

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL HELD AT
WOODHATCH PLACE, 11 COCKSHOT HILL, REIGATE, SURREY,
RH2 8EF, ON 8 FEBRUARY 2022 COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM, THE
COUNCIL BEING CONSTITUTED AS FOLLOWS:**

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

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

*absent

r = Remote Attendance

1/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies for absence were received from Bernie Muir.

Members who attended remotely and had no voting rights were Jeffrey Gray, Rebecca Jennings-Evans and Buddhi Weerasinghe.

2/22 MINUTES [Item 2]

The minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 12 October 2021 were submitted, confirmed and signed.

3/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

Regarding item 5: 2022/23 Final Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2026/27:

Rachael Lake declared a non-pecuniary interest noting that her son was an employee of Surrey County Council (the Council); and that her daughter had in the past and may in the future work with an organisation that works with the Council.

Keith Witham declared a non-pecuniary interest noting that his stepdaughter was an employee of the Council in the Finance department.

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

John O'Reilly declared a non-pecuniary interest noting that his father received social care support from the Council.

Tim Oliver declared a non-pecuniary interest regarding item 12: Appointment of Independent Member to the Audit and Governance Committee, noting that he was involved in Terry Price's appointment to a similar position at Elmbridge Borough Council and noted that he was the Chair of trustees at Esher Sixth Form College and Terry Price was the Chair of the member board.

Amanda Boote arrived at 10.09 am

4/22 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS [Item 4]

The Chair noted:

- That her full announcements could be found in the Council agenda front sheet alongside the Queen's Surrey New Year Honours 2022 list and she congratulated all those Surrey residents listed.

5/22 2022/23 FINAL BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO 2026/27 [Item 5]

Before presenting the report and making his statement, the Leader noted that the 'No One Left Behind' video - (accessible using this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E9pboD-sTPU>) - set out the context of the budget and demonstrated the work underway across the county to meet the Council's guiding

principle. He noted that the video had received positive feedback and he credited the work of an apprentice at the Council, for their work in producing it.

The Leader presented the 2022/23 Final Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2026/27 and made a statement in support of the proposed budget. A copy of the Leader's statement is attached as Appendix A.

Each of the Minority Group Leaders (Nick Darby, Will Forster, Robert Evans and Jonathan Essex) were invited to speak on the budget proposals.

Key points made by Nick Darby were that:

- Noted the context of the budget which called for a 4.99% Council Tax increase, despite inflation moving towards 7%, increasing energy costs and the National Insurance increase.
- Stressed that additional Council Tax bands were needed so those with high value properties pay more, the Council must press for a change in legislation so it could address poverty and deprivation.
- Noted that the Council needed efficiencies led through the Twin Track approach because it had been inefficient in the past and working efficiently going forward and putting residents first was what was needed.
- Noted the contrast between the Council's ambitious projects to ensure that no one is left behind and the reality of delivering that ambition, noting the following examples.
- The new IT system to cover payroll and HR, to which the Resources and Performance Select Committee in October 2020 recommended that assurances be put in place to monitor risks and progress, since then the system had faced delays and cost the taxpayer an extra £3.2 million which could have been avoided with robust programme management.
- The Agile Office Programme (AOP) had seen its estimated annual cost savings reduce from £3 million to £2.2 million a year - he sought greater collaboration on its progress.
- The Council's existing offices were not fit for purpose with £39 million needed in repair work, of that £15 million was for Quadrant Court.
- The Council had a deliberate policy on the neglect of its property assets, whilst he welcomed the intended £2 million spend on repairs on Surrey's eight children's homes, the £250,000 cost per home was due to years of neglect.
- The Council must take immediate action to prioritise its outstanding repair work across its properties, to stop the neglect and further costs to residents.
- Welcomed the intended investment in new extra care homes, supported living homes, children's homes and extra housing for those with autism, but urged that those projects must be managed properly and collaboratively.
- Welcomed the additional funding for mental health but was concerned that it was announced last-minute with little planning.
- Noted concern in the Council's borrowing costs which must be managed efficiently, whilst the costs would be used to fund flood defences and the property projects mentioned, the costs were expected to reach £80 million a year in the future - adding 6 to 8% on Council Tax bills.
- That Your Fund Surrey had cost £100 million in borrowed money, had faced delays, frustrated applicants and would cost the taxpayer; the Council's borrowing costs must be reviewed to ensure that money is targeted and spent on the most disadvantaged, reversing vital services cut to achieve efficiencies.
- Regarding the Twin Track approach, firstly it was proposed that the number of those receiving the Home To School Transport service would be reduced and

those supplying the service would be squeezed; secondly fees and charges would be increased such as the annual parking permit charges.

- The Equality Impact Assessments included at the end of the budget report referenced several groups who might be affected by the multiple efficiencies in the budget including adults of all ages with physical and learning difficulties, children and young people including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), older adults and their carers and women particularly in areas where they make up the majority of the frontline workforce.
- Stressed that the Council must be efficient, pay attention to detail and not waste residents' money, it must deliver on its ambitions and projects.

Key points made by Will Forster were that:

- The budget failed Surrey's residents for three reasons; it did not meet its own target of ensuring that no one is left behind.
- Firstly on Council Tax, the budget if approved would mean that Surrey's residents would pay twice for the social care reforms announced by the Government last year as a result of the combination of the 4.99% increase in Surrey's Council Tax and the 1.25% rise in National Insurance.
- The increase breaks the Conservative Party's manifesto promise not to raise taxes and would mean that hard-pressed families and small businesses already facing a cost of living crisis would be left paying more tax annually.
- That one in four Surrey households would not be eligible for the Government's proposed Council Tax rebate.
- The rise this year was due to last year's rise being deferred until after the 2021 County Council elections.
- The increase in Council Tax was meant to fund Adult Social Care (ASC), yet there was a £43 million cut to ASC and a consultation had recently closed on the closure of eight Council run care homes.
- Secondly on waste and inefficiency, the responses under item 7 highlighted that nearly £2 million a year was spent on Communications and PR, nearly £30 million a year is spent on agency and temporary staff and 1,166 staff earn over £50,000 a year.
- The Council was more interested in style over substance and was a top-heavy organisation, money should be spent on crucial services for the most vulnerable which had been cut such as ASC as noted earlier and £7.8 million in efficiencies in Children's Services which was rated 'inadequate' by Ofsted.
- The budget relied on large investment projects yet the Council had a poor track record, as uncovered at the last Council meeting nearly £50 million had been lost to investments.
- The Council had a poor record on delivery, noting the £3 million overspend on the new IT system and the Eco Park which was years behind schedule.
- Thirdly on the level of reserves, that an average resident would find it appalling that the Council had £200 million in reserves yet Council Tax was increasing by nearly 5%.
- Some of the reserves should have been used to ease the burden of residents already facing a cost of living crisis, they should be used to invest in the repairing of Surrey's roads and in supporting vulnerable residents such as those with SEND; so that money is saved in the long-term.

Key points made by Robert Evans were that:

- Noted that whilst it was good to meet in person unlike this time last year during the height of the pandemic, it was regrettable that the Government has not taken action to give councils the flexibility in how they conduct their business.
- Stated that the Leader noted last year that Surrey was in a stable financial position so it did not need to increase Council Tax by the maximum amount and raised it by 2.5% instead, however the Leader's proposed budget this year sets out a 4.99% rise which suggested that the Council's financial position was not as stable.
- If the lower Council Tax increase last year was a tactic in advance of the 2021 County Council elections, it failed as the Conservative Party lost fourteen seats.
- That no one wants to pay more taxes than necessary, however it was the Council's duty to provide its residents with reliable services.
- Noted the upcoming Spelthorne Borough Council by-election in Stanwell North where the feedback from residents was threefold: residents were appalled at the behaviour of the Government and Prime Minister, residents were worried about the cost of living crisis, and lastly residents were unsatisfied with the state of the roads and inadequate quality of repairs and the poor public transport provision.
- There was nothing in the budget that highlighted that the Council was on the side of its residents, noting that the closure of the local fire station in Stanwell, the reduction in the number of firefighters across the county, the closures of fire stations at night and the reduction in crewing levels, did not make Surrey safer.
- The projected £0.9 million increase in the budget for the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) would be lost to inflation.
- Requested the Leader's guarantee that the number of firefighters would not be further reduced nor that fire stations would be closed at night.
- The increase in the budget for ASC was inadequate, despite the twelve years of austerity nationally, £100 million of the Council's £150,000 million in reserves could be spent on services rather than residents facing cutbacks.
- The efficiencies in the budget totalled £81 million on top of the £240 million made since 2018, whilst some efficiencies were due to modernisation, the majority were cuts.
- The Council would have an extra half a billion pounds to spend on making a difference to its residents - totalling up the money wasted to inefficiencies and its reserves as well as the cuts imposed on Surrey by the Government.
- Despite Surrey being a relatively wealthy county and the levelling up agenda, highlighted the inadequate Council Tax rebates offered by the Government, the Government must address how unfair the Council Tax system is and the Leader could work with Surrey's eleven MPs to lobby the Government.
- The current Council Tax system benefited those in more valuable properties, new bands beyond G and H were needed.
- The budget was a missed opportunity to address the Council Tax system and to redistribute wealth, and left residents behind.

Key points made by Jonathan Essex were that:

- Welcomed the £8 million additional funding on mental health as recommended by the Council's Mental Health Task Group.
- Welcomed the Council's call for a strategy to address child poverty which highlighted the growing inequalities across the county, but that was not reflected

in the budget despite the higher cost of living, food and energy prices, the removal of the Universal Credit uplift and the increase in National Insurance.

- That it was positive that the budget continued to fill the gap created by the Council over the last decade in failing to provide sufficient school places for those with SEND in Surrey and commended the No Wrong Door model in the prevention of new children entering care.
- Questioned how the budget matched the commitment of no one is left behind - noting the 'inadequate' rating by Ofsted of the Children's Services in 2018 - and that half of Surrey's children in care were placed outside of the county in independently run children's homes and via foster care agencies.
- Suggested that the Council should match the pay of foster carers in Surrey with that of neighbouring authorities.
- Many children and young adults were left behind due to Covid-19 and had insufficient support for the past few years, the Council must reassess its support.
- The Council must address its backlogs service-wide.
- Questioned why Surrey's public health funding per head was lower than other counties, despite the fact that Surrey residents consulted on the budget said that they wanted more spending on preventative measures and the Leader had called for change to ensure that no one is left behind.
- The Council must strengthen its investment in prevention and early intervention across all services, including Children's Services and Public Health.
- Suggested that the new Twin Track approach of joined-up thinking in the budget could be applied to Public Health investment, to Green Futures direct investment in Surrey's Pension Fund, to road safety transforming local transport provision across Surrey, to including care in the Home to School Transport provision and to extending the core bus service including coinciding the new bus service to Reigate with that to Woodhatch Place.
- The Council needed to do more, noted that his amendment outlined how it could do so through utilising reserves and delivering more for residents.

Jonathan Essex moved an amendment, presenting the following recommended alternative budget proposals (included in the supplementary agenda), which was formally seconded by Catherine Baart. This was:

Recommendations

Council is asked to approve the following budget proposals:

1. That a Gap Analysis study be undertaken to identify additional evidence to deliver Surrey's Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) ambitions for modal shift.
Budget commitment: £100k to fund gap-analysis, modelling modal shift, energy use and infrastructure investment needs to decarbonise transport in Surrey.
2. That a Climate Citizens' Forum be established to explore options to reduce demand and damage from road transport in Surrey. A Climate Citizens' Forum to explore options to reduce demand and damage from road transport in Surrey.
Budget commitment: £50k to fund participation process to strengthen strategic response to deliver LTP4 and overall road transport decarbonisation in Surrey.
3. That research be undertaken to establish a baseline to enable a coordinated action-plan to target energy efficient retrofit and address fuel poverty across all Surrey homes.

Budget commitment: £217k to fund 2 FTE – a PS11 manager and a PS10 officer (£117K) and a consultancy support (up to £100K) for a baseline study to kick-start a coordinated plan for energy-retrofit of Surrey homes.

4. That the scope of the additional £6.5 million in the budget envelope for Mental Health be widened to target early interventions to prevent and address child poverty.

Budget commitment: In addition to the £8 million included in the budget for Mental Health, add a further £8 million, doubling the size of the earmarked fund. Extend the remit of this £16 million allocation to include Public Health and Child Poverty, as follows:

- Reverse the recent reduction in numbers of children’s centres and universal youth services;
- Provision of funding to deliver the recently published child poverty strategy; and
- Enhance public health delivery across Surrey.

5. That the first year funding for Surrey’s Bus Back Better plans be guaranteed.

Budget commitment: guarantee first year funding for Bus Back Better in Surrey County Council’s BSIP bid to central government. £17.7m revenue to be met from reserves and £10m capital to be met from reprioritising the Capital Pipeline.

Table 1. Summary of budget proposals to be funded from reserves

Proposal	2022-2023 revenue budget impact
1.Transport: Gap Analysis	£100,000
2.Transport: Climate Citizens’ Forum	£50,000
3. Homes: Baseline Study	£217,000
4. Prevention and Early Intervention: Child poverty and Public Health	£8,000,000
5.Transport: guarantee Bus Back Better funding	Up to £17,674,000

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

- Highlighted that the amendment set out a plan for how the Council might deliver sufficient decarbonisation of Surrey’s transport and homes, the level of ambition depended on funding which was vital to ensure that no one is left behind.
- The budget did not include specific plans on what was needed to transform transport or housing in Surrey which combined accounted for two thirds of Surrey’s climate footprint.
- Noted that the Council had consulted on the draft Surrey Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) but had not yet identified the level of changes needed across Surrey to ensure that the Council would meet its climate targets.
- Residents responded to the budget consultation calling for more local participation in decision-making and the proposed Climate Citizens’ Forum was a response to that, having a better understanding of what it would take for behaviour change in transport would help ensure that investments in infrastructure and bus routes would deliver on their aims.
- Whilst the Council had contracted Action Surrey who had funded the retrofit of 523 homes, but there was no overall plan to decarbonise Surrey’s homes.

- Research in 2020 showed that 62% of all Surrey's homes had an energy ranking of 'D' or worse and the Government said that all should be ranked C by 2035 and all those in fuel poverty households by 2030 - equivalent to 212,000 homes.
- The amendment called on the Council to commission a study to drive forward a plan of how the Council would decarbonise housing such as through home improvements, reducing the energy bill by £500 of an average home.
- The budget stressed the need to improve people's health and wellbeing but Surrey received less public health grant per head than elsewhere - 15% less than in 2014 - and the Council does not top that up.
- The amendment sought to address that public health grant shortfall by proposing £8 million to be placed in a reserve budget alongside the commitment to mental health, to jointly deliver public and mental health and the early intervention of Children's Services.
- That Surrey needed to 'Bus Back Better' regardless of whether the Government fully funds the Council's bid to transform bus travel or not.
- To deliver the Council's current ambitions the Council needed new thinking - such as the Leader's suggestion last year for the roll out of free bus travel for all those aged under 25 years old - in order to deliver transformation and a sustainable funding model for buses in the longer-term.
- Meeting the Council's ambitions would require significant upfront investment reflected in the Council's bid for Government funding, and therefore the amendment included proposals to strengthen the Council's Green Futures programme and to widen the Council's focus on prevention.
- Noting the uncertainty of whether buses, home retrofitting, child poverty or mental health would receive Government funding, the amendment sought to ensure that all areas could be progressed together.

As seconder to the amendment, Catherine Baart made the following points:

- Noted that the proposed amendment aligned with the Council's objective of no one left behind and supported the Greener Futures agenda especially the Council's climate change targets, through decarbonising transport.
- It was vital for the Council to direct sources of funding for transport and infrastructure more effectively.
- The response to the budget survey showed that residents wanted a more active role in local decision-making and the Climate Citizens' Forum would provide a new and informal approach to achieve that as well as behaviour change.
- The house retrofit part of the budget amendment would provide a baseline to develop a roadmap of what needed to be done and the need to decarbonise heating at scale was more pressing in light of the high energy prices.
- Retrofitting homes was vital to prevent Surrey residents being left behind, through tackling health inequality and helping families struggling with fuel poverty.
- The fourth part of the budget amendment was the response to the issue that Surrey received a small amount of public health spend per head than other comparable counties and the Council did not top up that spend unlike other counties.
- Voting for the amendment would demonstrate that the Council was committed to tackling health inequality in Surrey as investment now would avoid future costs.
- Voting for the amendment to guarantee spending on the Council's first year plans for buses would demonstrate that the Council was serious about public

transport for all - highlighting Scotland's recent introduction of free bus travel for under 22 year olds.

- The proposed amendment focused on prevention to ensure that no one is left behind, responding to residents who said that they wanted more investment in preventative services.

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

- Noted that despite critical comments on the budget from the opposition groups, only the Green Party Group proposed an amendment.
- Noted disappointment that the amendment was not taken through the select committee system and had not involved the Cabinet.
- Regarding the first proposal there was no need to commission a further study as the Council had collated information, the Surrey Transport Plan report that went to the Cabinet in June 2021 had identified the work that was underway and pulled together the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan, the work on electric vehicle charging infrastructure and the Council's electric fleet, the Bus Service Improvement Plan, the Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) and the Council's partnership with the Boroughs and District Councils on placemaking.
- Regarding the second proposal in relation to a proposed Climate Citizens' Forum, another forum was not needed as through the work of the Greener Futures Board, the Council was engaging with a number of organisations, businesses and residents across the county to understand their concerns.
- Similarly, the Surrey Climate Change Commission had wide engagement and the once approved the LTP4 would go out for a further targeted consultation.
- Regarding the third proposal on energy retrofitting - some of that information was included in the responses under item 7 - the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan set out targets such as 20% of fuel poor homes would be decarbonised by 2025.
- Additional Government funding would be vital to accelerate decarbonisation alongside the Greener Homes Grant and the Home Upgrade Grant; and three additional officers had been funded through the Council's Transformation Fund as well as £150,000 in funding to strategically map fuel poor and off-gas homes.
- The Council would look to identify unregistered private landlords and help the Borough and District Councils to enforce the minimum energy efficiency standards.
- Regarding the fourth proposal on child poverty, highlighted the recent Cabinet report on a child poverty strategy which set out a collaborative approach and signposted the issues and set up a process for submission of business cases on future projects and scaling up community-led initiatives.
- That children's youth provision delivered via third parties had been effective and the reorganisation of children's centres and the creation of early help and family resilience services had been effective; therefore an additional £6.5 million as proposed was not needed.
- Opposed the five proposals which were all to be funded from reserves as the Council's reserves were not excessive, £25.7 million coming out of reserves would see a 17% reduction in those available balances over the first five years of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy which was unacceptable.

Four Members made the following points on the amendment:

- The Council was three years into its climate emergency, yet the budget did not reflect that emergency.

- Noted that 40% of Surrey's 6.6 million tonnes of carbon emissions came from transport, Surrey was an outlier due to more roads and cars.
- That the draft LTP4 was an ambitious plan and could deliver positive change such as cutting carbon emissions yet did not believe that the LTP4 or the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan would bring about the required behavioural change.
- The £100,000 suggested to fund a gap analysis was essential to understand the nature of the problem.
- Ensuring the behavioural change was a large challenge and supported the suggestion of setting up a Climate Citizens' Forum.
- The second largest driver of carbon emissions was Surrey's homes which generated 28% of that 6.6 million tonnes each year, only 600 homes had been upgraded out of 30,000 to be done by 2030.
- Noted disappointment as Bus Back Better was hoped to deliver better services yet was unsure whether Surrey would receive any or adequate funding.
- That the Council needed to find a way to reduce local traffic, 90% of journeys could be accommodated by other means of transport and that required behavioural change which the amendment sought to address.
- That rather than some of the Borough and District Councils like Runnymede Borough Council having to cut school bus services, the Council should accelerate the provision of multi-modal transport with buses central to that.
- Emphasised the importance of funding across Surrey - particularly north Surrey - to enable the independence across the generations such as through internet accessibility - particularly north Surrey - which consistently had minimal Government funding.
- That buses were critical to decarbonising Surrey and the service provision needed to be increased.
- Noted a negative testimony of a resident regarding their social housing.
- Moving from 58 family centres to 22 was a cost-cutting decision and the Council must focus on those most in need through prevention and would continue to work with the local Borough Council and other authorities to try to gain funding.
- Referred to the 'No One Left Behind' video introduced by the Leader which showed the work of local community foodbanks vital during the pandemic and would continue to be as a result of the increased cost of living.
- Fuel cost rises were affected by the lack of insulation and other climate change measures that the budget did not address and the amendment could.
- Surrey had many wealthy areas that were often bordering areas of deprivation.
- Unlike many of the Borough and District Councils, the Council had reserves that it could use to great effect.

Robert Hughes raised a point of order under Standing Order 22, procedural motion: "that the question be now put".

In response, the Chair highlighted that no other Members had requested to speak so she asked the proposer of the amendment to respond.

The Chair asked Jonathan Essex, as proposer of the amendment to conclude the debate:

- That the usage of foodbanks was an example of those already left behind.
- Stressed that early intervention and prevention was needed especially as a result of the pandemic, the amendment called for a review of early intervention for children, early years and teenagers; noting that mental health issues were likely a reflection of the lack of early intervention.

- Welcomed the news that the Council was planning to do a baseline study to locate the fuel poor houses in Surrey and hoped that once completed all houses would be reviewed.
- Contrary to the Leader's comment that the Council did not have to spend £25.7 million from the reserves, some of that figure might be required if Surrey was not given any funding for Bus Back Better.
- That the amendment signalled that the Government must release funding so councils could progress their work on transforming bus services.
- The amendment called for a transformation in buses and other areas listed; the Council needed to be more entrepreneurial in its approach to address the challenge of buses and needed adequate resources.

The amendment was put to the vote with 31 Members voting For, 43 voting Against and 2 Abstentions.

The following Members voted for it:

Catherine Baart, John Beckett, Amanda Boote, Stephen Cooksey, Colin Cross, Nick Darby, Fiona Davidson, Jonathan Essex, Robert Evans, Chris Farr, Paul Follows, Will Forster, Angela Goodwin, Robert King, Eber Kington, Andy MacLeod, Ernest Mallett MBE, Michaela Martin, Jan Mason, Steven McCormick, Julia McShane, Carla Morson, George Potter, Catherine Powell, Penny Rivers, John Robini, Joanne Sexton, Lance Spencer, Liz Townsend, Hazel Watson, Fiona White.

The following Members voted against it:

Maureen Attewell, Ayesha Azad, Steve Bax, Jordan Beech, Luke Bennett, Liz Bowes, Natalie Bramhall, Helyn Clack, Clare Curran, Paul Deach, Kevin Deanus, John Furey, Matt Furniss, Tim Hall, David Harmer, Edward Hawkins, Marisa Heath, Trefor Hogg, Robert Hughes, Jonathan Hulley, Saj Hussain, Frank Kelly, Riasat Khan, Rachael Lake, Victor Lewanski, David Lewis (Cobham), David Lewis (Camberley West), Scott Lewis, Andy Lynch, Cameron McIntosh, Sinead Mooney, Mark Nuti, John O'Reilly, Tim Oliver, Rebecca Paul, Becky Rush, Tony Samuels, Lesley Steeds, Mark Sugden, Richard Tear, Denise Turner-Stewart, Jeremy Webster, Keith Witham.

The following Members abstained:

Nick Harrison, Chris Townsend.

Therefore it was **RESOLVED** that:

The amendment was lost.

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

- Noted that it was uncharacteristic that the Liberal Democrats and Labour Party were supporting reductions in Council Tax and that it was delusional to believe that they were the supporters of the Council taxpayer.
- That the opposition groups had argued for more spending yet had not said how that would be funded.
- That the opposition groups had not made it clear what they were objecting to, questioned whether it was the 0.99% increase for inflation and paying the living wage or the 3% for ASC precept, or the 1% increase for mental health.

- That the budget was credible and would deliver for Surrey's residents, leaving no one behind.
- Recognised the need to some extent for budget cuts due to the continued inadequate funding from Government, and the Council's history of financing and its over-cautious approach to reserves.
- Noted concern on the impact on Children's Services and care services due to the Council's cuts to its budget annually, referred to reducing the demand concerning Looked After Children through new practice models.
- Had seen little evidence of early intervention being achieved in adults and children's care despite dedicated funding annually.
- Welcomed the plans for additional places for children with SEND, however a lot of those places had yet to be delivered and there was a reliance on increasing the use of foster carers.
- Highlighted the high cost of agency staff as asked under item 7 and noted the difficulty in reducing those costs.
- That taxation had been increased through the backdoor with increases at local government level contrary to the national promise by the Conservative Party to cut taxes.
- Highlighted that if the Council did not deliver on what it has outlined in the budget, it would not make those savings nor carry out its functions.
- That over the past seventeen years the Council had built only seven extra care homes yet its aim was to build 725 houses, once built the Council could save between £20 and £36 million a year.
- Questioned the no one is left behind rhetoric, noting a divisional example where in West Molesey over Christmas in conjunction with a local vicar, had faced obstruction from the Council in housing three rough sleepers in a Council-owned disused building.
- Noted that since 2018, the Council's Transformation Programme had delivered £240 million in efficiencies, yet Members from the opposition groups failed to recognise that through that work and financial management the Council had built a strong financial base to deliver its services.
- That the Council had built back depleted reserves and undertaken investment all at the same time as reducing financial risk and delivering service improvement.
- That the Conservative Party administration had continued to act responsibly with taxpayers' money delivering services efficiently.
- That the Council's financial resilience was evident through the pandemic where services continued to be delivered and staff worked tirelessly to protect and support Surrey's communities and businesses.
- That the Council recognised the financial pressures faced by many and that the health and wellbeing of Surrey's residents was of paramount importance, the proposed 4.99% increase in Council Tax would be invested in supporting vulnerable residents.
- Commended the ambition of no one is left behind in the Community Vision for Surrey in 2030 but noted concerns in whether the Council's actions and budget would meet that ambition.
- Noted the cynicism in politics due to the contradiction between what politicians say and what they do and questioned how the Council was matching its words with its actions.
- Having asked at question at the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee on what the £13.8 million of proposed efficiencies in that directorate would mean, the Equalities Impact Assessments in the budget highlighted the multitude of groups affected.

- That the negative impact cited in respect of children and young people was the reduction of services to those Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) therefore having a more severe impact on children from lower income households.
- Noted that the Disabled Children's Partnership had undertaken an investigation which showed that Surrey was ranked as the worst area in England in real term cuts to disabled children's services between 2015-2020 with cuts of £7.8 million.
- Noted an example of lived experience from a local resident who fostered children with disabilities and complex health problems, who had explained that disabled children in Surrey wait months for assessments and equipment.
- Noted testimonies from parents about the negative consequences of implementing efficiencies in Home to School Transport for SEND children, in one case a child lost a full year of schooling.
- That such situations whilst not intentional, happened too frequently and in relation to the budget questioned how committed the Council was to no one is left behind.
- Supported the budget and the Capital Programme; and a study of the highways, transport and infrastructure projects demonstrated a commitment to spend on projects and delivered on the Council's promise to prioritise infrastructure plans to meet the needs of residents and to enable the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan.
- That the key capital spending commitment of £125 million this financial year towards highways, transport and environment included the funding of £4 million towards the River Thames Scheme and £16.1 million for the A320 north of Woking and Junction 11 of M25.
- That £43.8 million over a five-year period would be used to fund the A320 north of Woking and Junction 11 of M25 that would benefit local residents and looked forward to working with the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure.
- Emphasised that the Council was delivering key infrastructure projects for the residents of north-west Surrey.
- Welcomed the additional £1.5 million in funding to deliver the Farnham town centre infrastructure programme, asked Members who represented Farnham to back the budget and the investment in the town centre.
- Highlighted that all Members were Corporate Parents, the Council was committed to giving children and young people in Surrey's care the best opportunities in life after having faced negative experiences.
- That the Council had a duty of care to children's home staff and foster carers and it was positive to see money being put aside to address the long-term lack of maintenance in Surrey's children's homes and minimal disruption would be vital.
- Noted that the Fostering Network's 'State of the Nation's Foster Care 2021 report' stated that 44% of foster carers reported deterioration in their mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic.
- Questioned recent efficiencies as during the pandemic Surrey's provision of transport for foster carers to contact with birth parents was suspended, that suspension had been made permanent and was costly to those affected; that decision needed to be revisited.
- That the Council must support Surrey's foster carers, the cost of independent foster care provision would be approximately £30,000 more per child per year compared to £4,000 for the cost of transport.
- That more foster carers in Surrey were needed, Surrey was significantly below the national average for in-house places and significantly above the national average for the number of its Looked After Children out of the county.

- That efficiencies in Children's Services do not cover the coming pressures, efficiencies were not met last year and around £13 million of efficiencies were likely not to be met this year due to trying to bring back children and young people who had been sent out of the county to receive care which costed a large amount of money over many years.
- That the Council did not have the facilities such as mainstream schools and staff or adequately run children's homes in some cases, to bring those children and young people back into the county.
- That the budget included an alarming 15% reduction in services for children Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), the budget was leaving its most vulnerable children behind and the Leader needed to address that immediately.
- Noted that all council budgets were required to balance by law and the key issue was the quality of the budget reductions to offset the pressures on salaries inflation.
- That the budget reductions totalled £46 million, £5 million more than the current year whilst the directorates were expecting to miss their targets by £8 million.
- Regarding the achievability of the efficiencies, only £6 million were rated green and £11 million were rated red or difficult to deliver.
- That having allowed for inflation and demand increases of £24 million in ASC, the Council was proposing to offset by savings and commissioning reviews of packages and better purchasing techniques; was doubtful of making £9 million in efficiencies after having made savings year after year.
- Noted the reoccurrence of the efficiencies needed in the Resolution of Continuing Health Care disputes, which was £2.5 million for 2022/23.
- That there were £14 million in savings for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning of which half were rated as red.
- The Council recognised the £6 million in pressures due to the increased numbers of Looked After Children and inflation, yet offset that with £6 million in savings nearly all rated red.
- That the Council would be judged by reversing the Ofsted 'inadequate' rating in Children's Services and responded to the Leader's challenge of providing an alternative, that the £4 million annual spend for Your Fund Surrey could be used to support the Council's vulnerable children.
- Regarding SEND, it was questionable that despite the Council facing £32 million in deficit this year, it was on track to deliver a balanced position.
- That the budget was not credible as whilst it was probable that there were sufficient contingencies to achieve a balanced outcome in the current year, the savings needed in some critical services were unachievable or unacceptable.
- That the Eco Park remained a substantial risk in the budget, the Council had suspended £10 million in Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Private Finance Initiative (PFI) credits in the budget pending completion of the Eco Park which was started in 1999; having received £137 million PFI credits so far, if the project was not delivered the Council was liable to repay some or the entire PFI grant received to date.
- Noted the scaremongering over ten years ago by the opposition groups at the time concerning one quarter of the fifty libraries in Surrey to close, currently there were over fifty libraries in Surrey thanks to previous Conservative Party administrations finding innovative ways to deliver more services to residents.
- Praised the work of the innovative Your Fund Surrey through which dozens of local community projects were coming through for consideration, many of which might not have had a chance to receive funding from elsewhere.
- Welcomed the financial support of a grant of over £500,000 that the Council was giving to its Citizens Advice charities across the county.

The meeting was adjourned at 12.13 pm to resolve technical issues concerning the microphones.

The meeting was resumed at 12.20 pm.

The Leader raised a point of order under Standing Order 22, procedural motion: “that the question be now put”, which was seconded by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources and over ten Members stood in support of the procedural motion.

The Chair called for the meeting to be adjourned for lunch to seek advice from the Council’s Monitoring Officer and to resolve the reoccurring technical issues concerning the microphones.

The meeting was adjourned for lunch at 12.25 pm.

Chris Farr left the meeting.

The meeting was resumed at 13.08 pm.

The Chair explained that the microphone system had been restored and that following a discussion with the Leader and the Minority Group Leaders, the Leader had rescinded his procedural motion. She noted that the agenda order would be changed as following the conclusion of items 5 and 6, items 9 to 16 would be taken first as they required the Council’s approval, before returning to items 7 and 8.

Continuing the debate on the original budget proposal and recommendations as published in the agenda, five Members spoke on it:

- Questioned what the point was of the debate with Members of the Conservative Party praising the budget and the opposition groups challenging and posing amendments to the budget, votes would then be made on party lines.
- Stressed that politics was not a game, it was about people’s lives and it was not credible and was dishonest to say that no one is left behind.
- Noted a divisional example of parents of young children who had been suffering since the Boxgrove Children’s Centre was closed three years ago.
- Highlighted the need to have social care and the problems of poverty, hunger and inexcusable wait times for disabled adults and children seeking diagnoses or support; short-term cuts by the Council were more costly longer-term.
- Highlighted the empty Debenhams owned by the Council in Winchester which was a waste of taxpayers’ money.
- Highlighted that Woodhatch Place was expensive, largely empty of staff and was not fit for purpose.
- That despite Members and select committees frequently pointing out the problems and ways to do things better, the Conservative Party voted down other voices.
- Questioned what motivated the Members of the Conservative Party, noting their record of cuts to services, the mismanagement of taxpayers’ money and empty slogans such as no one is left behind; appearance was valued over substance.
- Highlighted the importance of investing to save, hoping that the Council would implement a greater extent in the coming financial year and changed the way it operated particularly concerning the highways.
- That a lack of investment had resulted in more revenue expenditure being incurred concerning two highways examples: the A24 in South Leatherhead

near Givons Grove and the A24 near Dorking railway station which had multiple surface dressings and a partial re-surfacing.

- That despite the Leader's focus on the aspiration that no one is left behind, due to increases in energy prices and inflation it was inevitable that many children would suffer this financial year and would be left behind.
- Noted personal experiences of working with the Council's social services.
- Responded to a previous comment made by another Member, noting that he as a Member of the Liberal Democrats was not delusional.
- That in the last financial year the Council spent £220 million on Children's Services and the officers had identified the need to increase the budget by £18.4 million in the coming financial year to cover the expected increase in numbers of Looked After Children expected and inflationary costs.
- That even with a 4.99% increase in Council Tax the Council would not have that money outlined above.
- That the cost of providing support to Surrey's most vulnerable children and families was related to staff costs, those would have to reduce.
- Noted several areas of concern in the budget including of the impact of efficiencies totalling £13.8 million such as in Looked After Children, Home to School Transport, staff realignment and restructuring; the cuts would leave children and families behind.
- Responded to a previous comment made by another Member, noting that Members representing Farnham were pleased with the Farnham town centre infrastructure programme, which had faced difficulties in the form of local opposition and where the funding would come from; credited the Leader on the progress of the infrastructure programme.
- Noted disappointment in Your Fund Surrey.
- Responded to a previous comment by another Member, noting that the Residents' Association and Independents Group does not propose an alternative budget because at every Council meeting the Conservative Party votes down opposing views.
- That following years of poor financial management by successive Conservative Party administrations and the publication of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) report, lessons had not been learnt.
- That the Council was not efficiently managing its resources and was still making mistakes costing taxpayers money, noting examples including: the debt repayment strategy was described by Grant Thornton as imprudent, a commercial property strategy was now worth 50% less than the original purchase price, the costly failed purchase of a property for a headquarters in Woking leading to the purchase of Woodhatch Place which was inaccessible so the Council was subsidising taxis to get staff to work, and an IT project £3 million over budget and required an additional spend of £700,000.
- Noted the usual response to solving problems whereby the Council had recently appointed and would be shortly appointing another director earning over £100,000.
- Challenged the Leader's comment in his statement whereby he said that every single penny spent was designed to improve the lives of residents, that was not the case as pointed out by previous Members that there had been a series of financial failings and failed strategies in the last year.
- That residents were calling for competent financial management and Surrey's most vulnerable residents were owed better support from the Council including accessible funding opportunities, new social and educational policies that do not harm those most in need, a strategy that would ensure well-maintained children's homes and safe streets through the funding to end the part-night street lighting switch off.

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

- That by not supporting the budget those Members were not supporting Surrey's residents.
- Accepted that the administration did not always get it right and had asked for Members' support and ideas through established processes such as through the select committee system, the Cabinet and the Council.
- That no one is left behind was an ongoing ambition, questioned what the ambitions were of the opposition groups.
- Agreed that politics was not a game and was about people's lives, little had been said by the opposition groups on the 3% for ASC and the 1% for mental health which would be used to support Surrey's 40,000 vulnerable residents.
- Highlighted that despite the challenging past two years of the pandemic, the Council had delivered a multitude of projects and supported its vulnerable residents; recognised that there had been delays in some cases and things that could have been done better.
- Highlighted the complex context of a £1 billion budget to deliver for 1.2 million Surrey residents.
- That the budget identified how the Council would spend that money and alternative budgets could be proposed.
- That referring to what had happened in the past was pointless, it was imperative that the Council looked to the future and delivered its series of programmes, residents and the select committees would hold the administration to account on that delivery.
- Responded to a previous comment by another member noting that the Council had a Communications team to disseminate the truth to residents.
- Referring to a press release by another Member on the Levelling Up White Paper which referred to a 'power grab', that having looked up the definition for devolution it was about devolving powers from central Government to local or government rather than a 'power grab'.
- That a County Deal would be better for Surrey's residents.
- Clarified that three Government cabinet ministers were Surrey MPs.
- That he would pick up any of those other issues raised through the correct process and was happy to speak to any Member with concerns or suggestions.

After the debate the Chair called the recommendations, which included the Council Tax precept proposals, and a recorded vote was taken with 43 Members voting For, 31 voting Against and 1 Abstentions.

The following Members voted for it:

Maureen Attewell, Ayesha Azad, Steve Bax, Jordan Beech, Luke Bennett, Liz Bowes, Natalie Bramhall, Helyn Clack, Clare Curran, Paul Deach, Kevin Deanus, John Furey, Matt Furniss, Tim Hall, David Harmer, Edward Hawkins, Marisa Heath, Trefor Hogg, Robert Hughes, Jonathan Hulley, Saj Hussain, Frank Kelly, Riasat Khan, Rachael Lake, Victor Lewanski, David Lewis (Cobham), David Lewis (Camberley West), Scott Lewis, Andy Lynch, Cameron McIntosh, Sinead Mooney, Mark Nuti, John O'Reilly, Tim Oliver, Rebecca Paul, Becky Rush, Tony Samuels, Lesley Steeds, Mark Sugden, Richard Tear, Denise Turner-Stewart, Jeremy Webster, Keith Witham.

The following Members voted against it:

Catherine Baart, John Beckett, Amanda Boote, Stephen Cooksey, Colin Cross, Nick Darby, Fiona Davidson, Jonathan Essex, Robert Evans, Paul Follows, Will Forster, Angela Goodwin, Nick Harrison, Robert King, Eber Kington, Andy MacLeod, Michaela Martin, Jan Mason, Steven McCormick, Julia McShane, Carla Morson, George Potter, Catherine Powell, Penny Rivers, John Robini, Joanne Sexton, Lance Spencer, Chris Townsend, Liz Townsend, Hazel Watson, Fiona White.

The following Members abstained:

Ernest Mallett MBE.

Scott Lewis left the meeting at 1.33 pm.

Therefore it was **RESOLVED** that:

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

1. The Executive Director of Resources' (Section 151 Officer) conclusion that estimates included in the Final Budget Report and Medium-Term Financial Strategy are sufficiently robust in setting the budget for 2022/23; and
2. That it is the view of the Executive Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer), that the level of reserves is adequate to meet the Council's needs for 2022/23. These reserves and contingencies include the following amounts, (totalling 86.0m) set aside specifically to provide financial resilience:
 - a General Fund (£28m).
 - Specific contingencies built into the 2022/23 budget (£20m); and
 - Unused contingency brought forward from previous years (at least £38m depending on 2021/22 outturn).

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

3. The net revenue budget requirement be set at £1,042.0 million (net cost of services after service specific government grants) for 2022/23 (Annex B), subject to confirmation of the Final Local Government Financial Settlement.
4. The total Council Tax Funding Requirement be set at £829.7 million for 2022/23. This is based on a council tax increase of 4.99%, made up of an increase in the level of core council tax of 1.99% to cover core Council services, including 1% for mental health, and an increase of 3% in the precept proposed by Central Government to cover the growing cost of Adult Social Care (Annex E).
5. For the purpose of section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council formally determines that the increase in core council tax is not such as to trigger a referendum (i.e., not greater than 2%).
6. Sets the Surrey County Council precept for Band D Council Tax at £1,626.39, which represents a 4.99% uplift. This is a rise of £1.48 a week from the 2021/22 precept of £1,549.08. This includes £185.48 for the Adult Social Care precept, which has increased by £46.47. A full list of bands is as follows:

Valuation Band	Core Precept	ASC Precept	Overall Precept
A	£960.60	£123.66	£1,084.26
B	£1,120.70	£144.27	£1,264.97
C	£1,280.80	£164.88	£1,445.68
D	£1,440.91	£185.48	£1,626.39
E	£1,761.11	£226.70	£1,987.81
F	£2,081.31	£267.92	£2,349.23
G	£2,401.51	£309.14	£2,710.65
H	£2,881.82	£370.96	£3,252.78

7. That the 4.99% increase in Council Tax will be deployed as follows:
- 0.99% increase to fund the increased cost of delivering services
 - 3.00% increase to fund additional spend in adult and children's social care
 - 1.00% increase to fund additional investment in mental health.

Across this investment, the 3% increase in Adult Social Care Precept will be directed entirely to Adult Social Care.

8. Delegated powers to the Leader and Executive Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer) to finalise budget proposals and recommendations to County Council, updated to take into account new information in the Final Local Government Finance Settlement;
9. The Total Schools Budget of £575.2 million to meet the Council's statutory requirement on schools funding (as set out in Section 9 of the 2022/23 Final Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2026/27).
10. The overall indicative Budget Envelopes for Executive Directorates and individual services for the 2022/23 budget (Annex B).
11. The total £1,909.6 million proposed five-year Capital Programme (comprising £1,031.2m of budget and £878.4.9m pipeline) and approves the £212.1 million Capital Budget in 2022/23 (Annex C).
12. The Council's refreshed Transformation Programme (as set out in section 3 of 2022/23 Final Budget Report and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2026/27)
13. Noted that the investment in Transformation required to deliver improved outcomes and financial benefits is built into the proposed Medium-Term Financial Strategy (as set out in section 3 of 2022/23 Final Budget Report and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2026/27).

Capital and Investment Strategies: That the following be approved:

14. The Capital, Investment and Treasury Management Strategy which provides an overview of how risks associated with capital expenditure, financing and treasury will be managed as well as how they contribute towards the delivery of services (Annex F).

15. The policy for making a prudent level of revenue provision for the repayment of debt (the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy) (Annex G).

6/22 CHANGES TO CABINET PORTFOLIOS AND APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES [Item 6]

The Leader introduced the report, highlighting that Kevin Deanus had been appointed as the Cabinet Member for Community Protection and Rebecca Paul had been appointed as the Deputy Cabinet Member for Levelling Up. He noted that in addition to the updated Cabinet Portfolios he had appointed Jordan Beech as the Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways.

RESOLVED:

1. That Council noted the updated Cabinet Portfolios (Annexes 1 and 2).
2. That Council noted Rebecca Paul's appointment by the Leader as the Deputy Cabinet Member for Levelling Up on 30 November 2021.
3. That as a result of the above, David Harmer was appointed as a Select Committee Task Group Lead (Vice-Chair) to the Resources and Performance Select Committee.
4. That Alison Todd (née Griffiths) was appointed as Vice-Chair of Spelthorne Joint Committee.
5. That Council noted Jordan Beech's appointment by the Leader as the Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways.

7/22 RATIFICATION OF ORIGINAL MOTIONS FROM INFORMAL REMOTE COUNTY COUNCIL MEETING ON 18 JANUARY 2022 [Item 9]

Items 9 to 16 were taken before items 7 and 8.

The Chair introduced the report and referring to the minutes of the Council - Informal meeting held on 18 January 2022 she highlighted that Jonathan Essex had raised a typing error on page 30 of the Supplementary Agenda (Items 2 and 4) concerning the Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Lifelong Learning's Cabinet Member Briefing under item 2: Members' Question Time, which would be noted in the minutes for this item (with additional words in bold/underlined and deletions crossed through):

“30th November 2001” to be changed to “30th November 2021”

RESOLVED:

1. That the County Council approved the minutes (Annex A) as a true record of the informal remote County Council meeting held on 18 January 2022.
2. That the County Council formally approved the following outcomes from the debate on Original motions held at the informal remote Council meeting on 18 January 2022:
 - i. Motion 4(i) as amended by Matt Furniss was supported and approved.
 - ii. Motion 4(ii) standing in the name of Catherine Baart was lost.
 - iii. Motion 4(iii) standing in the name of Catherine Powell was withdrawn.
 - iv. Motion 4(iv) standing in the name of Bernie Muir was supported and approved.
 - v. Motion 4(v) standing in the name of Rebecca Paul was supported and approved.

8/22 REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE: EXTERNAL AUDIT PROCUREMENT [Item 10]

The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee introduced the report and noted that at its meeting on 29 November 2021 the Audit and Governance Committee agreed that the Council should opt into the “appointing person” national auditor appointment arrangements, established by the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the appointment of external auditors to the Council for a five-year period from 2023/24.

RESOLVED:

That the Council approved the decision to opt into the PSAA sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for five financial years from 1 April 2023.

9/22 REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE: ANTIFRAUD AND CORRUPTION STRATEGY AND FRAMEWORK 2021-2024 [Item 11]

The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee introduced the report and noted that at its meeting on 29 November 2021 the Audit and Governance Committee agreed the latest version of the Antifraud and Corruption Strategy and Framework 2021-2024, which aligned its pillars to the local government Fighting Fraud and Corruption strategy (2020) which included two additional areas of activity of ‘Govern’ and ‘Protect’.

RESOLVED:

That the Council noted that the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy and Framework had been reviewed and agreed by the Audit and Governance Committee on 29 November 2021 and that the Constitution would be updated with the new strategy.

10/22 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBER TO THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE [Item 12]

The Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee introduced the report and referred Members to the October 2021 Council report where the Council agreed to the appointment of an Independent Member to the Audit and Governance Committee. He noted that following an extensive recruitment process, the recruitment panel thought that Terry Price was well-qualified and unanimously agreed to offer him the role; to which he had accepted.

RESOLVED:

That the Council agreed to the appointment of Terry Price as the Independent Member of the Audit and Governance Committee for a period of 4 years.

11/22 SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21 [Item 13]

The Chair of the Select Committee Chairs & Vice-Chairs’ Group introduced the report:

- Noted that great progress had been made in the Council’s scrutiny function for example in scrutinising the budget and that scrutiny was taken more seriously.
- Praised Democratic Services officers for their support.

- Noted that Members were undertaking pre-meetings to prepare their questioning.
- Was pleased that more opposition Members were involved as Chairs and Vice-Chairs and was pleased to work alongside the Vice-Chair of the Group.
- Noted that whilst the select committees were doing more and better scrutiny, they needed to make more recommendations rather than noting reports.
- Noted that more needed to be done to encourage public involvement in scrutiny.
- Welcomed Member feedback.

The Vice-Chair of the Group and the Chair of the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee noted that:

- Endorsed the above comments and noted the important role played by backbench Members in the scrutiny function.
- Highlighted that a second report would be produced in May and would outline the work of each of the four select committees.
- Noted that going forward, each of the select committees' Chairs and Vice-Chairs would report to the Council and be held accountable by Members.
- Welcomed the cross-party membership and chairmanship of the select committees.
- Welcomed the cooperation from the Cabinet and the Leader; but implored the Executive to ensure that reports are provided to select committees in a timely manner so it could undertake its role effectively.

Members made the following comments:

- The Chair welcomed the debate at yesterday's Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee and encouraged Members to watch meetings of the select committees.
- Emphasised that scrutiny was an essential function of the Council and for it to be undertaken effectively Members needed to be well-informed.
- Noted that the report showed how scrutiny had continued to improve, noting the excellent induction programme and detailed reports from officers.
- Highlighted the work of the No Wrong Door Task Group which looked at a different way of delivering services for children and young adults aged between 12-25 years old who were either in care or on the edge of care and that witness testimonies were a powerful driver in deciding on the right approach.
- Noted that there was room for more progress and it was vital to implement the recommendations by being even more outward looking and having more engagement with stakeholders.

RESOLVED:

That Members noted the progress made by the Council's scrutiny function, the examples of good practice and support the next areas of improvement identified by the report.

12/22 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY REVIEW 2021-23 [Item 14]

The Chair of the Member Development Steering Group (MDSG) introduced the report:

- Thanked officers for their work despite the challenges of the pandemic, he noted the induction process for new Members last year, the Member Development Sessions every Monday and the Members' Portal which he encouraged Members to actively engage in.
- Noted the positive cross-party work of the MDSG, the report produced included the move to Woodhatch Place and a more agile way of working through IT.
- Invited new ways of thinking on Member development going forward, noting that the MDSG were utilising internal resources and external help such as from the Local Government Association.
- Noted that going forward the review would be received by Council biannually.

The Chair endorsed the above comments and she welcomed the programme of Member seminars and workshops which had been excellent. She thanked the officers involved and also as a member of the MDSG, she welcomed the openness of the cross-party discussions with Members.

RESOLVED:

That the revised Member Development Strategy and its appendices were approved by County Council.

13/22 REPORT OF THE CABINET [Item 15]

The Leader presented the report of the Cabinet meetings held on 26 October 2021, 30 November 2021, 21 December 2021 and 25 January 2022.

Recommendations on Policy Framework Documents:

30 November 2021:

- A. Coordinated Admissions Scheme for September 2023

RESOLVED:

1. That Council noted that due to the postponement of the 14 December Council meeting and the deadline for publishing the coordinated admissions scheme, this item was approved by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of Council, the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer under Standing Order 54.

25 January 2022:

- B. 2022/23 Final Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2026/27 [Agenda Item 5 on the agenda]

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations regarding this item had already been approved under item 5.

- C. Admission Arrangements for Surrey's Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools for September 2023

RESOLVED:

That the County Council agreed:

1. That priority for children who have the school as their 'nearest school' is removed from the admission criteria for Hurst Park Primary School, Langshott Primary School, Meath Green Infant School, Tillingbourne Junior School and Wallace Fields Junior School for 2023 admission, as indicated in Enclosure 1.
2. That a catchment area is introduced for Walton on the Hill Primary School for 2023 admission to replace 'nearest school', as set out in Enclosure 1 and Appendix 5.
3. That a nodal point to measure home to school distance is introduced for Reigate Priory School for 2023 admission, as set out in Section 8 of Enclosure 1.
4. That the Published Admission Number for Year 3 at West Ashted Primary School is reduced from 30 to 2 for 2023 admission, as set out in Appendix 1 of Enclosure 1.
5. That a Published Admission Number of 4 is introduced for admission to Year 3 at Leatherhead Trinity Primary School for 2023 admission, as set out in Appendix 1 of Enclosure 1.
6. That a Published Admission Number of 2 is introduced for admission to Year 3 at Felbridge Primary School for 2023 admission, as set out in Appendix 1 of Enclosure 1.
7. That priority is given to children of a member of staff for entry to a nursery school for 2023 admission as set out in Section 20 of Enclosure 1.
8. That a supplementary information form is introduced for families applying on the basis of exceptional social/medical need for 2023 admission, as set out in Appendix 6 of Enclosure 1.
9. That the Published Admission Numbers (PANs) for September 2023 for all other community and voluntary controlled schools are determined as they are set out in Appendix 1 to Enclosure 1.
10. That the aspects of Surrey's admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for September 2023 for which no change has been consulted on, are agreed as set out in Enclosure 1 and its appendices. (as set out in the Cabinet paper from 25 January 2022)

D. No One Left Behind: Child Poverty in Surrey

RESOLVED:

That County Council:

1. Noted the data research review on poverty, with emphasis on children, in Surrey as requested in a previous Council motion.
2. Endorsed and adopted the proposed framework, approach and themes as the basis for the Council's strategic response to child poverty in the county. (as set out in the Cabinet paper from 25 January 2022)

Reports for Information/Discussion:

26 October 2021:

E. Surrey's Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan (CCDP)

- F. National Bus Strategy - Bus Back Better - A Bus Service Improvement Plan for Surrey
- G. Acquisition of Land at Tice's Meadow, Farnham

30 November 2021:

- H. 2022/23 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2026/27
- I. Libraries Transformation Update and the Next Phase, Modernising our Library Estate
- J. Transformation of Surrey Children's Residential Services

21 December 2021:

- K. Surrey Forum and Delivering Through Partnerships
- L. Annual Procurement Forward Plan 2022/23

25 January 2022:

- M. Changes to Surrey's Community Recycling Centre Policies
- N. Quarterly Report on Decisions Taken Under Special Urgency Arrangements: 4 October 2021 - 31 January 2022

RESOLVED:

1. That Council noted that there had been no urgent decision in the last three months.
2. That the report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 26 October 2021, 30 November 2021, 21 December 2021 and 25 January 2022 be adopted.

14/22 MINUTES OF CABINET MEETINGS [Item 16]

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.

15/22 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME [Item 7]

Items 7 and 8 were after items 9 to 16

Questions:

Notice of twenty questions had been received.

The questions and replies were published in the supplementary agenda on 7 February 2022. A number of supplementary questions were asked and a summary of the main points is set out below.

(Q3) Robert Evans asked the Cabinet Member for Environment whether she was aware that most scientists agree that bees across Surrey and nationally were dying for a number of reasons including habitat destruction and pesticides; and asked whether she would contact Surrey's eleven MPs to stop the use of pesticides which were harmful to bees.

The Chair asked the Cabinet Member to confirm whether there would be beehives at Woodhatch Place.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Environment explained that her day job was in conservation and biodiversity, she was happy to contact Surrey's eleven MPs and national government political parties to ensure that they were aware of Surrey's pollinator strategy and to reconsider the use of harmful pesticides to bees. She noted that she did not know the circumstances around the emergency use of the pesticide in January 2022, which she noted should be used as infrequently as possible.

The Cabinet Member responded that she was supportive of the above proposal of having beehives at Woodhatch Place as part of the Council's pollinator strategy.

(Q4) Jonathan Essex had no supplementary question.

Ernest Mallett MBE asked the Leader for a further explanation as to why the removal of the highways functions from Local and Joint Committees through new engagement methods would be better than the existing decision-making structure, as Local and Joint Committees currently engaged closely with residents. He asked whether the reason for the removal of the highways functions was that it was preferable to remove top-level decisions away from Local and Joint Committees.

John Beckett asked why none of the Local and Joint Committees' chairmen or vice-chairmen were involved in the decision to remove the highways functions and sought assurance that they would be involved in decision-making processes going forward.

In response, the Leader noted that the matter was discussed at the recent meeting of the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee and that he welcomed any representations on the matter at the February meeting of the Cabinet.

(Q5) Catherine Baart asked the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources whether she saw a role for residents to contribute to the Twin Track approach.

In response, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources explained that the point of the Twin Track approach was to provide time to develop an approach to savings and efficiencies for the future. Projects and programmes would be scrutinised and where necessary there would be consultation with residents.

(Q7) Angela Goodwin asked the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure whether he would provide a breakdown of how the additional £3 million in funding for road safety would be spent and where.

Jonathan Essex highlighted that the written response noted that there were 93 twenty miles per hour (20 mph) schemes across Surrey but the map of where those schemes were showed that there were twenty-five single streets and thirty zones. He asked how those figures added up to 93 and whether the amount of schemes which covered 1.7% of Surrey's highways by length, were dealing with the issue of speeding across Surrey or whether the Cabinet Member saw speeding to be an issue only on the particular roads with schemes.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure noted that he would provide the breakdown of the additional £3 million in funding for road safety.

The Cabinet Member assumed that the Member had read his Twitter feed recently as those figures looked familiar. He would provide the Member with an updated list of all the 20 mph zones and he explained that 20 mph zones do not alone reduce speeding, as speed reduction came from working with the police and through having the correct engineering measures in place.

Jonathan Essex clarified that he had not read any Twitter feeds but had worked those figures out himself, he noted the importance of being honest and truthful in how Members refer to each other.

The Chair agreed that Members must be courteous when referring to one another.

(Q9) Stephen Cooksey asked the Leader to clarify what the specific uses were for the additional £200,000 in the budget for the Communications, Engagement & Public Affairs directorate and how could that increase be justified in the current financial climate.

Lance Spencer asked whether he believed that the budget was sufficient to engage with residents to ensure the necessary behaviour change required for the LTP4 and the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan.

In response, the Leader noted that he would provide the breakdown following the meeting on what the additional £200,000 would be spent on. He emphasised the importance for the Council to provide timely and accurate information to residents through its Communications team, during the pandemic the Covid-19 Top Lines Brief was excellent and well-received.

The Leader noted that there were separate communications plans for delivering the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan for example and that ensuring behaviour change through communications and education was vital for residents to reduce their carbon footprint.

(Q10) Fiona White welcomed the Joint Venture which was an innovative way to address the issue. She highlighted the ambition to save money in agency spend as that would be important regarding the Council's revenue budget and she asked the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources whether she would ensure that all Members receive regular reports on those savings achieved and at what rate.

Robert King asked the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member if she could comment on whether the high use of agency staff was one of the main factors for poor real-term pay offerings in the budget, and whether any future savings would be used to give the lowest paid Council staff a real-term pay rise.

In response, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources thanked the Member for acknowledging the innovation that the Council was making. She noted that the response provided highlighted the Council's improved position by £10 million for 2021/22. She explained that the majority of the spend was on social workers and that the ongoing monitoring of how the Council was performing was included in her monthly financial reporting to the Cabinet and could be reviewed by the relevant select committee.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member clarified that the spend on agency staff had no link to the Council's spend and its pay offering to its officers, she noted that the budget included a pay increase for the Council's lowest paid staff.

(Q11) Lance Spencer noted that he calculated the number of people in Horsell Village that were affected by 20 mph schemes and that totalled 600 residents, that would mean that approximately across Surrey the 93, 20 mph schemes that had taken eight years to deliver would have benefited 60,000 residents. At the current speed, Surrey would have delivered 80% of its 20 mph schemes by 2140. He asked whether the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure would agree that the current slow speed was not consistent with the draft LTP4 or the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan.

Catherine Baart noted that the draft LTP4 stated that 20 mph would be the default speed limit for busy town centres and residential roads, and she asked how that would be implemented proactively once the LTP4 was approved.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure did not agree with the Member's comment regarding the current speed of implementing 20 mph schemes.

The Cabinet Member explained that the Council did proactively reduce speed limits with the police and divisional Members. He noted that currently rural speed limit reductions applied to a range of speed limits from unrestricted down to 20 mph, once the LTP4 had been agreed, the Council would continue with its proactive approach.

(Q12) Liz Townsend welcomed the recognition that Government funding would impact on the scale and timescales in which the Council could deliver a change in public transport. She noted that residents in her division sought to know when they could see improvements in their bus services and she asked the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure to provide assurance that there was an end date in sight for the resumption of cut services and for that to be shared with her.

The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure responded that the service reduction was due to the shortage of drivers, once he hears an update from Stagecoach he would inform the Members affected.

(Q13) Paul Follows welcomed the initiatives outlined in the response and looked forward to seeing further detail in the future. He noted that retrofitting homes to an energy performance certificate (EPC) rating of C in line with the Government's policy, would require significant increases in funding across Surrey. That the details of the Government's funding was absent and the number of homes in Surrey that need to reach EPC rating of C was greater than the number of fuel poor homes noted in the response. He asked whether Surrey had conducted its own analysis of the magnitude of the costs needed for the decarbonisation of homes, whether Surrey had conducted an evaluation of the capacity to deliver the changes required, and whether he could have a breakdown of the £7,849 average costs of decarbonisation measures per home stated in the response; if useful, he was happy to share the data from Waverley Borough Council on the cost of the decarbonisation of homes.

The Cabinet Member for Environment welcomed that offer of the data from Waverley Borough Council. She noted that she would provide the breakdown of the £7,849 figure. She added that there were three new officer roles to focus on decarbonising homes and to progress the initiatives outlined in her response. That the Council had also allocated £150,000 to start identifying fuel poor housing and houses below the EPC rating of C. The work on decarbonising homes was progressing with resources having been put aside, whilst she did not have all the figures requested she was happy to follow up with the Member outside of the meeting.

(Q14) Robert Evans noted that the response provided referred to foodbanks, he asked whether the Leader believed that the increase in the number and usage of foodbanks was to be celebrated; and asked whether he believed that they were a long term solution to the cost of living crisis.

In response, the Leader emphasised that he did not celebrate the use of foodbanks and hoped that they were not a long-term solution to the issue of food poverty. He noted that earlier discussions had highlighted the Council's and Government's support to residents and moving out of the pandemic the Council would address such issues.

(Q18) Stephen Cooksey noted that the information provided in the response referred exclusively to a potential County Deal, the Levelling Up White Paper appeared to emphasise the additional resources for communities in the North and Midlands in England but failed to identify new sources of funding. He asked whether the Leader had concerns that levelling up elsewhere would result in levelling down for Surrey.

George Potter noted that the Government appeared to be offering a menu of three levels of devolution deals, level one: a simple joint committee of different authorities of an area, level two: a non-mayoral combined authority and level three: a mayoral combined authority with a directly elected mayor or governor. He asked the Leader whether he intended to consult with the Borough and District Councils as to the best way forward for making the most of opportunities contained within the Levelling Up White Paper.

In response, the Leader noted that he did not share those concerns, the Council would continue to lobby the Government for funding and recognised that as a relatively affluent county it should help more deprived areas in the country. That when timely, the Council would actively pursue conversations on a County Deal and make known its contributions to the wider economy. That the Council must focus on four areas: growing the local economy and supporting people to get back into work, focusing on the health and wellbeing of Surrey's residents, pursuing the initiatives set out in the budget and elsewhere such as actively pursuing the Green Futures agenda and the Council must ensure that there are thriving communities.

The Leader explained that a Surrey Delivery Board had been established and that it must be a joint effort alongside the leaders of the Borough and District Councils and the towns and parish councils. Regarding the three levels, what was important was what would be best for Surrey and that required support from all political parties to support the initiatives outlined in the budget.

(Q19) Liz Townsend asked the Cabinet Member for Children and Families to advise her of how many private children's homes in Surrey were in the position where the Council was not satisfied with the quality of their provision and so was not able to place any children in them.

Jonathan Essex noted that as a result of the review of the Ofsted monitoring reports which meant that the issues outlined in the article came to light, he asked the Cabinet Member how the Council has reviewed the way it monitors and oversees those independent children's homes; the Council must change what it does to take responsibility for its own children.

Robert King noting previous concerns raised in recent months on the issue, he asked the Cabinet Member for assurance that Surrey as the Corporate Parent would know where its vulnerable children were located.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Children and Families noted that she could not inform the Member on which independent children's homes were providing a sub-stand quality as such homes were regulated by Ofsted outside of the Council's responsibility. That when the Council placed children in any independently run children's home, it had a robust process in place such as visiting the children's home and judging the appropriateness of the home for the child.

The Cabinet Member explained that where the Council was placing its children, it would be assured of the quality of the provision. She noted the difficulty for the Children's Service in finding the right homes for Looked After Children, what was important was placing a child in a high quality and loving home which might in some cases be outside of the county.

The Cabinet Member provided assurance that the Council knew where all of its Looked After Children were living.

Paul Deach left the meeting at 14.26 pm.

16/22 STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS [Item 8]

David Lewis (Cobham) made a statement on the launch of the second Chatterbus which boosted the service being provided to school pupils living in Oxshott and Stoke D'Abernon and helped the Council meet its obligations for free school transport. The first Chatterbus launched in 2015 and provided free and concessionary fares for residents and was run on a voluntary basis. He welcomed the support by the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure for the funding of a future replacement electric bus next year and noted a testimony from a Chatterbus driver.

Trefor Hogg (Camberley East) made a statement on the volunteers of the Old Dean community who came together in March 2020 at the start of the pandemic and despite being a deprived area, volunteers delivered food parcels and provided local support to residents. That community support continued into June with more ventures such as a free food stall, sports kits for children in poverty and a dementia café. He thanked all those volunteers for their work and time given.

The Chair noted her thanks to those volunteers.

[Meeting ended at: 14.31 pm]

Chair

Leader's Statement – County Council (Budget Meeting), 8 February 2022

Madam Chair, Members, I'm delighted that we're back meeting in-person again, in our still-new Council Chamber as a full group.

I sincerely hope and believe this will now be the norm, and there'll be no turning back.

This is what democracy is all about and full, in-person meetings like this, is conducive to good local government, proper scrutiny, healthy debate, and ultimately positive outcomes for our residents.

Today we are bringing the Council's 2022/23 budget for discussion.

It is a budget to be delivered in a year that holds many challenges, but also many opportunities as we finally come out of the pandemic and welcome back many of the norms we have missed for so long.

The challenges however are very real.

Many we were already facing, like tackling the Climate Emergency.

Many have been exacerbated by COVID, like pressures on mental health services and Adult Social Care.

Many are new and emerging, with different social and behavioural patterns in our post-COVID, post-Brexit world.

This budget is all about responsible, strong leadership in the face of those challenges, to deliver our collective ambitions for Surrey.

Ultimately – that no one is left behind.

You have all heard me speak about this a great deal over the past 3 years, but particularly over the last few weeks as we really look to build on the great work already done and turbo charge our efforts to deliver it.

The short video I showed you highlights that No one left behind is the guiding principle for all that this Council does – helping those that need us most and improving quality of life for everyone in Surrey.

This is particularly pertinent in the context of our budget.

As the County Council, we're responsible for a huge range of services for all of our 1.2million Surrey residents.

The majority of our spending is – quite rightly - spent on looking after those who need us most:

Adults and children with disabilities, Looked After Children, our elderly residents as they need a bit more help, young people with Special Educational Needs to make sure they can access opportunity, and people with really complex needs who need specialist care and support.

These are the most expensive public services - more than £1 million every day delivering services to adults, and half a million pounds every day supporting children and their families.

We don't begrudge this – that is what our society is all about, and it plays true to our principle that no one is left behind.

We are also the organisation responsible for Surrey-wide services such as our roads and pavements, transport, countryside, major infrastructure projects like flood defence, and new road building.

We're responsible for schools, recycling centres, libraries, birth, death and marriage registration, public health, and trading standards.

We also have responsibility for Surrey Fire & Rescue Service.

All of these services too, are relied upon by so many people – to get around, to work, to learn, to live healthy lives, for protection, for peace of mind, for celebration and for support in good times and bad.

We are here for you Surrey.

Every single penny of Council Tax – every single penny we spend – is spent to make Surrey a better place.

Madam Chair, we have worked hard to get our finances on a steady footing over the last few years – we are in good shape thanks to that hard work, and huge credit should be given to all the staff and of this organisation, and indeed elected Members for that.

For striving to deliver services in the best way possible, for being open minded, dedicated, committed public servants.

Our Transformation Programme has so far saved £240m and that's more than £75m each and every year, with a further £75m projected over the next few years, all the while improving services for residents.

We will continue to be responsible with taxpayer's money.

We have reduced risks around our budget, delivered services in a more effective and efficient way, and provided a stable platform to invest in the county's future.

We have been able to provide a financial bedrock for the county to deal with COVID and a platform for recovery.

However, more, and greater threats are coming. There are more hurdles to overcome.

There are still huge pressures on our budget and public finances across the country are stretched following COVID.

There is no expectation of more money from central government, with a tightening of budgets more likely.

Our progress and future sustainability are still at risk. We cannot lose focus and we still must find new and more efficient ways to deliver services.

But we are Surrey County Council.

We're a strong, ambitious, responsible organisation with great people here always ready to tackle the next big challenge.

While we will lobby government for what we feel is fair and necessary for Surrey, we will look to the future, prepare properly, and crack on delivering for our residents.

To truly make Surrey a better place, and to truly deliver the County's No One Left Behind ambition, we must work together – us as elected Members with partners across the Surrey system, and most importantly with our local communities.

Collaboration and cooperation are key to delivering our services sustainably going forward. Nobody, and not one single organisation, can do this alone.

Teamwork. Togetherness. Surrey working as one. Everyone playing their part.

That is how we tackle the big fundamental challenges heading our way – public finances, climate change, a shifting society.

We are ready to do our bit – this budget underpins that.

We'll try to make it as easy as possible, but everyone has to step up and take responsibility alongside us.

Thriving and engaged communities will help.

Active residents and local community support can prevent longer term health and social issues and can play an important role in tackling the fundamental issues like Climate Change.

Neighbourliness and support networks can help more people to live independently, in their community for longer.

More local provision – like the wonderful Normandy Community Shop that has just been awarded Your Fund Surrey funding – means people have less need to get in their car and can live healthier lives.

More and stronger local networks and relationships can bring together different skills and grow ideas that can solve issues – locally and on a bigger scale.

Stronger local economies provide more jobs and opportunity.

Let's make it happen.

Madam Chair, as I've said earlier, the vast majority of the money we spend – indeed the vast majority of people's Council Tax in Surrey – is spent on looking after a tiny proportion of our population.

Adult Social Care, Special Education Needs Provision, looking after children in care – it's all hugely expensive, but this is what we're about.

So it is important that we remember what this Council is here for; it is helping those that need us.

Providing *everyone* with opportunity.

Demand for care has been increasing for a long time, and the type of care needed is often complex and specific to individual circumstances.

COVID has increased that pressure further.

The NHS provide world class, life saving care at the point of need. They come to our rescue when we're hurt and acutely ill.

But long-term care, often for many years, falls to local government.

None of us know when we might need it, or when our family might need it, or how complex that care might need to be.

But we will be there.

Here in Surrey, we want to modernise care, make sure it is right for each individual and also to increase independence. We want residents to stay in their community for longer, to have the support to live independently where possible rather than taken into care.

We are investing in this ambition now, through technology and new, more effective forms of care and accommodation, to deliver a better quality of life and prevent reliance on expensive care packages.

The government's National Insurance tax rise is for the longer-term, with money initially going to the NHS so the cost of social care right now falls on local authorities.

We're determined to do right by all generations. To provide dignity and a better quality of life.

A rise in the Adult Social Care precept is unavoidable if we want to deliver this ambition and look after residents most in need.

The average cost of supporting an older person has increased by 13% compared with pre-pandemic levels and across all groups we have seen an increase of 7%.

So 3% of our proposed Council Tax rise will be dedicated to Adult Social Care through the precept.

We have an ageing population and an increasing number of younger people moving into adulthood that need services.

Equally we have an increasingly frail care market at a time when the government is rightly proposing radical changes to national policy.

That suggests the cost of delivering social care is only likely to increase over the next few years and that is why we are committing a further £24m to ensure that we can meet the needs and demands we are likely to face.

We will not shirk from our responsibilities.

Another key factor in this budget Madam Chair, is mental health.

We have seen a huge increase in those needing to access mental health support throughout the pandemic, caused by a combination of family crisis, bereavement, loneliness, isolation, employment, or financial challenges.

Following the second COVID lockdown in 2021, we saw increases of up to 89% in referrals through the Council's Children's Single Point of Access and a 66% increase in demand for children's eating disorder services.

In terms of adults at the same time, there was a 45% rise in referrals to Home Treatment Teams, Psychiatric Liaison, and intensive support teams.

Referrals and pressures have remained high ever since.

With partners we've carried out a widescale review into mental health provision and identified where improvements can be made.

We must invest in prevention and early intervention and ensure that children and adults can access services as soon as they need them

The 1% rise in Council Tax ring fenced for mental health will be used for exactly that:

- More mental health counsellors in education settings
- Extra help in schools to improve young people's mental health
- More practitioners to aid people's recovery

- Grants to mental health charities
- Investment in suicide prevention
- More practical advice for residents to enjoy better mental health
- Increase in early support like talking therapy
- More mental health hospital beds for people in crisis
- Specialist accommodation for people in recovery

And we will continue to work with our partners, including the NHS to seek match funding for even greater investment.

Madam Chair, local government is also at the forefront of tackling the climate emergency and Surrey County Council has set out bold ambitions to deliver a greener future for Surrey.

If we are serious in this endeavour, if we really want to deliver change, then it needs meaningful investment.

Members, we are serious.

Investment in green infrastructure and new technology will both make the Council an environmentally friendly organisation, but also enable every single Surrey resident to play their part.

We are asking people to use their cars less - so we are investing in better cycling and walking networks and public transport.

We are asking people and businesses to be more energy efficient - so we are investing in renewable energy and better insulation.

We are asking people to move away from petrol and diesel - so we're leading by example by investing in electric vehicles and machinery for our work.

We're planting more trees, we're installing LED streetlights, we're investing in an electric and hydrogen bus network, we're tackling congestion and air quality with our highways planning.

We are tackling the climate emergency – together.

Alongside our day-to-day service delivery, and our revenue budget, we have also set out an ambitious - but deliverable - 5-year plan of investments that will deliver both immediate improvements for Surrey residents and long-term savings to our budget including:

£139m to create more school places,

£126m to provide supported living and independent care accommodation,

£64m increasing provision for special education needs and disability in schools,
£51m on safer highways infrastructure,
£65m as the first tranche of a budgeted £273m on reducing carbon emissions to tackle the climate emergency,
£100m to be invested in projects promoted by our communities,
£200m improving our roads and footways,
£34m increasing the capacity and quality of residential homes for children.

Things that simply make the day-to-day life of all residents better.

We are getting on and delivering that investment plan, so we can start to see the positive impacts as soon as possible.

Madam Chair, Council Tax now makes up around three quarters of our funding – money from central government has reduced since 2010, while demand on our services has increased.

Over the last year, the cost of meeting that demand has also gone up considerably with inflation high and supply chains stretched.

We must be responsible with our budget, and with our services, and stay true to our ambition that no one is left behind.

We recognise that household budgets are feeling the squeeze just like ours – that any further increase for many people is unpalatable but we're deciding to tackle the root causes of hardship and inequality, instead of just applying a sticking plaster.

For those that need financial help now, who are facing crisis point, we will actively support them. The Surrey County Council website provides details of organisations that they can turn to including:

Debt Support,

Household Support Fund,

Surrey Crisis Fund,

Community Foundation for Surrey,

Housing Benefit and Council Tax benefit.

We are boosting funding already, and there is help at hand.

The government recently announced a Council Tax rebate for band A to D householders which will also assist. A band D house in Surrey will see a £1.48 pence increase in Council Tax of which £1.19 will be spent on mental health and social care. But with the £150 rebate from government, those households will in fact be £58 better off even assuming the District and Boroughs and the Police increase their element of Council Tax to the maximum, whilst band A to C will see even more.

Madam Chair, as I've outlined – like local authorities up and down the country, we are facing some fundamental challenges.

We could shirk our responsibility, put our head in the sand and muddle along hoping for government money that will not come.

But we're not going to that.

That is not the way of this Council.

That is not the way of Surrey.

We are going to stand up, roll up our sleeves and not only tackle those challenges – we're going to make the best of them.

We're going to make Surrey a better place.

And we're going to make sure no one is left behind.

Madam Chair and Members, I recommend the budget to this Council.

Thank you.