promote the wider decarbonisation of transport.
- This Government's Bus back better Strategy, which in tandem with Surrey County Council's Active Travel, will transform the way in services are planned and delivered and the way in which residents use public transport.

This Council resolves to:

- I. Continue to engage a constructive dialogue with railway service providers and other partners in the rail industry to help inform and shape the detail

of future timetables, and to include a restoration of service frequencies through our stations across Surrey.

- II. Support the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure in writing a letter to the Secretary of State outlining this Council's concerns regarding the impact that new timetable proposals may have on Surrey residents and to ensure adequate funding is provided to support sustainable transport provision in Surrey.

Bernie Muir made the following points:

- Noted that her motion was in response to the reduction in train services by Southern Railway and South Western Railway.
- Noted that Surrey's roads had 66% more traffic than the national average and 46% of carbon emissions were from the transport sector. The aim was to reduce carbon emissions by 60% and that required all stakeholders working together.
- World leaders, councils, businesses and organisations were searching for solutions to tackle climate change, highlighted the Boroughs and Districts' climate change strategies and the Council's strategies and initiatives in response to its declaration of a climate emergency.
- That to address carbon emissions from transport, it was vital to encourage walking, cycling and the use of public transport and to have a coherent and integrated transport policy; noting the Council's Active Travel and Government's Bus Back Better strategies.
- That the reduction in services would impact local economies and good transport connectivity was vital for businesses, regarding Epsom and Ewell she noted concern that businesses would choose not to locate there.
- Trains were vital to transport people to hospitals and medical facilities the decision was being made prematurely at a time when people were gaining confidence in travel post-pandemic and were changing their behaviours.
- That train companies were missing the opportunity to grow their own businesses by encouraging greater rail travel through intelligent timetabling and ticket prices and easing road congestion; noting the investment in eco-friendly buses and linking into train stations.
- Urged the Government to reconsider and the Secretary of State for Transport to ensure adequate funding to support sustainable public transport provision in Surrey.

The motion was formally seconded by Tim Hall, who reserved the right to speak.

Eight Members made the following points:

- That the South Western Railway consultation to which the Council and the Boroughs and Districts responded to, was limited to principal stakeholders, going forward the onus was on South Western Railway to take account of those submissions and to revise the proposed timetable before the public consultation.
- Questioned the basis for the revision of South Western Railway's timetable which estimated passenger levels during rush hour to be 60% of what they were pre-pandemic.
- Noted residents' concerns over South Western Railway's changes to the timetable concerning the Guildford via Epsom line and Bookham train station, the proposals would not meet demand - noting flexible

working patterns and demand in young people travelling to school or college - nor improve performance as was the aim of the consultation.

- Welcomed the support from the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure through the Council's submission to South Western Railway, who did not recognise the green agenda through increasing the use of public transport.
- Noted that the proposals were condemned by local authorities whose residents were affected but noted concern that the motion was not strong enough to move the Government to enact change and provide adequate funding to the railway operators.
- Noted the Government's encouragement of a greater use of public transport whilst being complicit in reducing transport facilities.
- Supported the motion's call for a constructive dialogue with the railway service providers but noted the omission the Department for Transport.
- Hoped that the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure would convey the points as raised above, firmly in his letter to the Secretary of State noting the need for adequate funding to meet the need of residents.
- Thanked public transport staff for working tirelessly during these challenging times.
- That in relation to residents in the east of the county, any reduction of services would affect residents travelling into London and for localised journeys, noting the cuts to the services by Southern Railway and on the East Grinstead line.
- A flexible and sustainable service that recognised demand and connected all communities was vital for levelling up and to meet the climate targets.
- That the proposed changes by South Western Railway would remove many stops at smaller stations, making travel by car in rural areas of the county the only viable option, more emphasis was needed from the Government to challenge the train operators.
- That the proposal by South Western Railway to halve the peak time services to two - affecting residents using Stoneleigh station and Worcester Park stations - was ridiculous when the morning rush hour was the busiest time.
- That regarding the motion's second resolution, urged the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure to stress upon the Government that additional funding was required for sustainable public transport.

Tim Hall, the seconder of the motion, made the following comments:

- Noted that South Western Railway's model was misleading and outdated, in some cases there would be a 50% reduction in services in large parts of Mole Valley and Epsom and Ewell.
- Thanked the MP for Epsom and Ewell who had argued that South Western Railway had not delivered on their promises for improvement, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure, and the Council's Member for Hersham for their support during South Western Railway's consultation.
- That Surrey was dependent on rail travel to work, courts, hospitals, schools and colleges and for the visitor economy; South Western Railway was ignorant of its customer base.

The Chair asked Bernie Muir, as proposer of the motion, to conclude the debate:

- Stressed that the train operators' proposals did not fulfil their own objectives, the evidence to support the proposed model was baseless and outdated, and worked against the national objective to build a coherent public transport policy.

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

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** that:

This Council notes that:

- Surrey County Council would like to thank all public transport staff, including the frontline staff, who have all worked extremely hard on a daily basis over the last eighteen months to maintain the vital rail network across Surrey during the pandemic, and in the face of such adversity.
- It is crucial to review our public transport networks – both bus and rail – to ensure as far as we practicably can that these networks continue to support our economy and growth ambitions, meet the needs of our communities, and ensure we reach net zero in Surrey.

This Council further notes that:

- Any reduction in services across the network is contrary to national, regional and local strategies. Specifically, the County Council's emerging Surrey Transport Plan, the Rail Strategy approved earlier this year and the Climate Change Strategy; all of which promote public transport ahead of car use, whilst providing a framework to promote the wider decarbonisation of transport.
- This Government's Bus back better Strategy, which in tandem with Surrey County Council's Active Travel, will transform the way in services are planned and delivered and the way in which residents use public transport.

This Council resolves to:

- I. Continue to engage a constructive dialogue with railway service providers and other partners in the rail industry to help inform and shape the detail of future timetables, and to include a restoration of service frequencies through our stations across Surrey.
- II. Support the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure in writing a letter to the Secretary of State outlining this Council's concerns regarding the impact that new timetable proposals may have on Surrey residents and to ensure adequate funding is provided to support sustainable transport provision in Surrey.

Item 8 (ii)

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

Under Standing Order 12.1 Marisa Heath moved:

An amendment to the motion set out in the agenda for this meeting in her own name which had been published in the supplementary agenda (12 October 2021), which was formally seconded by Trefor Hogg.

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

This Council notes that:

- Surrey County Council is committed to becoming a net zero council by 2030.
- The Council has further committed to Surrey becoming a net zero county by 2050 at the latest to mitigate the impact of climate change on our residents, infrastructure, landscapes and biodiversity, and to play our part in preserving the vitality of our planet for future generations.
- Surrey County Council has a crucial role to play in delivering and driving this agenda by ensuring that resources and levers that are within its control and areas of influence are utilised to the maximum.
- The ambitions of the Greener Futures Climate Change Strategy require a step change in how our communities live, work and play.

This Council further notes that the Council's role in delivering the county's net zero target requires us to:

- **Lead** by example with the ambition to reduce the carbon emissions of the Council's own operations and services, recognising that elected members and officers have a significant role in leading by example in their actions and lifestyles and inspiring our colleagues, residents and communities to move to more sustainable ways of living and working in all of their decision making.
- **Enable** and identify opportunities and projects that reduce carbon emissions across Surrey that can benefit from the Council, by the Council facilitating finance and resources to attract external investment.
- **Inspire** by maximising opportunities to influence behaviour change and empower people and organisations to take actions that lead to real and sustainable change.

Additionally, it will be crucial for the Council to take a fourth role, by **collaborating** with districts and boroughs, health and other key partners to ensure every effort is maximised and joined up wherever possible.

In light of the above, this Council resolves to:

- I. Endorse a Greener Futures Member Commitment and in doing so, agree to put greener futures at the forefront of all aspects of decision-making, in line with our refreshed organisational strategy.
- II. Commit to working cross-party to champion the Greener Futures agenda and Climate Change delivery plan. Where Surrey County Council members also hold seats at District and Borough councils, they will support ongoing collaboration to deliver shared objectives and targets, and will, wherever possible, support local decisions and policies that deliver decarbonisation for Surrey.
- III. Commit to act as a connector with residents, staying abreast of opportunities for residents and communities to reduce their personal carbon footprints and improve their local environments **and ensure we have a strong communication strategy that gets input from members and engages residents, members and businesses across Surrey.** This includes promoting schemes, initiatives and funding opportunities. ~~which will be highlighted through communications undertaken around the Greener Futures.~~
- IV. Commit to actively encouraging communities to take a leading role in shaping and delivering the way in which we decarbonise the county and supporting community led decarbonisation and environmental initiatives, signposting appropriate funding sources such as Your Fund Surrey.
- V. Commit to working with partners through the Greener Futures Board to provide countywide leadership to this agenda **and use our wider influence and connections to obtain sufficient funding and policy change from central Government to enable us to meet the challenges set in the Delivery Plan.**
- VI. Work with County Council officers to identify and support those on lower incomes and vulnerable residents to reduce their carbon footprint and energy bills, ensuring that our policies do not have unintended consequences on these groups and that no one is left behind.
- VII. Agree that the Greener Futures Member Commitment will be included as a project within the One Net Zero Public Estate Programme of the new Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan, which will be taken to Cabinet for a decision in October. The carbon impact of the commitment will be monitored and included as part of the Council's carbon reduction contribution.
- VIII. Agree that the Communities, Environment & Highways Select Committee Climate Change Task Force consider other actions in the future which can be added to the Greener Futures Member Commitment.
- IX. Appoint a Greener Futures Champions to support members in their efforts and highlight relevant points to all elected members that can help them deliver on their commitment to tackling climate change.

Members agreed to debate the amended motion and therefore it became the substantive motion.

Marisa Heath made the following points:

- Highlighted the addition and deletion within the third resolution, the additions in the fifth resolution and the deletion and addition within the ninth resolution.
- That the motion complemented the new Delivery Plan and whilst building on the previously agreed ambitions to become a net zero carbon emissions county by 2050 and Council by 2030, the motion recognised that the Council needed to take action immediately by setting its own priorities, putting the Greener Futures Programme at the forefront of its work.
- That following receipt of the Delivery Plan - which was an easy to read and flexible document - by the Cabinet later in the month, the Council had to be ready to take it forward recognising that success was only possible through collective working.
- That whilst collective working was underway by Members working with the Boroughs and Districts, residents and businesses, and through the Greener Futures Member Reference Group (MRG) and Greener Futures Board; once Cabinet received the Plan it was vital for all to support it collectively.
- That whilst she would be exploring the details of the Plan further through Member input, the motion called on Members to lead, enable and inspire their communities through agreeing a Greener Futures Member commitment.
- That Members were asked to agree several measures towards delivering the Council's climate change objectives through supporting collaboration, promoting schemes and funding opportunities, working to ensure that no one was left behind and to develop a communications and engagement strategy.
- That the established cross-party MRG would develop the Greener Futures Member Commitment going forward and Members could also submit their suggestions.
- That the motion called for Greener Futures Champions to provide updates at meetings and ensure that the Greener Futures Programme was at the forefront of the Council's work, she welcomed Members coming forward.
- That she looked forward to Members' views in the debate and hearing new ideas, it was vital to ensure that the Council engaged with Members and worked collaboratively to achieve the climate change targets.
- Stressed that the challenge going forward was driving the change and pushing harder to achieve the ambitious targets.

The motion was formally seconded by Trefor Hogg, who made the following comments:

- That whilst the Council's commitment to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030 and for the county to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 were challenging, such ambitions were deliverable.
- The Council's actions must be aligned to the United Nation's seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), whilst SDG number thirteen on climate action was central to achieving the targets, the SDGs were interlinked and so the Council must take a broad view by meeting all seventeen.
- Recognised the need to review and refocus the Council's objectives on climate change in the future, it was a climate emergency so should be addressed in a controlled way.

- That to deliver the challenging targets, the Council must put sustainable development at the heart of its work to ensure a greener future in Surrey where no one was left behind.

Fourteen Members made the following points:

- Highlighted the importance of hydrogen fuel for a green future, but that depended on its production due to high levels of carbon dioxide emissions produced, hoped the Council would call for carbon capture in the future.
- Welcomed the commitment to work cross-party, addressing climate change was a task for all and progress would be undermined if it became a bidding war between the political parties.
- That the Council's net zero carbon emissions targets were ambitious, and the challenge would be met through the Council's role in leading, enabling and inspiring the county.
- That greater collaboration was vital to address climate change, with the Council working with the Boroughs and Districts and other stakeholders to ensure a joined-up approach through the Delivery Plan.
- That whilst the cross-party MRG's recommendations to the Cabinet in October and the motion were important, going forward embodying the commitments into reality was vital.
- That Surrey was dependent on cars, behaviour change was vital.
- Contested the meeting of select committees in person as that was contrary to reducing travel and pollution.
- Commended the inspiring cross-party work undertaken by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee on policies to achieve the county's net zero targets which would be a huge challenge.
- Noted an instance of leading by example through a personal commitment to use an e-bike as a primary mode of transport in 2022 rather than a car.
- That Members and officers should not wait for a mandate but should change their behaviours now.
- Quoted from Chatham House's Climate change risk assessment 2021, noting the importance of addressing the rising global average temperature - already 1.1-1.2 degrees Celsius rise - at the UN Climate Change Conference (COP26) following on from the commitment in the 2015 Paris Agreement to limit global warming to well below 2°C, compared to pre-industrial levels.
- Noted surprise that since the Council declared a climate emergency in July 2019 there had been no further motions since, until today where there were three so hoped that reflected that the Council was taking the issue seriously.
- That even with the amendments, the motion failed to lead, enable and inspire, however supported the motion's proposals and hoped it was supported cross-party.
- Acknowledged that to reach the Council's net zero targets, partnership work was vital between all government levels and stakeholders.
- That local communities, residents and businesses were key to enact change and the Council must maintain and develop its infrastructure to support the behavioural change needed, such as a shift to walking, cycling and public transport.

- Urged the Council to work with the Boroughs and Districts and partners to avoid another year of blocked footpaths and cycleways.
- That the eighth resolution should reflect the change from a Task Force to the Member Reference Group - which could make recommendations to the Cabinet.
- That it was clear that Members and officers on the cross-party MRG - minus the Labour Group - were committed to the Delivery Plan.
- Highlighted Surrey Heath Borough Council's appointment of a dedicated climate change officer that worked closely with the Council.
- Referring to an example at Surrey Heath Borough Council, the Council needed to be robust in dealing with building developers so that they reflected the Council's green agenda and provision of affordable homes; noted discussions with Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to ensure the matter was addressed in the planning White Paper.
- That the motion recognised the centrality of climate change and welcomed the amendment to the fifth resolution which reflected one of the points in item 8: Original Motions, 8 (v).
- Noted confidence in the Cabinet Member for Environment's commitment to delivering the work outlined in the motion, however despite the Council's ambitions in some areas the Council's actions were lacking.
- Volunteered to be a Greener Futures Champion, working as a 'critical friend'.
- Praised the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure's on the work on an enhanced partnership with buses.
- Noted that many homes in the UK were not equipped to deal with extreme seasonal changes such as heatwaves, the response from some was the purchase of air conditioning units.
- That many of the tools needed to address the issues were not available to the Boroughs and Districts, welcomed therefore the Council's role to lead and enable through collaborative working.
- Highlighted that a fundamental problem facing Boroughs and Districts to be able to deliver on their ambitious plans was the need for officers with specialist skills, suggested that the Council establish a joint climate unit providing specialist climate officers across the county.
- Welcomed the Cabinet Member for Environment's defence of the Council's policies at a local Boroughs and Districts meeting, and the Council's ambition to reach its 2030 target which was beneficial to future generations.
- Welcomed the tone of the debate on the motion with Members being critical friends, hoped that the Council was committed to fulfilling its objectives rather than virtue-signalling.
- Looked forward to integrating the Social Value Act within the Council's procurement strategy and welcomed the review of the mineral planning policy.
- That annual reports were needed and noted that it was encouraging to see the Cabinet Member for the Environment leading on disseminating information on the Greener Futures Programme to residents.
- Noted the importance of the Council's collaboration with the Boroughs and Districts, noted local examples between the Council and Reigate and Banstead Borough Council around the Solar Together scheme, the LCWIP and green home grants.

- Highlighted that young people were often overlooked by councillors, noted a local example of regular debates held for young people on key issues; and had engaged with the Cabinet Member for Environment to introduce climate workshops in schools and colleges.
- That working with residents, businesses and community groups to provide a financially viable plan was vital, noted an upcoming Reigate Business Guild with a presentation on climate change.
- Highlighted the significant threat posed by climate change.
- Referring to Spelthorne, highlighted the large number of high rise buildings which used more energy and emitted more carbon dioxide, that it was located close to Heathrow Airport which emitted a large amount of carbon dioxide, residents were committed to protecting the many green spaces, cycling was being promoted as part of the active travel plan and other green transport measures were in place, had formed a youth group to debate climate change issues and worked with local businesses to reduce carbon dioxide emissions.
- That young people were leading on the net zero ambition and would hold policy makers to account.
- Supported the Delivery Plan and would hold the Cabinet to account in fulfilling its targets and supported the cross-party approach and partnership work outlined in the motion; but could not support the motion as it imposed an obligation for Members to act in a certain way so would abstain.

The Chair asked Marisa Heath, as proposer of the motion, to conclude the debate:

- Rather than preparing an arbitrary list for Members to follow, the motion was intended to be Member-led, to lead, inspire and enable residents to meet the Council's and country's climate change objectives.
- Welcomed the offer from the Member for Guildford East to become a Member Champion.
- Supported the sharing of resources such as specialist officers in climate change between the Council and the Boroughs and Districts, the Council was looking to scale up its existing nine climate change officers.
- Recognised the importance of a joined-up approach such as through using the 'green lens' when considering the Council's other strategic plans.
- Confirmed that officers and Members leading the Greener Futures Programme were committed and she hoped that all Members were too.

The motion was put to the vote in which 64 Members voted For, 0 Against and 2 Abstentions.

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** that:

This Council notes that:

- Surrey County Council is committed to becoming a net zero council by 2030.
- The Council has further committed to Surrey becoming a net zero county by 2050 at the latest to mitigate the impact of climate change on our

residents, infrastructure, landscapes and biodiversity, and to play our part in preserving the vitality of our planet for future generations.

- Surrey County Council has a crucial role to play in delivering and driving this agenda by ensuring that resources and levers that are within its control and areas of influence are utilised to the maximum.
- The ambitions of the Greener Futures Climate Change Strategy require a step change in how our communities live, work and play.

This Council further notes that the Council's role in delivering the county's net zero target requires us to:

- **Lead** by example with the ambition to reduce the carbon emissions of the Council's own operations and services, recognising that elected members and officers have a significant role in leading by example in their actions and lifestyles and inspiring our colleagues, residents and communities to move to more sustainable ways of living and working in all of their decision making.
- **Enable** and identify opportunities and projects that reduce carbon emissions across Surrey that can benefit from the Council, by the Council facilitating finance and resources to attract external investment.
- **Inspire** by maximising opportunities to influence behaviour change and empower people and organisations to take actions that lead to real and sustainable change.

Additionally, it will be crucial for the Council to take a fourth role, by **collaborating** with districts and boroughs, health and other key partners to ensure every effort is maximised and joined up wherever possible.

In light of the above, this Council resolves to:

- I. Endorse a Greener Futures Member Commitment and in doing so, agree to put greener futures at the forefront of all aspects of decision-making, in line with our refreshed organisational strategy.
- II. Commit to working cross-party to champion the Greener Futures agenda and Climate Change delivery plan. Where Surrey County Council members also hold seats at District and Borough councils, they will support ongoing collaboration to deliver shared objectives and targets, and will, wherever possible, support local decisions and policies that deliver decarbonisation for Surrey.
- III. Commit to act as a connector with residents, staying abreast of opportunities for residents and communities to reduce their personal carbon footprints and improve their local environments and ensure we have a strong communication strategy that gets input from members and engages residents, members and businesses across Surrey. This includes promoting schemes, initiatives and funding opportunities.
- IV. Commit to actively encouraging communities to take a leading role in shaping and delivering the way in which we decarbonise the county and

supporting community led decarbonisation and environmental initiatives, signposting appropriate funding sources such as Your Fund Surrey.

- V. Commit to working with partners through the Greener Futures Board to provide countywide leadership to this agenda and use our wider influence and connections to obtain sufficient funding and policy change from central Government to enable us to meet the challenges set in the Delivery Plan.
- VI. Work with County Council officers to identify and support those on lower incomes and vulnerable residents to reduce their carbon footprint and energy bills, ensuring that our policies do not have unintended consequences on these groups and that no one is left behind.
- VII. Agree that the Greener Futures Member Commitment will be included as a project within the One Net Zero Public Estate Programme of the new Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan, which will be taken to Cabinet for a decision in October. The carbon impact of the commitment will be monitored and included as part of the Council's carbon reduction contribution.
- VIII. Agree that the Communities, Environment & Highways Select Committee Climate Change Task Force consider other actions in the future which can be added to the Greener Futures Member Commitment.
- IX. Appoint Greener Futures Champions to support members in their efforts and highlight relevant points to all elected members that can help them deliver on their commitment to tackling climate change.

Item 8 (iii)

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

Under Standing Order 12.1 Catherine Baart moved:

This Council notes that:

At present it is very expensive for suppliers to provide locally generated renewable electricity to local customers.

The Local Electricity Bill would help reduce the cost of renewable electricity from community projects. It would make the supplier's financial costs proportionate to the size of the operation and in doing so would help community energy groups get their schemes going. In turn, this would generate local revenues for the local economy, as well as reducing carbon emissions.

"Accelerating community energy projects" is part of the Council's Climate Change Delivery Plan and the Local Electricity Bill made law would support the Council in achieving its Greener Futures goals. In Outwood (an East Surrey village with no gas supply largely dependent on oil for heating), a local community electricity project could make decarbonising heating possible for the residents.

The Local Electricity Bill would establish a "Right to Local Supply" policy.

At present, 79 councils and a cross party group of at least 264 MPs support the Local Electricity Bill, including Jeremy Hunt, MP.

This Council resolves to:

- I. Support the Local Electricity Bill.
- II. Write to local MPs who have not yet expressed support for the Bill.
- III. Write to the organisers of the Bill, Power for the People, expressing its support.

Catherine Baart made the following comments:

- That the UK needed to increase its electricity production for the transition to electric transport and heating to meet its climate change targets.
- That currently only 11% of all energy produced in the UK was from renewable sources.
- That community scale renewable energy had the potential to help meet the challenge but community energy groups in the UK unlike in Germany for example, faced disproportionate costs to the amount of energy produced due to the current energy market legislation and licensing rules.
- That community energy groups benefitted local economies by creating jobs and skills and encouraged local support for schemes such as solar farms.
- That the Local Electricity Bill (the Bill) would support the Council's Greener Futures Programme through decarbonisation as Surrey's councils could sell energy generated at council owned solar farms to local people and businesses.
- That the Bill would remove barriers faced by community energy groups by re-regulating the energy market through Ofgem.
- That the Bill had cross-party support in Parliament, was supported by the MP for South West Surrey and by many councils.

The motion was formally seconded by Robert King, who reserved the right to speak.

Three Members made the following points:

- Supported the motion and noted that it would be helpful as well as writing to MPs and the Bill's organisers, that work be undertaken by the Council through the Communities, Environment and Health Select Committee and Greener Futures Board to understand the practicalities around the Bill.
- Acknowledged the cross-party support for the Bill, support from MPs and councils including Surrey Heath Borough Council, which would accelerate the transition to green energy and so was critical to the Council's climate change work.
- Recognised the benefits of empowering community energy groups to generate energy which they could sell locally and strengthen local economies which was vital after the challenges brought by Covid-19.
- That as Cabinet Member for Environment, would work to make the Council's support of the Bill known to MPs more widely and would ask officers to look into the delivery of the Bill across Surrey.

- That in the past energy generation was local until the Electricity (Supply) Act 1926 established the National Grid and introduced regulations and financial barriers that distorted the market, supported the Bill with the removal of those barriers that discriminated against local energy suppliers and would help in the journey to be a carbon zero Surrey where no community was left behind.

Robert King, the seconder of the motion, made the following comments:

- That the Bill enabled the market to work for local communities, cooperatives such as the MaidEnergy Cooperative in Egham were blocked from re-investing revenue back into capital due to the costs they faced - those costs also affected the Council and the Boroughs and Districts.

The Chair asked Catherine Baart, as proposer of the motion, to conclude the debate:

- Thanked Members for their support and noted that she had no further comments to add.

The motion was put to the vote and was carried with 1 Abstention.

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** that:

This Council notes that:

At present it is very expensive for suppliers to provide locally generated renewable electricity to local customers.

The Local Electricity Bill would help reduce the cost of renewable electricity from community projects. It would make the supplier's financial costs proportionate to the size of the operation and in doing so would help community energy groups get their schemes going. In turn, this would generate local revenues for the local economy, as well as reducing carbon emissions.

“Accelerating community energy projects” is part of the Council's Climate Change Delivery Plan and the Local Electricity Bill made law would support the Council in achieving its Greener Futures goals. In Outwood (an East Surrey village with no gas supply largely dependent on oil for heating), a local community electricity project could make decarbonising heating possible for the residents.

The Local Electricity Bill would establish a “Right to Local Supply” policy.

At present, 79 councils and a cross party group of at least 264 MPs support the Local Electricity Bill, including Jeremy Hunt, MP.

This Council resolves to:

- I. Support the Local Electricity Bill.
- II. Write to local MPs who have not yet expressed support for the Bill.
- III. Write to the organisers of the Bill, Power for the People, expressing its support.

Item 8 (v)

Under Standing Order 12.3 the Leader of the Council, Tim Oliver, moved a proposal. The proposal was as follows:

That the motion below by Lance Spencer be referred to the Cabinet for more detailed consideration.

The Council notes that:

The important Climate Summit COP26 is being held in Glasgow this November, and that it is now over two years since the Climate Emergency was recognised and declared by this Council on 9 July 2019.

The local response to the Climate Emergency, as laid out in the Greener Futures Delivery Plan, while capable of undertaking many urgent and useful actions within its powers and capacity and able to energise local people and businesses, faces critical limitations in key areas for scaling-up change, including:

- Sufficient funding for the front-loaded costs of insulation schemes, replacement of carbon-intensive heating systems and installation of renewables in Surrey buildings - by residents, businesses and the public sector.
- Sufficient funding to bring forward the necessary changes to motorised transport as laid out in the Local Transport Plan 4 currently out for consultation to significantly reduce the 46% of Surrey-based greenhouse gas emissions which are from this activity.
- Sufficient funding and a clear strategy for the effective communications and engagement necessary to create the behavioural change that will be required in the coming years to deliver the Greener Futures Delivery Plan.
- Sufficient workforce, trained and employed to deliver the above.

In light of the climate emergency declaration, this Council resolves to:

- I. Request the Cabinet Member for Environment to write to the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, the new Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, the Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and Alok Sharma, President of COP26 to urge sufficient funding and policy change to allow local government to make urgent progress in meeting its challenges meaningfully in the financial year 2022/23.
- II. Request the Cabinet Member for Environment to review and update the existing communications and engagement plan, before the next meeting of the Council, to set out how we will engage with the 1.2 million residents, eighty-one Members and businesses across Surrey so they fully understand the transformation needed for Surrey to meet its carbon reduction targets.

In speaking to his proposal the Leader of the Council:

- That there had been a constructive debate on the matter concerning item 8: Original Motions, 8 (ii) which had been amended to include the

reflect the motion, so proposed that the motion be referred to the Cabinet and picked up as part of the wider work around the Greener Futures Programme.

- That it was too early to discuss the finances, the Greener Futures Board would receive a presentation at the next Board on the finances around the Delivery Plan.

Lance Spencer made the following points:

- Agreed that there had been a good debate on the earlier motion and would take his supporting points on the motion to the Cabinet for consideration.

Lance Spencer confirmed that he was in support of the referral of the motion to Cabinet.

The proposal to refer the motion was put to the vote and received unanimous support.

Therefore it was:

RESOLVED:

That the motion be referred to the Cabinet - specifically to the next meeting in October.

63/21 CHANGES TO CABINET PORTFOLIOS [Item 9]

The Leader introduced the report, highlighting that a significant change was re-combining the Health and Adult Social Care portfolios represented by the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health, which was consistent with his earlier comments and the Health and Care Bill. He noted that other tweaks sought to balance the workload of the Cabinet and that he intended to appoint a Deputy Cabinet Member for Levelling Up.

Jonathan Hulley, Nick Darby and Tony Samuels left the meeting at 13.59 pm

A Member queried why the responsibility over Learning Disabilities was not with the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning as opposed to the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health.

The Member also asked whether the Deputy Cabinet Member for Levelling Up's special responsibility allowance would be funded by the Leader rather than placing a burden on the taxpayer.

In response, the Leader noted that it was his responsibility to appoint the Cabinet how he saw fit.

RESOLVED:

That Council noted the Leader's changes to Cabinet Portfolios.

64/21 ARRANGEMENTS FOR MEMBER MEETINGS [Item 10]

The Leader introduced the report and noted:

- That it sought to confirm arrangements following the expiry of the Remote Meeting Regulations 2020 with concessions in place as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- That the Local Government Association (LGA) carried out a survey whereby 97% of councils supported the continuation of remote meetings where appropriate and that discussion with the Government was ongoing through the LGA and County Councils Network.
- Council meetings would take place in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 and Local Government Act 2000.
- That in response to a previous comment made earlier by a Member concerning in person attendance at select committee meetings, noted that whilst select committee meetings were not formal decision-making bodies they had a role to formally scrutinise the proposed budget before consideration by the Council, select committee Chairmen could choose to reduce the number of public select committee meetings where appropriate and task and finish groups could meet remotely.
- That legislation was different for the Cabinet which had resumed in person meetings.
- That the Council sought to continue with the special dispensation on medical grounds for Alison Griffiths until the AGM in May 2022 whilst she received medical treatment; he was delighted to see her at the meeting.

Members made the following comments:

- Thanked the Leader for his response concerning in person attendance for select committee meetings and sought assurance that he would use his influence as Leader of the Council and chair of the County Council's Network to lobby the Government to affect change in the legislation.
- Sought clarification on the Surrey Local Pension Board and the Surrey Local Firefighters' Pension Board which operate under different legislation.

In response, the Chair confirmed that those two Boards were regulatory committees and were considered under the section on non-executive decision-making committees.

The Chair welcomed Alison Griffiths to the meeting and congratulated her on her recent marriage.

In response, Alison Griffiths noted that she continued to receive treatment for terminal cancer, would try to attend council meetings where possible and thanked all Members for their continued support.

RESOLVED:

That Council:

1. Agreed the arrangements for committee meetings including remote participation as set out in the report for the remainder of the council year 2021/22.
2. In relation to the six-month rule for meeting attendance;
 - a. Agreed that the blanket dispensation for attendance at formal committee meetings for all members is not extended beyond 31

- October and that councillor attendance records are reset from this date.
- b. Agreed that Councillor Alison Griffiths may continue to be absent from meetings until May 2022 by reason of ill health and that the Council looks forward to welcoming her back in due course.
3. Authorised the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Council and group leaders to incorporate any legislative changes issued by Government into council business processes.

65/21 REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE: RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY [Item 11]

The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee introduced the report and noted:

- That the Council's existing Risk Management Strategy expired in 2021 and the refreshed Strategy as agreed by the Audit and Governance Committee on 20 September 2021, combined best practice, the risk framework and risk strategy.
- That it was proposed that the Audit and Governance Committee would review the Strategy annually.
- That the Strategy was embedded into the Council's Constitution, so the report sought the Council's approval to update the Constitution.

A Member noted that there were a couple of items missing from the report, was unclear as to what the changes were in the refreshed Strategy compared to the existing version and asked whether the existing strategy in the Constitution would be updated or replaced. As a result of his queries, he suggested that the item be deferred to the next Council meeting to be presented in a complete manner.

In response, the Chair asked the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee to clarify whether the report needed to be deferred.

The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee reiterated his introductory comments, noting that there was no reason to defer the report as it simply replaced the existing Strategy which had expired.

The Chair asked the Member and Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee to discuss the queries raised outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That Council noted that the Audit and Governance Committee have agreed the enclosed Risk Management Strategy (Annex 1) and agreed for the Constitution to be updated.

66/21 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER TO THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE [Item 12]

The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee introduced the report and noted:

- Surprise upon taking up chairmanship of the Audit and Governance Committee in May that independent members did not form part of the

Committee's membership, unlike at his borough council's audit and standards committee and as was recommended best practice by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).

- That having an independent member would be beneficial as they would provide a degree of objectivity, they would be apolitical and add to the experience of existing Committee members.
- That the independent member would not be a voting member and would not receive any special responsibility allowance, only expenses.
- A change in the wording concerning recommendation two:

The recruitment of the Independent Member be led by a panel consisting of the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee and two opposition group members (appointed by Group Leaders), **whose members be chosen following consultation between the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee and the Group Leaders**, supported by the Director of Law and Governance.

Four Members made the following comments:

- Disagreed with CIPFA's recommendation of best practice to include independent members to the membership of audit committees as such members would devalue the role of the elected Members and create a democratic deficit.
- That Members were elected on their common sense capable of making reasonable decisions, officers were employed to present reports and provide advice, and the Section 151 officer had oversight over financial matters. An externally imposed independent member was not needed and one professional could not reflect the views of the whole of the Surrey community.
- Suggested that whilst the person specification listed that the independent member must not be a councillor, an addition be made stating that the role was non-political.
- Commended the initiative by the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee in bringing the Committee in line with best practice, noting the importance of independent members at his borough council's corporate governance and standards committee where independent members did not devalue the work of elected Members.

RESOLVED:

That:

1. Council agreed to the principle of appointing an Independent Member to the Audit and Governance Committee for a period of four years.
2. The recruitment of the Independent Member be led by a panel whose members be chosen following consultation between the Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee and the Group Leaders, supported by the Director of Law and Governance.
3. Following the recruitment process, a report to formally appoint the Independent Member be presented to a future Council meeting.
4. Council agreed to delegate to the Director of Law and Governance, in consultation with the Chair of the Audit and Governance Committee, authority to finalise the role description, skills, competencies and person specification (attached as Appendix A).

67/21 REPORT OF THE CABINET [Item 13]

The Leader presented the report of the Cabinet meetings held on 20 July 2021 and 28 September 2021.

Recommendations on Policy Framework Documents:

28 September 2021:

- A. Amendments to the Spelthorne Joint Committee Constitution following Implementation of the Committee System by Spelthorne Borough Council

Reports for Information/Discussion:

20 July 2021:

- B. Covid-19: Surrey County Council - Update, Review and Lessons Learned
- C. River Thames Scheme Collaboration Agreement Principles
- D. Joint Working Arrangements for Finance Services with Tandridge District Council

28 September 2021:

- E. Award of Term Maintenance Contract for Highway Services
- F. Policy on the Use of Safety Cameras in Surrey
- G. Surrey Outdoor Learning and Development – Phase 1, Thames Young Mariners

- H. Quarterly Report on Decisions Taken Under Special Urgency Arrangements: 14 July 2021 - 4 October 2021

RESOLVED:

1. That Council approved the changes to Spelthorne Joint Committee constitution, in relation to non-executive decision making, to reflect the change from a Cabinet to a Committee system within Spelthorne Borough Council (as set out in the Cabinet report from 28 September 2021).
2. That Council noted that there had been no urgent decision in the last three months.
3. That the report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 20 July 2021 and 28 September 2021 be adopted.

68/21 MINUTES OF CABINET MEETINGS [Item 14]

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: 14.25 pm]

Chair

Leader's Statement – County Council, 12 October 2021

Madam Chair, Members, we come together for the first time since the summer break and for the first time in our new Council Chamber here in Woodhatch, and there is a real sense of renewed energy in Surrey as we approach autumn and the winter months ahead.

As we move out of major incident mode from COVID-19, we have faced new challenges as a County – whether that's welcoming evacuees from Afghanistan, dealing with the ongoing disruption to fuel supplies, or preparing for winter in the face of higher energy prices.

The partnerships that were forged and strengthened through the pandemic have again been relied on and are again proving strong and resilient here in Surrey.

I'm immensely proud of our people and our communities in meeting these challenges head on and maintaining an overriding objective of looking out for those most vulnerable in our society.

Surrey is a place where nobody should be left behind, and the dedication of our staff and partners over the last few months continues to demonstrate how we are making that ambition a reality.

We have also made real progress in tackling some of our longer-term challenges as a council and put in place a solid foundation from which to tackle new and emerging issues.

Madam Chair, we are approaching our budget setting period, with a draft 2022/23 budget due to be published next month and some early resident engagement underway.

We have worked hard, transformed the Council, and got our finances in order with balanced budgets, ambitious investment and building back our reserves.

But it is clear that greater challenges are on the horizon.

Local and national government stepped up during COVID and that has added severe pressure to public finances.

Climate Change is a real and imminent threat that must be tackled seriously, and we have set out our ambitious plan to do that – that kind of action does not come cheap.

The government's funding plans for Adult Social Care is longer-term and the immediate burden remains squarely on local authorities.

Demands on our services continue to increase, while funding streams are being squeezed.

While we will lobby government for what we feel is fair and necessary for Surrey, we must look to the future and prepare properly for these anticipated budget impacts.

We have done the tough slog to base camp, but we still have to scale the mountain and there is a storm coming in.

We need to collect ourselves and find renewed energy and vigour to tackle these next challenges together – with our staff, our partners, and our residents.

Madam Chair, later this month we will take our Climate Change Delivery Plan through Cabinet, setting out how we plan to reach our climate objectives in Surrey.

We aim to be a net-zero organisation by 2030 and help deliver a net-zero county by 2050.

These are not just soundbites or lip service – this is a serious plan, to tackle a serious threat.

Cllr Heath will discuss this further later today with her motion, and it is a plan that requires everybody to play their part.

We will do everything in our power to do our bit – we'll electrify our transport fleet, we'll put green infrastructure in place, we'll get home insulation and renewable energy schemes together, we'll plant trees, make our buildings efficient, lobby government...

But we can't do it alone. We need collective responsibility. We have to do it together.

Another significant area where we are committed to putting the right foundations in place, to tackle a long-term challenge, is social care.

While we continue to spend over £1m every single day on caring for vulnerable adults, we are also working hard to transform our care provision to provide better quality of life, greater independence, and more effective and efficient support for those that really need us.

Our overriding ambition is to increase independence and modernise care.

We want residents to stay in their community for longer, to have the support to live independently where possible rather than be taken into care.

We are investing in this ambition now, through technology, modern supported living accommodation, and extra care schemes in the community, all to deliver a better quality of life and prevent reliance on residential care.

Again, this will only be successful working together with a thriving community sector, and health partners to deliver stronger, joined-up local support.

Madam Chair, the challenges we have faced across Children's Services over recent years have been well documented – it's something we have not shied away from, in fact the opposite. We have put in place a fundamental transformation programme and a rigorous structure to make the improvements required, with positive progress noted at every step of the way from Ofsted.

A formal letter from the latest monitoring visit from Ofsted is due to be published today and will recognise further good work specifically in our duty to care leavers.

There was some very positive feedback about our direct work with young people around mental health and abusive relationships, the breadth and depth of our local offer, and the strong support we offer to older Care Leavers until they are 25 through personal advisors.

One area we're particularly proud of, and praised by Ofsted, is our support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people.

We take seriously our responsibility for the care of asylum-seeking children – ensuring that we properly assess the needs of unaccompanied minors and place them in the most appropriate care, so they can settle and go on to play a full and active role in our society.

I reiterate – nobody in Surrey should be left behind on this Council's watch.

This support for young people, accompanied by the welcoming and compassionate nature of communities across Surrey, has really come to the fore in recent weeks as we've welcomed people of all ages from Afghanistan.

These are people who have been forced to flee their home country, many of whom have put their lives at risk for the values and principles of freedom and democracy, and who we should be proud to welcome into our wonderful county.

They have come here with nothing, to an unfamiliar country, often having been through severe stress and trauma, many with young children or acute healthcare needs.

I have been so impressed by the work of County Council staff, alongside Surrey's Districts and Boroughs, and health providers, in making sure Afghans can settle here safely and happily, ensuring access to healthcare, education and secure accommodation.

I'd like to pay tribute to all those people working tirelessly on this resettlement issue, and to our communities for their generosity and compassion.

Our country is built on the contribution of a diverse range of people, from all across the world, with different backgrounds, experiences, skills and ideas, contributing to a free and open society.

And while we welcome newcomers from Afghanistan, and previously Syria and elsewhere, into our communities, this month of October is also used to recognise the historic, and ongoing contribution of people from African or Caribbean descent to our society.

Black History Month is hugely important in helping us promote our principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion, taking time to learn about the specific contributions of black people.

I would encourage everybody to take a look at Surrey History Centre's powerful exhibitions this month and engage and promote Black History Month activities going on across the county.

Our history, and our historic challenges, must guide our future.

We must learn from past mistakes – and past success – to shape our future. To play our part in creating a better place and stronger, thriving communities across Surrey.

Madam Chair, as we look to the immediate challenges in front of us, we must work together, and each and every one of us should look out for each other in society.

Let's redouble our efforts to protect our most vulnerable.

We announced at the last Cabinet meeting more funding for people at risk of fuel poverty to make home improvements. We will also make sure there is wider support available for people this winter through avenues such as the Surrey Crisis Fund and Winter Fuel Payments.

Members, look out for your neighbours this winter and make sure they're aware of the support available if needed.

Madam Chair, I have always aimed, as Leader of this Council, to work openly and collaboratively. I have encouraged scrutiny of our decisions as well as early sight of policy changes through the select committees, I have tried to stimulate thought and contribution from all members and communities, and I will continue to promote transparency and honesty.

As I have shared with all of you - and spoken about publicly - we are ready to stand up for Surrey and ask for greater local powers from central government in the form of a County Deal.

And I make no apology for being ambitious for this county. Ambitious to improve the lives and livelihoods of all our residents and I urge all leaders of all councils across the county to share that ambition.

It is right that we seek further devolved powers from central government – if we have the levers to grow our economy, to tackle health inequality, to enable a greener future and to support our communities we WILL deliver.

We must, and will, drive forward with completion of our transformation programmes. As each week and month goes by we improve the delivery of our services as I have set out earlier.

There will always be more to do but we have a Council – a team – that truly wants to deliver and although there will be bumps in the road – though less potholes - we must remain focused and committed.

We shall continue to press government for a County Deal, for sustainable funding for social care, and we will do all that we can to level up our county as we contribute to the national programme.

Of course, there will be frustration at the pace of improvement, none more than from me, but what is important is the desire to achieve a better and fairer life and whilst this council is only one part of the wider ecosystem we can and should lead from the front.

Not everything is perfect but let's be constructive, let's be realistic, let's be supportive and above all let's get it done.

As a country we need to invest in ourselves, in our infrastructure, in our manufacturing capacity, in being self-sufficient, in creating equality of opportunity in all four corners of the UK.

We must better support those that are vulnerable, help those struggling with mental illness and social isolation, wherever possible create an environment where people can enjoy gainful employment, reskill, or upskill if they want to.

We equip the next generation to help deliver that brighter future, where our streets are safer, where we can breathe clean air and live healthier lives.

These are all worthy ambitions many of which touch upon the work of this council but equally much of which is outside of our control. We must therefore come together - playing to the strengths of each organisation, getting behind a single vision for this county and a vision where we genuinely and sustainably address the inequality of opportunity, to create a better future for everyone.

That is why we are elected to this Council and that is not only our opportunity, but it is also our duty.

What that will look like specifically is not yet known, but from our conversations together so far, it's clear that the vast majority of local partners and stakeholders share our ambitions of a stronger county, with more control of our own destiny, delivering the right local solutions so that Surrey can be the very best place it can be.

The government have set out their agenda and we have a responsibility to engage with that, as local leaders across the country (from all political persuasions) are doing.

Their four levelling up objectives are things all of us in this council chamber should be aiming to deliver for Surrey:

- Empowering local leaders & communities
- Growing the private sector & boosting living standards
- Spreading opportunity & improving public services
- Restoring local pride

We want to and need to do that so we can ensure :-

- A **stronger** Surrey economy
- A **sustainable** Surrey
- **Safer** Surrey streets
- **Supportive** and thriving Surrey communities

Ultimately, a healthy place where there is equal opportunity for everyone, and nobody is left behind.

We owe it to our residents to step forward, grasp this opportunity and deliver this agenda locally.

It is our future. It is our residents' future.

Let's seize it, together.

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