

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL HELD AT  
WOODHATCH PLACE, 11 COCKSHOT HILL, REIGATE, SURREY,  
RH2 8EF, ON 12 JULY 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
Jeffrey Gray	Tony Samuels
Tim Hall	Joanne Sexton
David Harmer	Lance Spencer
Nick Harrison	Lesley Steeds
Edward Hawkins	Mark Sugden
* Marisa Heath	* Richard Tear
Trefor Hogg	* Alison Todd
Robert Hughes	Chris Townsend
Jonathan Hulley	Liz Townsend
Rebecca Jennings-Evans	Denise Turner-Stewart
Frank Kelly	Hazel Watson
Riasat Khan	Jeremy Webster
Robert King	Buddhi Weerasinghe
Eber Kington	Fiona White
	Keith Witham

\*absent

#### **45/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [ITEM 1]**

Apologies for absence were received from Liz Bowes, Paul Deach, Marisa Heath, Victor Lewanski, Jan Mason, Sinead Mooney, Penny Rivers, Richard Tear, Alison Todd.

#### **46/22 MINUTES [ITEM 2]**

The minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 24 May 2022 were submitted, confirmed and signed.

#### **47/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [ITEM 3]**

There were none.

#### **48/22 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS [ITEM 4]**

The Chair:

- Noted that her full announcements could be found in the Council agenda front sheet.

#### **49/22 LEADER'S STATEMENT [ITEM 5]**

*George Potter arrived at 10.05 am.*

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

Members raised the following topics:

- Referring to the Surrey Pay Policy Statement 2022/2023 and in light of the cost-of-living crisis, welcomed the percentage increase to be granted to the Council's staff on the lower end of the pay scale.
- Despite the Council's recent contact with Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), noted concern by the lack of any increase in over ten years in the 45p per mile travel allowance and noted that there seemed to be an unwillingness to argue for the urgent changes needed.
- Welcomed the announcement of early engagement with Members on the 2023/24 budget, however further detail on the Council's pressures and efficiencies and detail from the Government on the adult social care costs remained unclear.
- That whilst the Local and Joint Committees would be discontinued, the detail on their replacement had yet to be agreed.
- Welcomed the increase in Member's allocation for highways for their division, however noted that the changes were confusing.
- Understood the need to review Home to School Transport, however noted disappointment in the recent delays and the delay in Member involvement concerning the M25 junction 10/A3 Wisley Interchange work.
- Welcomed the recent email from the Cabinet Member concerning the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) timing, however noted that Surrey's residents faced being left behind.
- Regarding the recent water damage at Quadrant Court, queried whether the Council should sell the building or stay, queried whether it was an example of

neglected repairs over the last fifteen years; further scrutiny was needed concerning the Agile Office Programme.

- Noted the significant resident opposition concerning the Reigate Priory Junior School and delay of at least one year for the move.
- Queried the difference in cost between the purchase of Woodhatch Place and the sale of County Hall.
- Noted the repair delays and that all children's homes must be fit for Surrey's children.
- Noted the tax cuts proposed by the national Conservative Party leadership contenders which go against what the Council has been saying cross-party that local government and public services require extra funding, particularly for social care and roads and to tackle the aging population; asked whether the Leader would be raising the issues with the leadership contenders.
- As a result of the flux in Government, asked how likely it was that the county deal and levelling up proposals would continue and what the Council's relationship should be with the district and borough councils; asked whether the Leader had spoken to the new Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on those matters and what the Council's bargaining points were.
- That one of the last official acts of the previous Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities was to allow oil drilling in Dunsfold, previously refused by the Council's Planning and Regulatory Committee. Asked whether the Council would be lobbying the Government and new Secretary of State to reverse that decision in order to protect the Surrey Hills from oil drilling.
- Highlighted that Gatwick Airport was again consulting on its plan for a second runway after having underestimated the impact on the highway network and the economic impact of climate change. Asked the Leader for confirmation that there would be a Member briefing on the matter and that the Council's response would be shared publicly before being agreed.
- Welcomed that the Council has been improving and the ambition of no one left behind but emphasised the need for more humility from all Members in distinguishing between how far the Council has come in different areas and what is good enough on issues around Children's Services and the highways.
- Welcomed that Children's Services was no longer under threat of takeover but noted that it was a long way from Ofsted's outstanding rating and the provision of adequate places and services for children in the county, including those in care and with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- That with the increase in child and fuel poverty, asked what transformation was still needed and what the Council's emergency action plan was as prices rise and what role the Land and Property team would play in providing affordable homes as homelessness and food bank usage rises in Surrey.
- Welcomed the improvements in the Surrey Highways but noted that more was needed to address road safety and integrated transport to revolutionise bus fares to deliver the Surrey Transport Plan (Fourth Edition).
- Questioned whether the ongoing reorganisation would be enough to change the mindset to transform transport sufficiently to deliver the substantial reduction in carbon emissions needed across Surrey; progress on the estate and vehicle fleet risked underplaying the wider challenge across the county.
- Reiterated that it was a climate emergency and the Council needed to act, working cross-party on issues such as climate, children and roads.
- Paid tribute to the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) concerning the Surrey Heath fires, however highlighted the recent Staines fire when the fire was only put out because SFRS had to call upon the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service and the London Fire Brigade because of the cuts to and understaffing of SFRS.

- That with the delay to the Fair Funding Review, asked the Leader how or whether the Council should put pressure on Surrey's MPs and the new incoming Government to ensure that Surrey receives a fair deal so that it can better serve its residents and not have to repeat the £15 million in cuts.

## 50/22 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME [ITEM 6]

*Becky Rush left the meeting at 10.39 am.*

### Questions:

Notice of twenty-three questions had been received. The questions and replies were published in the supplementary agenda on 11 July 2022.

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

**(Q1) Trefor Hogg** noted that given the food within its use by date can often be frozen, he asked the Cabinet Member for Property and Waste to ensure that space to accommodate freezers on the Council's premises for food banks is mandated wherever possible.

**Catherine Powell** asked whether the Council could look to use apps such as OLIO which allow food that cannot be used on the day to be advertised online and distributed on the day to those in need free for collection.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Property and Waste noted that the food service was currently contracted out to Selecta UK. She would look into Trefor Hogg's request with the Facilities Management team and would look into Catherine Powell's request.

**(Q3) Robert King** asked whether the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning was confident that meals and the nutrition of meals in all schools in Surrey in a year's time would be the same they are today.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning explained that both the funding and the nutrition of meals would be sustained for Surrey's children. She noted that the funding from the Department for Education was maintained for the next three years for the provision for school holidays. She highlighted that the Council continued to provide assistance to families with children eligible for free school meals during school holidays and provision had continued during the academic year. Regarding the summer holidays, families would be provided with holistic support such as supermarket vouchers and activities for children.

**(Q4) Robert Evans** referring to the comparative figures of the Council budget over the same period, asked whether the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources was aware that since the last census the Consumer Price Index had increased by nearly 20%. He asked how she felt that had impacted on the Council's services and budget.

In response, the Leader, in the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources' temporary absence, noted that he would ask the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to provide a written response. The Leader noted that the Council's budgeting process considers anticipated inflation and

he noticed from the census that there had been a reduction in the number of older people in the county, which could make a difference to Adult Social Care.

**(Q6) Nick Darby** asked whether the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Economy could provide his thoughts in relation to corridors to allow resident access to the M3 and two local hospitals.

**Will Forster** noted that the response states that fines generated in Surrey would be retained in Surrey. He noted that was nonsensical as fines would be generated in London and sought clarification on whether fines generated by vehicles registered in Surrey should be spent in Surrey. He asked whether the Council had the legal power to create ULEZ for Surrey in the future.

**David Harmer** asked the Cabinet Member whether he was aware of the impact on school teachers cross-border with London, as there could be considerable chaos in the education system.

The Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Economy responded to Nick Darby, noting that the ULEZ consultation was underway by Transport for London (TfL). He informed the Member that the Council would make that point about corridors particularly concerning access to hospitals and the Council could lobby them to change certain elements, however he noted that the corridors do not follow the border exactly as they give people a chance to turn around and avoid the ULEZ.

The Cabinet Member responded to Will Forster, explaining that because the fines would affect the vehicles from Surrey and neighbouring counties, he was liaising with his counterparts in the surrounding county councils bordering London to have a pan-London response. He noted that Surrey should not be paying for Londoners to be able to scrap their cars, that scheme should be extended to Surrey and the neighbouring counties because it would be those residents who would be paying for the fines to enter London. Consideration was also needed on the improvement to the cross-border public transport which was not mentioned in the consultation. The Government has extended moving traffic enforcement powers and the Council had received its moving traffic enforcement powers and would be commencing enforcement going forward.

The Cabinet Member responded to David Harmer, agreeing that it was a concern and needed to be taken into account, it would form part of the Council's general response to the consultation. He reminded Members of the Member Development session on 18 July 2022 regarding the expansion of the ULEZ, where further comments would be collated.

**(Q9) Will Forster** noted that less buses on some of Surrey's busiest routes was not positive. He asked what the Council's and Stagecoach's plan was to recruit more drivers to ensure that Surrey has the public transport network that it needs.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Economy noted that the Council was meeting with Stagecoach's senior management and director regularly. He noted that there was a driver shortage nationally, many bus drivers had a conversion on their licence allowing them to move into the HGV sector. That with the acquisition of Arriva, Stagecoach did not get the same level of drivers moving over to their company. He provided assurance that none of the Council's subsidised routes are affected as it is commercial routes operated by Stagecoach that are affected. Stagecoach had recruited an additional ten drivers recently and the Council would continue to work with them to encourage them to do more.

**(Q10) Hazel Watson** asked which adult education courses are being provided by East Surrey College in Mole Valley.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning noted that the Surrey Adult Learning received a very good grading from its Ofsted inspection in May and the demand for adult learning in Surrey was shifting with around a third of learning done remotely with the rest done face-to-face, compared to all face-to-face learning pre-pandemic. The Council was working with East Surrey College to explore how it can improve the opportunity and availability for adult learning and Mole Valley residents. She would look to provide a list of all of the courses available. It was the Council's ambition that Mole Valley would receive all of the of the opportunities available that are extended to the rest of Surrey.

**(Q11) Lance Spencer** asked the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning whether she was confident that all Ukrainian children would be found places by September when the new term begins and that sufficient resources would be available to support those children with any mental health issues they might have.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning noted that the Council recognised the additional needs and vulnerabilities of children with refugee status and additional demands placed on the schools. Schools were able to access Educational Psychology support via weekly telephone conversations and mental health support via Mindworks Surrey. The salary scale had been uplifted for Educational Psychology and the data showed that outputs exceed the capacity. She provided assurance that the Council was focusing on a long-term plan for more active engagement in early intervention.

**(Q12) Robert King** had no supplementary question.

**David Lewis (Cobham)** he asked whether the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Economy could advise whether Surrey Highways could look to ensure that Sat Nav systems are updated to reflect the diversion routes concerning the M25 junction 10/A3 Wisley Interchange work that have been agreed with National Highways.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Economy noted that he and the Member would be meeting with National Highways tomorrow to discuss the matter. He explained that Sat Navs are updated on a six-monthly basis, so it is unlikely that the diversion routes would be programmed in; however there would be the necessary signage on the roads where the diversion routes are in place. He provided assurance noting that Surrey Highways had programmed in a number of works on the local network, National Highways would have to work around those as they do not automatically get a diversion or get to choose where it goes.

*Becky Rush rejoined the meeting at 10.55 am.*

**(Q13) Robert Evans** had no supplementary question.

**Catherine Powell** highlighted the apparent situation occurring in Surrey where in some areas where numbers are increasing in some schools and decreasing in other schools. She asked the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning how the Council could better plan for housing developments to ensure there were places for students without breaching the maximum numbers and to ensure that all of the schools within

Surrey are protected, particularly around the borders with Hampshire and other districts and boroughs.

**Jonathan Essex** referred to the written response which stated that the Department for Education would not share the data of class sizes regarding academies, he asked the Cabinet Member whether the Council could ask the academies directly. As knowing the class sizes of academies and schools would help with the placement of Ukrainian refugee children over the summer, and to understand the capacity across Surrey.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning responding to Catherine Powell, clarifying that capital funding from the Government was for the provision of additional places and was not directly related to class size. She explained that additional school places were allocated through the admissions process and were not based on class sizes unless in relation to limits through infant class size legislation. She outlined the multiple reasons why classes may have more than thirty pupils in relation to nursery classes, from year three onwards there are no limits on class sizes and the School Admissions Code sets out a number of exceptions.

The Cabinet Member noted that she would take away the question from Jonathan Essex about the academies and provide a written response.

**(Q14) Nick Darby** welcomed that the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources had written to HMRC. He asked for assurance that Members would be provided with a copy of the response as it is received.

In response, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources noted that she was happy to provide a copy of the response once received.

**(Q15) Catherine Baart** referring to Project Horizon, noted that although the criteria were published, the scoring for each individual scheme was not shown on the website. She asked whether the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Economy agreed that providing a link on the website for each individual scheme, and how it been scored would provide full transparency for the selection of the project Horizon Schemes.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Economy suggested having a discussion after the meeting on the matter. He noted that the Member could write to the Highways team who would be able to provide the scoring for a specific road. He was unsure of the wider benefit of publishing all the scoring information. The Highways team was about to rewrite the Project Horizon criteria, ensuring that it is in line with the Surrey Transport Plan (Fourth Edition), therefore having that discussion after the meeting would inform the Highways team on what to include going forward.

**(Q16) Jonathan Essex** highlighted that the response states that a team of officers was being pulled together to address the issues. Once that team was up and running, he wondered whether there could be a briefing to all councillors across Surrey: Members, borough and district councillors and parish councillors on what they were doing so all residents can be provided with support.

In response, the Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment in the Cabinet Member for Environment's absence, would discuss the matter with the Cabinet Member for Environment and would liaise with the Member.

**(Q17) Robert King** asked the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning whether she would look at a new informal check at point of appeal for parents by officers, as parents often fail to provide sufficient evidence at time of appeal because they do not understand the process. He also asked whether she agreed that an outstanding rated school for a child without SEND needs is often different to a child with SEND needs.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning explained that the appeals process had been thoroughly reviewed, so that parents are adequately supported and prepared. There was a new parent guide and there was officer representation within the Member cohort so that the schedule and frequency of appeals can be maintained. She noted that she would not wish to differentiate the quality of provision provided to any child within Surrey, more weight was not put on providing outstanding education for one student over another.

**(Q18) Robert Evans** noted confusion in the response which states that no reference was made to Surrey County Council in the article, however the article stated that more than one third of schools in Surrey had buildings in urgent need of repair and across the county 151 state-funded schools had at least one building at serious risk of imminent failure. He requested that the Cabinet Member provides a response that answers his question.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Property and Waste noted that according to officers, the Surrey article refers to the national position. She noted that one school that urgently needed replacement was Reigate Priory Junior School and the Department for Education funding of £10 million had been secured for its replacement, the planning application for the new carbon net zero school proposed to be delivered on the site was submitted in June.

**(Q19) Nick Darby** had no supplementary question.

**Steve Bax** noted that Gladstone Place/Summer Road were in his division, he had been meeting with residents and officers to discuss the matter. He asked whether as divisional member he could be included in any discussions on the matter with Nick Darby.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Economy noted that he was happy to include Steve Bax in any discussions.

**(Q20) Catherine Baart** noted that the fees for auditing were agreed in 2007, she asked whether there were plans to review the hourly rate and also whether it would be possible to review existing travel plans against the Surrey Transport Plan (Fourth Edition).

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Economy noted that he was happy to look into the requests made.

**(Q21) Jonathan Essex** asked for clarification on the timeline which the team was working to, he asked when Members and residents would get to see the results or progress made on the subject of reviewing future bus provision.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Economy noted that the Council was in discussions with the bus operators. He explained that public consultation would be launched later this year, the new contracts and routes need to be agreed by December and January; to be in place for September 2023.



**(Q22) Catherine Baart** noted that when she cycles along shared pavement on the A23 she crosses twenty give way lines and drivers can see those and that they apply to cyclists. She asked whether she should be giving way to the vehicles or whether she should trust them to follow the Highway Code and give way to her. She asked whether the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Economy agreed that the matter was confusing and unsafe for cyclists and motorists.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Economy advised the Member to never assume that someone is going to give way. Regarding the Surrey Transport Plan (Fourth Edition) and changes to the Highway Code it would take time for Surrey Highways to retrofit all of its existing road network, including all the cycleways. Surrey Highways was costing up what it could do quickly across the county to start retrofitting continuous pavements and the long-term costings were being worked out.

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

These were also published in the supplementary agenda on 11 July 2022.

Members made the following comments:

**Cabinet Member for Property and Waste:** on the gasifier at the Eco Park in operation, **Nick Harrison** asked whether the county has signed it off as fully operational in accordance with the specification, particularly concerning its reliability, effectiveness and emissions.

In response, the Cabinet Member confirmed that the independent certifier had signed off the gasifier. Under the terms of the Council's agreement with Suez, it has to operate 55% of the time and it is currently operating at that level and the Environment Agency are also happy with the current limits.

**Leader, and Cabinet Member for Education and Learning:** on a comment made by the Leader in his response under the Leader's Statement to a comment on home to school transport appeals and that there was a delay because of Members not putting their names forward and it was a comprehensive change as the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning had outlined. **Chris Townsend** sought clarification on the matter as Members from the Residents' Association and Independent Group had put their name forward for the appeals and received no response; a later email stated that the matter was still being worked on.

In response, the Leader clarified that his point was that there was a lack of Member availability for the home to school transport hearings.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning confirmed that there was a lack of Member availability which led to delays and to the review of the whole process. She recognised that some Members did provide their availability during that process and that was followed up by Democratic Services and officers to resolve as the appeals process was being changed to provide remote accessibility for parents. That had been completed and the schedules had been set.

**Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Families:** on the review of the family centres underway, **Catherine Powell** wondered when the report would be issued as a local family centre remained locked for all but two hours a week. She would like to understand what the Council was going to do to improve that situation.

In response, the Deputy Cabinet Member would take that comment away and would provide a written response.

**Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Economy:** regarding Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) and Active Travel, **Ernest Mallett MBE** asked the Cabinet Member whether he could issue Members with a table of the headings and location of the schemes which had been repeated, agreed, under consideration and refused; as residents sought information on the matter. Whilst there were proposals in Molesey, he would like to know if they had been refused or not.

In response, the Cabinet Member confirmed that a table could be provided to the Member.

**Cabinet Member for Children and Families:** welcomed that Members were able to make a contribution from their local allocation into the Celebration Fund for Looked After Children and Care Leavers last year. Rebecca Jennings-Evans asked whether the Cabinet Member could share with Members how money from the Celebration Fund is being used to improve the quality of life for those children.

**Eber Kington** referred to a comment made by the Leader in his response under the Leader's Statement that regarding Children's Services the Council was no longer inadequate, but that should not be the measure of success as it was about getting the best outcome for Surrey's children. He asked whether the Cabinet Member could confirm whether she would also not be using Ofsted judgments as a measure of success going forward.

In response, the Cabinet Member thanked the twenty-nine Members who generously contributed some of their Members' Allocation to the Celebration Fund which is a small discretionary fund established to support Surrey's Looked After Children and Care Leavers in a variety of ways such as to pursue hobbies and to go out on trips. A large number of awards had been made during the course of the last year. She would send Members the printed annual report of the Celebration Fund. She would welcome contributions from Members for the new municipal year to the Celebration Fund.

The Chair noted that she was sure that Members would be happy to continue to contribute to this worthwhile cause.

In response, the Cabinet Member explained that the general improvement of Children's Services in Surrey as she and the Leader have frequently said, is the highest priority of the Council. The Council has an ambition for outstanding services which are recognised by Ofsted and the Council had made progress in its Children's Services. She emphasised that it was not simply a journey to reach the outstanding rating to tick a box for Ofsted, but that it is the Council's journey to provide the best possible services for Surrey's children, young people and their families.

## **51/22 STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS [ITEM 7]**

Clare Curran (Bookham and Fetcham West) made a statement on Mole Valley Connect, a Surrey County Council funded new demand responsive door-to-door electric minibus service. The service takes passengers to their local destination in the north of Mole Valley or to several nearby locations. She highlighted the travel times, affordable fares and accessible booking service and explained that its aims were to encourage the shift to a sustainable form of transport for shorter journeys and to keep people connected.

## 52/22 ORIGINAL MOTIONS [ITEM 8]

### Item 8 (i)

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

Under Standing Order 12.1 Fiona White moved:

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

- On 1 April 2022, Ofgem increased the energy price cap by 54 per cent.
- In light of the increased energy price cap, the average standard tariff energy bill will increase by £693 per year. The average pre-pay meter energy bill will increase by £708 per year (Ofgem, 2022).
- On 6 April 2022, the Government increased National Insurance by 1.25 percentage points, which is projected to cost the average family in Surrey an additional £600 a year.
- The Government has suspended the pensions 'triple lock' for 2022/3, meaning Surrey's over 209,000 pensioners will see a rise of 3.1 per cent this year (instead of 8.3 per cent under the triple lock formula). This year, this will cost individual pensioners in the county hundreds of pounds.
- Evidence shows that use of foodbanks across Surrey has increased by 300% compared with the same month in 2019 including use by households who are working and have never had to ask for help until now.

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

The decision taken in June 2022 to impose a 'Windfall Tax' on the super-profits of oil and gas companies and to redistribute this as a one-off payment of £400 to households later this year. Though the Windfall Tax is welcome, Council believes it does not go nearly far enough and the Government should be doing much more to support local people through the Cost-of-Living crisis.

#### **This Council resolves to:**

- I. Call for a Surrey Cost-of-Living Emergency Summit, with stakeholders including Citizens Advice, Surrey Welfare Rights Unit, Food Banks, Local Trades Unions and Chambers of Commerce to draw up a joint plan to alleviate the impact on Surrey residents, especially those in the most vulnerable households, and invite local MPs to attend this meeting.
- II. Welcome the increased Household Support Fund from the Government which has enabled ringfenced funding to pensioners who are struggling financially and additional support to foodbanks and voluntary, community and faith organisations.
- III. In addition to the funds in resolution II. above, to provide further funding to meet the increased demand on foodbanks and community fridges and provide more money to the Surrey Crisis Fund to expand its remit to emergency purchase of such things as fridges and washing machines.
- IV. Increase efforts to provide advice and practical help to enable residents to insulate their homes and make them more energy efficient especially those experiencing fuel poverty.

- V. Continue to review the support given to residents as the crisis deepens especially with the further increase in fuel costs in the autumn.
- VI. Call on the Government to:
- i. immediately reduce the standard rate of VAT from 20 per cent to 17.5 per cent for one year, saving the average household in Surrey a further £600 this year.
  - ii. Immediately re-introduce the pensions triple lock to support Surrey's pensioners.
  - iii. Immediately restore the Universal Credit supplement of £20, which was cancelled by the Government in September 2021.

Fiona White made the following points:

- That the motion was triggered by conversations with a home school worker who asked about the provision of resources to help the number of families who could not afford their electricity; and with a charity running a Jigsaw Project who noted that 450 families had been referred by schools as they could not afford school uniforms for their children.
- Noted concern about the long-term problems that families and individuals would have to cope with.
- That inflation was predicted to hit 11% this financial year, energy prices are doubling in two years and ever-increasing, the country has the highest tax burden since the 1940s and the Good Company had reported an 85% increase in the use of its five food banks in Surrey since 2019.
- Turning to the resolutions, noted that it was clear that no single organisation could provide the support that was needed in Surrey, therefore a countywide summit was needed to pool resources.
- As a result of the cost-of-living crisis some families have had to use up their savings to meet day-to-day bills and cannot afford to replace a basic household appliance if it breaks.
- That the increases in interest rates meant higher mortgage payments and people had to maximise their borrowing ability to afford somewhere to live.
- That a car was essential for many people but petrol prices had reached the highest monthly increase in records dating back to 2000.
- That charities nationally reported a decrease of 4.9 million donors in 2021, before the crisis hit and that trend was likely to continue this year.
- That better insulated homes meant lower energy bills.
- That however hard the Council and the other Surrey organisations try, there was a limit to how much can be done locally to mitigate the problems, support from central Government was essential.
- Noted the uncertainty on whether the next Chancellor would stick to the promise to reintroduce the triple lock pension, pensioners generally spend a bigger proportion of their income on essentials such as food and energy and one in five UK residents reaching retirement this year would rely on the state pension as their only or main income.
- That the removal of the £20 uplift on Universal Credit should never have happened and should be restored, and the benefits increased supporting those on the lowest income levels.
- The statistics outlined in the motion did not take the human impacts into account of the current crisis on individuals and families.

The motion was formally seconded by Carla Morson, who made the following comments:

- Despite the Council's commitment to no one being left behind the reality of the current cost-of-living crisis meant that there was a danger of that unless intervention happens now, using resources to the best effect.
- Highlighted the Trussell Trust's slogan of being one meal away from breaking, new requests were coming in daily to help with food provision via the community food parcel projects and community fridge in the Ash division.
- Noted the requests to help with energy costs, people were running out of their emergency allowance and cannot afford to top their meters up.
- Noted the increasing cost of debt not just affecting the lower income groups, persistent debt problems had surged by almost a third since December last year.
- The increases in food, energy and fuel prices and debt leads to physical and mental health problems in residents due to sustained stress and would increase the cost to the Council.
- That health, welfare, care and GP services were already overburdened.
- Reiterated that no single organisation could resolve the issues all faced with the cost-of-living crisis, resources needed to be pooled and stakeholders to be engaged with.
- That supporting the resolutions would ensure that no one is left behind.

Ten Members made the following comments:

- The Leader wished that the Liberal Democrat Group would not keep putting forward motions from their head office and should focus on what was being done by the Council in Surrey.
- The Leader recognised the cost-of-living challenges outlined but noted that no solutions had been put forward other than a county-wide summit.
- The Leader noted that the extent and the depth of the Council's partnership working continued, in his Leader's Statement at the May Council AGM he had outlined what the Council was doing.
- The Leader noted that the Council had a limited ability to control the Government and he outlined the practical solutions underway in Surrey: the Council was putting more money into the Surrey Crisis Fund, helping householders across Surrey to save energy and combat rising energy prices through grants, there was a 1% rise in Council Tax ring fenced for mental health and the Mental Health Investment Fund (MHIF) was composed of £13 million, the Council had its own poverty strategy, there was a health and welfare hub, food vouchers were provided to families, the Household Support Fund was being used, £500,000 had been invested to find barriers faced by excluded groups, various employer initiatives had been set up and the pay review had been agreed with Council staff.
- Recognised the issues set out in the motion but disagreed with its political posturing, giving the impression that only the Liberal Democrat Group cared about the issues.
- That the solutions in the motion were not fully thought through.
- Questioned how the Liberal Democrat Group's leader could oppose the tax cuts being put forward by the Conservative Party contenders but then vote for a tax cut as set out in the motion.
- That the Liberal Democrats ignore the £37 billion of extra support being provided by the Government, composed of the £15 billion to help with energy bills, the cost-of-living payment, top ups on the annual winter fuel payments and

disability costs, the Household Support Fund and increase in the National Insurance contribution thresholds.

- That the motion would make the poor poorer in the long run, the Leader had outlined what the Council was doing to support residents.
- Endorsed the Leader's comments, noting that the motion did not set out how the Council might further use its resources, contacts and influence locally to make a difference, the motion promoted national political policies rather than recognising the problem for Surrey's residents.
- The Deputy Cabinet Member for Levelling Up noted that the Council's ambition of no one is left behind was embedded into all of its work and it was more important than ever regarding the ongoing cost-of-living crisis.
- The Deputy Cabinet Member for Levelling Up highlighted that the Council was one of the first to launch a childhood poverty strategy, which seeks to address the underlying root causes of poverty.
- The Deputy Cabinet Member for Levelling Up noted that the Council has a variety of support schemes in place to deliver on its ambitions, many of which rely on a strong working relationship with the voluntary sector.
- The Deputy Cabinet Member for Levelling Up highlighted one example where the Council has effectively partnered with charities to meet the challenge faced, the Period Dignity initiative with Binti International where around 1,000 items had been received and no further funding was needed over the £1,500 initial investment.
- The Deputy Cabinet Member for Levelling Up highlighted another example, the Winter Poverty Fund of £200,000 that was set-up through the Community Foundation for Surrey to support organisations seeking to tackle the impact of rising costs and the root causes of poverty.
- The Deputy Cabinet Member for Levelling Up noted that much was being done already by the Council to support Surrey's residents and therefore the motion was unnecessary. The Council's priority should be to continue to deliver this support while thinking innovatively, working with its partners.
- That regarding national issues, on the one hand Conservative Group Members take credit for the achievements of the Conservative Party Government or state how they have been lobbying the Government; however they denounce issues which they seem less concerned about as national issues which have nothing to do with the Council, yet issues raised such as in the motion are both local and national issues.
- That energy bills alone would rise to £270 per month in October for the average household and many were struggling with payments; Universal Credit for those under 25 years old to cover all costs was £260 a month.
- Acknowledged that the Council has done a great deal to support residents, however asked whether the Council was saying that there was nothing more that can be done, if so that was absurd and obscene.
- Noted that the motion was asking for some simple common-sense changes, those who did not like all of the motion could amend it.
- Noted that getting together with stakeholders across the county to come up with better ideas of working together was crucial.
- Noted that even if the motion is voted down, the borough and district councils, the town and parish councils would continue to help its communities.
- Regarding the comments made on political game playing, highlighted the difference between those politicians that recognise that issues cut across all levels and seek to use every avenue of opportunity to do address them; whilst other politicians shun their responsibility.
- That the cost-of-living crisis affected the entire country and county, to call the details of the motion nonsense was insulting and the practical issues that have

been outlined in the motion are positive steps that could be taken on by the Council.

- Agreed with the aspiration that no one should be left behind but noted that people were being left behind in light of the highest inflation for forty years, the highest taxes for seventy years, high fuel costs, gas and electricity bills in some cases had tripled and people were consumed with debt.
- That to understand the situation of those struggling one must walk in their shoes, despite all the help from the Government and the Council people were still struggling.
- That it was up to the Council to put party political disputes aside and to work together for all of Surrey's residents.
- Highlighted that Waverley Borough Council had convened a body to bring people together on the matter, hoped the Council would step up in the same way.
- That as the matter is of such significance, the various stakeholders need to meet specifically to tackle the crisis.
- That the Council's administration does a gross disservice to its residents by dismissing motions because of political differences.
- Speaking as chair of a local charity focused on the relief of poverty, had been working with the issues related to multiple deprivation since the 1970s and had witnessed destitution around the world.
- Noted personal support provided to a local food bank cooking nutritious meals every Sunday to those who need it; the local food bank also provided counselling, companionship, practical help and signposting.
- That a lack of money was a symptom of deprivation, it was not the only cause; whilst providing immediate relief to issues such as food poverty was vital, simply throwing money at the problem would be a neglect of the Council's responsibilities as Council Tax would have to further increase.
- That more needed to be done locally to tackle the root causes of deprivation, changing life chances leading to the long-term defeat of the inequalities that cause deprivation.
- Asked each Member to consider their own personal responsibility to provide the local leadership needed to remove the root causes of poverty.
- Urged the motion's proposer to read on the terms of reference of the One Surrey Growth Board, a multi-stakeholder body set up by the Council to map out and tackle the challenges facing Surrey such as inequality and inclusion and those issues listed in the motion.
- That the Council would continue to lead from the front and was committed to protecting the most vulnerable residents across the county through the MHIF and over £800,000 from Your Fund Surrey had been provided to communities across Surrey.
- Noted disappointment with the Leader's comment that he and the Conservative Group would oppose the motion which did acknowledge what the Council had done, to dismiss the motion would be an error as it could be amended to remove references to national politics.
- That the request to have a cost-of-living summit was important and aligned to the ambition of leaving no one behind, best practice could be shared across organisations and that the administration would regret that by not agreeing to the motion.

The Chair asked Fiona White, as proposer of the motion to conclude the debate, she made the following comments:

- Noted disappointment at some of the responses to the motion particularly where it has been dismissed as a political motion, too often politicians say that they recognise the problem and that enough was being done to address it; yet examples given in support of the motion highlighted that what the Council was doing was not enough as many were in desperate situations.
- Noted that she was proud that it was a Liberal Democrat motion as it was about people, their needs and protecting them.
- Noted that it would be impossible to deal with the cost-of-living crisis without some element of national politics.
- Reiterated the point made about Universal Credit not covering the cost of energy bills, before even other necessities of life could be paid for.
- Noted that she did not see Citizens Advice or many voluntary organisations on the membership list of the One Surrey Growth Board despite the fact that they help people daily through some of the issues raised.
- Reminded the Council of its policy of no one left behind, yet the Council was leaving people behind; careful consideration was needed on the matter.

The motion was put to the vote with 19 Members voting For, 40 voting Against and 12 Abstentions.

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** that:

The motion was lost.

#### **Item 8 (ii)**

*Chris Townsend left the meeting at 12.04 pm.*

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

Under Standing Order 12.1 Will Forster moved:

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

It regrets that the Council will not be supporting Surrey's Local and Joint Committees after 31 October 2022.

Discussions have started between Borough and District Councils and the Council about the potential replacement for Local and Joint Committees. However, these discussions are at an early stage and there are currently no firm proposals.

#### **This Council resolves to:**

- I. Call on the Cabinet to continue to provide support to a Local or Joint Committee until a corresponding replacement has been implemented in that Borough or District.

Will Forster made the following points:

- That the Liberal Democrat Group does not want Local and Joint committees to stop operating, which was likely to happen later in the year.
- The ask was for the Council to continue supporting those until each replacement was agreed.



- That Local and Joint Committees had been in place since 2002 and were established by the Council as a way to build relationships within the borough and district councils and Members.
- Emphasised that Local and Joint Committees were about bringing decisions closer to local residents and enabling local people to raise concerns around key issues such as highways, education or climate.
- That four years ago the Council did a survey on what Members and residents thought of Local and Joint Committees, Members thought that they were a good forum for discussing local priorities and strategies, they were good at local decision making and partnership working and they were effective at engaging the public.
- That despite the positives of Local and Joint Committees, the Cabinet wants to stop them operating and have a different approach.
- Highlighted that there were no firm plans and Local and Joint Committees had not been consulted on any proposals, nor had there been a public consultation on what the new system would look like.
- That the Local and Joint Committees should be kept going to avoid a gap in provision as it would take time to consult with the borough and district councils and residents, there were key public facing bodies where residents can ask questions and Members can work with the borough and district councils.

The motion was formally seconded by John Robini, who made the following comments:

- Highlighted that Local and Joint Committees have for many years been a local meeting place for residents and councillors to air their views and communicate matters concerning the local community.
- Agreed that the Local and Joint Committees in their current form needed to change but not abolished, as too often discussions were made remotely with few opportunities for local input from residents.
- That Local and Joint Committees should be allowed to work out how they would continue in their best interests for the future and they need some support in this interim period.
- Emphasised that the Local and Joint Committees were too valuable an asset to be allowed to fail by default in the absence of any future plan for them.
- Pleaded that the Council works with the Members, borough and district councillors and residents on the Local and Joint Committees, which are one of the most important communications tool that the Council has for local issues.

*Robert Evans left the meeting at 12.08 pm.*

Nine Members made the following comments:

- The Cabinet Member for Communities implored the Council to move on and look forwards, as Local and Joint Committees had not been effectual for the last few years, they were constitutionally cumbersome, outdated and alienated residents.
- The Cabinet Member for Communities stressed that residents want the Council to communicate, listen, change, understand the issues that concern them, to take action and be more proactive and less restricted in its approach; the Council was progressive and had taken action.
- The Cabinet Member for Communities noted that the Council has embarked on a ground-breaking approach to engagement through a variety of tools, which

aim to put residents and Surrey's communities first and to encourage them to engage.

- The Cabinet Member for Communities highlighted that new Community Link Officers would work with Members across divisions, building relationships with external partners, borough and district councils and communities.
- The Cabinet Member for Communities highlighted that the recent Member Development Session on Community Engagement was generally well received cross-party and had explained how the changes would work and the reasons for the changes.
- The Cabinet Member for Communities noted that the Council was channelling its efforts and resources on the new approach, it was nonsensical to prolong the inevitable as having removed the highways decision making process the Local and Joint committees have no value.
- The Cabinet Member for Communities noted that the new approach was not a replacement for the Local and Joint Committees but was a brand new way of working.
- The Cabinet Member for Communities noted that a strategy was being worked on to build a community style forum which would coordinate partners including the borough and district councils, health colleagues, charities and volunteer groups; and would be shared in due course.
- The Cabinet Member for Children and Families noted that having been a Member of the Council, and member of the Mole Valley Local Committee for a number of years and its chairman previously, could not say that that Local Committee had made any contribution to the improvement of the delivery of services by the Council in the local community.
- The Cabinet Member for Children and Families noted that last year a number of members of the Mole Valley Local Committee had put forward the north of Mole Valley to the Communities Engagement team to be a pilot area for a local engagement initiative to run in parallel with the Local Committee. Following wide-ranging engagement across the community, positive discussions were had on the collective ambitions and priorities and on wide-ranging issues; and the initiative had met in a different and informal way.
- Emphasised that it was not a political motion but a basic operational one.
- Asked whether the Cabinet Member for Communities could share all of the engagement he has had with Waverley residents to come to the conclusions that he alluded to in relation to the Waverley Local Committee.
- Agreed with the Leader that the Local and Joint Committees were in need of reform and applauded the Council and the Leader for recognising the issues and addressing them; however there were no firm plans nor replacements.
- Thanked two fellow divisional Members for Waverley for their proactive and early engagement with him and Waverley Borough Council on the matter.
- Acknowledged that the Local and Joint Committees had flaws, however they were one of the few areas that allow residents to engage formally and locally with county processes in a structured way where actions can be pursued.
- That it was a shame that the Local and Joint Committees do not work as well in some areas as they do in others.
- That the Local and Joint Committees provide a forum to hear petitions and for interaction between Members and borough and district councillors.
- That the Local and Joint Committees were important and the decision to scrap them was causing a lot of local concern.
- That the motion made a straightforward request of not reviewing the decision made, but to simply extend the current practices until a firm replacement is established to ensure a proper transition.

- Noted that Local and Joint Committees could and should have been part of the process to deal with their own reform or at the very least have been briefed properly about what those changes would be.
- Accepted that the future way of working has been proposed, but the question was what happens moving forwards, noting that the Guildford Joint Committee as its last meeting discussed the issue of an air quality management area for Guildford Town Centre.
- That there were many issues across Members' divisions which have county and as well as district and borough implications.
- That having a mechanism where stakeholders can get together in public - where discussions take place transparently - with the ability for public participation was vital.
- That irrespective of whether the Council wishes to engage with the process or not, in many areas replacements of some form would be set-up and in the absence of firm plans the simple ask was for the Council's continued support to the current Local and Joint Committees to enable them to carry on with their business.
- That as Vice-Chairman of the Waverley Local Committee, took exception to the description of the Local Committee from the Leader as being tired and outdated; whilst it did need reform, it was highly valued and ways were being looked into of continuing it in association with the borough council.
- That as the fairly long-standing Chairman of the Mole Valley Local Committee, regretted that the system was now broken, reduced to a question time and the leader of Mole Valley District Council refusing to discuss issues such as the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money and the Transform Leatherhead project with the Local Committee and Members.
- Reiterated the local engagement underway in the north of Mole Valley as an alternative to the Local Committee, engagement and items of discussion were wide-ranging; thanked the partnership team who came to Bookham Village Day and had facilitated several events.
- That having previously chaired the Surrey Heath Local Committee on average there would be around eight residents which was considerably more than most of the other Local and Joint Committees; with only two residents attending a presentation from the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service.
- Highlighted the continued lack of consultation with the existing Local and Joint Committee chairmen and vice-chairmen.
- That having missed the Member Development Session along with two other chairmen, was still awaiting the invitation along with those chairmen to have a separate session.
- Asked whether there would be a guarantee that a viable alternative would be up and running by October, if not what further guidance would Members and borough and district councillors be receiving to fill the void.
- That as the newly established Chairman of the Guildford Joint Committee and having attended many Local and Joint Committee meetings over the years; felt sorry for Mole Valley because it seemed as though that they had not made the most of their Local Committee.
- That Covid-19 had an impact on the attendance to the Local and Joint Committees and that was still being rebuilt.
- Highlighted that a positive example at the Guildford Local Committee - since replaced by the Guildford Joint Committee - was when it held its meetings within the local villages and communities, meetings were well attended.
- That despite having attended the Member Development Session, did not fully understand what would replace the Local and Joint Committees, the motion

outlined that the current Local and Joint Committees should remain until there was a tried and tested substitute in place and working.

The Chair asked Will Forster, as proposer of the motion to conclude the debate, he made the following comments:

- Concluded that the system should not be thrown out before there was a replacement, which there was not.
- Hoped there would be a consultation on the replacements otherwise it looked like this administration was hiding from its residents and running away from the borough and district councils that it tried to abolish a couple of years ago.

The motion was put to the vote with 30 Members voting For, 39 voting Against and 1 Abstention.

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** that:

The motion was lost.

### **Item 8 (iii)**

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

Under Standing Order 12.1 Lance Spencer moved:

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

Surrey County Council has a Greener Future Delivery Plan to tackle climate change. This will transform the lives of Surrey residents. The two main areas for climate action in Surrey relate to buildings and transport as follows:

These are:

1. Reduce energy demand through retrofitting buildings including social, private rented and owner-occupied housing, public sector buildings (e.g. schools, NHS, council buildings, libraries), community facilities, commercial and industrial buildings.
2. Reducing energy demand in transport as set out in Surrey Local Transport Plan 4 including: liveable neighbourhood schemes, local cycling and walking infrastructure plans, public transport and EV charging roll-out.

Successful delivery requires effective partnerships with district/borough councils, other local organisations and engagement with residents.

To be effective this partnership will need to include public debate and decision making.

#### **This Council resolves to:**

- I. Support the creation of local Environmental Action Committees, as a way of addressing the issue.

- II. Establish a cross-party working group to consider how Members should meet publicly with Borough/District councillors and together engage with residents and local organisations to agree upon how the Greener Futures Delivery Plan will be implemented a locally level.
- III. Task the cross-party working group to report back to Cabinet in autumn 2022.

Lance Spencer made the following points:

- That it was the third motion brought to the Council in the last twelve months about the climate emergency as little progress was being made globally, nationally or locally.
- Highlighted that the global average temperature has already increased by 1.1 to 1.2 degrees Celsius, in the absence of dramatic action it would reach 3 degrees Celsius which would be catastrophic.
- That 2021 was the fifth hottest year on record, the last seven years had been the hottest years on record and this upcoming Sunday is expected to be the hottest day on record with an amber weather warning.
- Highlighted that Surrey's residents alone contribute about 20 million tonnes of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere each year, of which 6.6 million tonnes comes from direct activities such as heating homes, transport and running businesses.
- That the aim in the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan was to get that to zero by 2050, to do so emissions need to be reduced by 1.3 to 2.8 million tonnes by 2025.
- Suspected that by 2030 there would be more evidence of the massive impact of climate change on the planet and that his grandson would question what he was doing back in 2022 when the impact of climate change was known and why more was not being done to address it.
- Noted the successes in LED lighting and investment in electric buses, however the impact of those changes of actions proposed where the Council has direct control and if all delivered would equate to a reduction of 43,000 tonnes by 2025 or only 2% of what was required.
- That the Council must work out how to communicate and engage with all Members, residents and the numerous businesses to get them to understand what was needed to save our beautiful planet and county.
- Stressed that a step change was needed in how Surrey's communities live, work and play.
- That the two main areas for climate action in Surrey relate to buildings and transport which account for over 70% of Surrey's emissions, of which 41% related to transport and energy demand must be reduced through retrofitting buildings of which 30,000 had been identified.
- That successful delivery of the reduction of Surrey's emissions requires effective partnerships with the district and borough councils, local organisations, and engagement with residents through public debate.
- That the proposed local community networks might have some impact but it was unrealistic to expect those to have the level of impact demanded by the climate change emergency.
- That having asked an officer responsible for rolling out the 10,000 electric vehicle charging points across Surrey in the next seven years, he was confident he could liaise with the officers in the borough and district councils, but would have to engage with each Member individually and it was up to Member whether and how they engaged with the borough and district councillors and their residents.

- That Members need to be seen to take a visible lead in their communities on climate, allowing residents to engage and participate in the transformation required in each community.
- Asked Members to support the motion to allow local communities to work together to deliver the massive change that would be required.

The motion was formally seconded by Catherine Baart, who made the following comments:

- Highlighted that the Council has a strong Greener Futures team which was putting substantial effort into plans to reduce carbon emissions particularly in Surrey's estate, compared especially to many other councils; however Surrey's challenging greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets for 2025, 2030 and 2035 were hardly referred to by the Council externally.
- That the Council was not on track to meet the 2025 deadline for achieving the target of 46% greenhouse gas reduction, Atkins estimated the level of investment required for the 2025 target was between £3.4 and £4.2 billion, that scale of investment has not yet been secured.
- That there was no UK retrofit plan for the Council align with and that whilst the Council's Surrey Transport Plan (Fourth Edition) was due to be agreed in a later item, more action needed to be taken faster as reaching the emissions reduction targets late would be a failure; faster effective change required more participation and support for future changes to living.
- Highlighted the Leader's earlier comment that the Council knows how communities differ across Surrey, so it must work locally in conjunction with the borough and district councils and residents to bring about effective change rather than having a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Noted that a huge amount was to be gained in supporting the proactive motion which identified the most effective ways to engage local people democratically in the Council's climate action plans, with the results to be put to the Cabinet in order to increase the momentum to meet Surrey's climate change targets.

One Member made the following comments:

- The Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment in the Cabinet Member for Environment's absence noted that Conservative Group Members agree that a strong community structure was needed to support the Greener Futures agenda.
- The Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment provided assurance that a mechanism was in place to work with the district and borough councils, including the community groups and charities through the Greener Futures Partnership Group and the Greener Futures Board.
- The Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment noted that the Council had employed a Greener Futures Community Engagement Officer who was linking up all of the existing low carbon community resident groups and creating a network between them which would link into the work of the Climate Commission.
- The Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment highlighted that the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee had already established a Greener Futures Reference Group, where Members can ask questions and make suggestions.
- The Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment noted that what the motion was suggesting under resolutions two and three would sit well within the existing Greener Futures Reference Group, however resolution one on setting up local

Environmental Action Committees could not be supported until both the Conservative Group and officers were satisfied as to what was the right mechanism to engage the community.

- The Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment noted that the Conservative Group's suggestion was to amend the motion by deleting resolution one:

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

~~I. Support the creation of local Environmental Action Committees, as a way of addressing the issue.~~

- The Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment noted that the Conservative Group was happy to agree resolutions two and three, however understood that the deletion of resolution one had been refused by the proposer and so the Conservative Group cannot support the motion and remained open to suggestions through the current mechanisms in place.

Lance Spencer, the proposer of the motion responded noting that he would be happy to accept that amendment.

Lance Spencer accepted the amendment and therefore it became the substantive motion.

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

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** that:

**This Council notes:**

Surrey County Council has a Greener Future Delivery Plan to tackle climate change. This will transform the lives of Surrey residents. The two main areas for climate action in Surrey relate to buildings and transport as follows:

These are:

1. Reduce energy demand through retrofitting buildings including social, private rented and owner-occupied housing, public sector buildings (e.g. schools, NHS, council buildings, libraries), community facilities, commercial and industrial buildings.
2. Reducing energy demand in transport as set out in Surrey Local Transport Plan 4 including: liveable neighbourhood schemes, local cycling and walking infrastructure plans, public transport and EV charging roll-out.

Successful delivery requires effective partnerships with district/borough councils, other local organisations and engagement with residents.

To be effective this partnership will need to include public debate and decision making.

**This Council resolves to:**

- I. Establish a cross-party working group to consider how Members should meet publicly with Borough/District councillors and together engage with residents and local organisations to agree upon how the Greener Futures Delivery Plan will be implemented a locally level.
- II. Task the cross-party working group to report back to Cabinet in autumn 2022.

### **Item 8 (iv)**

Under Standing Order 12.3 the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, Becky Rush, moved a proposal. The proposal was as follows:

That the motion below by Jonathan Essex be referred to the Resources and Performance Select Committee for consideration.

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

- Polling from the Institute for Business Ethics finds that “corporate tax avoidance” has, since 2013, been the clear number one concern of the British public when it comes to business conduct.
- 66% of people believe the Government and local councils should at least consider a company’s ethics and how they pay their tax, as well as value for money and quality of service provided, when awarding contracts.
- 17.5% of UK public contracts have been won by companies with links to tax havens. Lost corporation tax revenues from multinational profit-shifting (just one form of tax avoidance) have been estimated to be costing the UK some £17bn per annum.
- The Fair Tax Mark offers a means to demonstrate good tax conduct and has been secured by a wide range of UK businesses, including FTSE-listed PLCs.

#### **This Council believes that:**

- As recipient of significant public funding, Surrey County Council should promote exemplary tax conduct, including ensuring contractors pay their proper share of tax, and refusing to condone offshore tax arrangements when buying land and property.
- This should apply equally to trading companies partially or fully owned by Surrey County Council.
- Current UK procurement law imposes restrictions on councils’ ability to both penalise poor tax conduct and reward responsible tax conduct.
- Due diligence into tax arrangements of suppliers will help identify the Council’s exposure to Russia and other international bad actors. Information on the beneficial ownership of companies will help Surrey County Council ensure its procurement maximises benefit to Surrey’s economy.

#### **This Council resolves to:**

- I. Approve the “Councils for Fair Tax Declaration”.
- II. Lead by example and demonstrate good practice in its tax conduct of both Surrey County Council and its trading companies.



- III. Ensure IR35 is implemented robustly such that contract workers pay a fair share of employment taxes.
- IV. Avoid offshore vehicles for the purchase of land and property.
- V. Undertake due diligence to ensure that not-for-profit structures are not being used inappropriately by suppliers to reduce the payment of tax and business rates.
- VI. Demand clarity on the ultimate beneficial ownership of suppliers and their consolidated profit & loss position.
- VII. Include tax conduct in social value scoring for assessing contracts.
- VIII. Support Fair Tax Week events in Surrey and celebrate the tax contribution made by businesses who pay their fair share of corporation tax.
- IX. Support calls for urgent reform of UK procurement law to enable local authorities to better penalise poor tax conduct and reward good tax conduct through their procurement policies.

Jonathan Essex made the following points:

- Highlighted that the motion was about corporate tax avoidance and about action on fairer tax at a local level and whilst having consistently been areas of concern for business conduct in market research, many UK public contracts continue to be run by companies with links to tax havens.
- That the motion was about ensuring that the Council's procurement processes follow best practice on the matter and are consistent with requirements for local authorities to consider social value throughout their procurement.
- That the motion seeks greater transparency into the beneficial ownership and the fullest possible financial reporting from the Council's suppliers.
- That such due diligence into the ownership and tax arrangements of suppliers would enable the Council to identify indirect exposure to Russia and other international bad actors and would help the Council understand how much money it spends recirculates directly into the local Surrey economy.
- That the resolutions confirm that the Council was complying with off-payroll working rules and avoiding offshore structures for its land and property investments.
- That the motion calls on the Council to celebrate its commitment as part of Fair Tax Week in June 2023 and calls for UK procurement law to be strengthened in ways that allow local authorities to better include tax conduct in their procurement policies.
- That the motion would support the Council's procurement processes, particularly with regard to due diligence on companies that it employs and it aligns with the Council's existing efforts to reduce the risk of fraud.

In speaking to her proposal, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources:

- Recommended the referral of the motion to Resources and Performance Select Committee where the matter of the Council's procurement policy extension could be given the due consideration needed.
- Noted that the matter of tax compliance for the Council and also its suppliers was an important matter and an informed view was needed.
- Noted that the Council and its subsidiaries, including investment property companies, were fully tax compliant including with IR35 legislation.
- Noted that regarding the Council's suppliers, all wish to see a fair tax system for companies operating in the UK; however the Council needs to tread carefully on the right side of procurement law and ensure that it does not penalise its ability to operate in a competitive market or leave itself exposed to legal challenge as companies have the right to organise their tax affairs how they choose.
- Clarified that the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 provide for contracting authorities to exclude a supplier on the grounds of tax evasion and the Council adheres to those regulations.
- Noted that issues concerning tax avoidance were significantly more complex, the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 do not make provision for discretionary exclusions based on concerns about matters such as tax arrangements or beneficial ownerships.
- Highlighted the budget risks to the Council as the due diligence and compliance checking required would be complex and the risk of delivery of core services in sectors with complex ownerships and tax structures, such as the care sector where private equity funding arrangements were impacting on suppliers in the sector.
- Recognised the merit in examining the Council's policies and procedures, striving for best practice and that would be done via the select committee.
- Noted that in making practical changes the Council must recognise that the impending change in Public Contracts Regulations 2015 combined with internal improvements to suppliers, conduct requirements, compliance and contract management would go a significant way to achieving the desired outcomes and provide a platform for further enhancements.

Jonathan Essex confirmed that he was in support of the referral of the motion to the Resources and Performance Select Committee.

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

Therefore it was **RESOLVED** that:

The motion be referred to the Resources and Performance Select Committee for consideration.

## **53/22 SURREY PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/2023 [ITEM 9]**

The Leader as Chairman of the People, Performance and Development Committee (PPDC) introduced the report and highlighted that the three main areas it covered related to the remuneration of Chief Officers, the responsibility of the PPDC in relation to the appointments of Chief Officers and the Council's policy on equal pay, redundancy and severance. He noted that the Statement reflected the positive outcome of the negotiations with the Trade Unions: UNISON and GMB, resulting in the agreed pay settlement. In addition to the inflation increase awards to those at the lower end of the pay scale, the incremental pay progression would continue with effect from 1 April 2022 for staff with headroom within their individual grade.

**RESOLVED:**

That Council agreed the Pay Policy Statement for 2022/2023.

**54/22 SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S DRAFT 2021/2022 MODERN SLAVERY STATEMENT [ITEM 10]**

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources introduced the report and noted that the impending changes to the Modern Slavery Act 2015 meant that local authorities would soon become subject to Section 54 of the Act requiring the publication of an annual Modern Slavery Statement. She noted that modern slavery is a heinous practice affecting millions of people worldwide and in line with the Council's ethos of no one left behind, the Council should care how its services are procured and delivered. The Council was being asked to approve the Council's first Statement to be published in September in accordance with the Home Office's timeframe. She explained that the Statement was developed by an officer with prior experience on the matter and had been developed using best practice ensuring that the Council's policies and practices mitigate the risks of modern slavery in its supply chains.

**RESOLVED:**

That Council approved Surrey County Council's draft 2021/2022 Modern Slavery Statement (see Annex).

**55/22 ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL – MEMBER DEVELOPMENT [ITEM 11]**

The Chair noted that the amended recommendations had been circulated within the supplementary agenda.

The Chairman of the Member Development Steering Group (MDSG) introduced the report and noted that the MDSG was a cross-party group responsible for overseeing all-Member training and support. He thanked the members of the MDSG for their constructive challenge and input and noted that the report detailed the Member development activity over the past year. He noted that the MDSG welcomed the Council's reaccreditation of the Charter Plus status in September 2021, in recognition of the Council's development programme. The MDSG had agreed multiple priorities for improvement for next year, such as implementing the recommendations of the Charter Plus assessment. He highlighted the report's amended recommendations.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That Council endorsed the current approach to Member development and agreed that it is equitable and effective.
2. That Council endorsed the approach of striving to continuously improve the Council's member development offer – and approved the priorities for improvement as set out in the report.

**56/22 ONGOING IMPROVEMENTS TO COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY [ITEM 12]**

The Chair of the Select Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs' Group introduced the report and highlighted that scrutiny had developed in the Council over the last few years. He noted that it was taken more seriously, the select committees were

undertaking in depth preparation with officers, the chairs and the vice-chairs and with Members, and experienced officers had helped drive scrutiny forward. He noted that Members of the opposition parties had been more involved than ever before and select committees were challenging each other to ensure that they were making a greater number of recommendations.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That Members noted and commented on the future improvement work identified within this report.
2. That Members reviewed the new protocol on scrutiny of Council companies and agreed to add it to the Constitution of the Council.
3. That the Scrutiny Business Manager is appointed as the Statutory Scrutiny Officer for Surrey County Council to cover the Governance Lead Manager's maternity leave.

**57/22 MEMBER CONDUCT PANEL REPORT [ITEM 13]**

The Chair as Chairman of the Member Conduct Panel introduced the report and explained that the Panel had noted that the Member had fully co-operated with the investigation and had voluntarily admitted and apologised for his conduct.

**RESOLVED:**

That Council noted the decision sheet of the Member Conduct Panel of 23 May 2022 attached as an appendix.

**58/22 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION [ITEM 14]**

The Chair noted that an addendum report had been published in the supplementary agenda and included an additional recommendation seeking special dispensation for Jan Mason.

The Leader introduced the report and noted that the amendment to the Scheme of Delegation related to the Stage Two Travel Assistance Appeals, it was proposed that officers be allowed to sit on that Panel.

The Leader and the Chair wished Jan Mason a speedy recovery.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the executive function changes to the Officer Scheme of Delegation in relation to home to school transport reviews approved by the Leader in June 2022 be noted (as set out in Annex 1).
2. That the amendments to the Terms of Reference for the Appeals and Representation Panel be noted (as set out in paragraph 6).
3. That Jan Mason may continue to be absent from meetings until December 2022 by reason of ill health. The Council looks forward to welcoming her back in due course.

**59/22 REPORT OF THE CABINET [ITEM 15]**

The Leader presented the report of the Cabinet meeting held on 31 May 2022.

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

- A. The Surrey Transport Plan (Fourth Edition) – Adoption *(as set out in the Cabinet paper from 31 May 2022)*

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That Council approved the Surrey Transport Plan including launch of new related Surrey website pages on the 13 July 2022.

That the Council agreed:

2. That the Cabinet noted the efforts that have gone into extending the engagement with communities and partners over the new Surrey Transport Plan including analysis and feedback received from the statutory public consultation and subsequent additional targeted engagement.
3. That Cabinet noted how delivering the Surrey Transport Plan associated policies, strategies and measures will support the Climate Change Delivery Plan.
4. That Cabinet noted the capital investment required to deliver the plan as set out in the 2022/23 budget and beyond in line with the Medium-Term Financial Plan.
5. That Cabinet recommended to Council that authority be delegated to the Executive Director, for Environment, Transport & Infrastructure, in discussion with the Cabinet Member for Transport & Infrastructure for any final changes that may be necessary to allow publication of the plan on 13 July 2022 and any key changes thereafter to comply with new government policy.
6. That Cabinet thanked the Members of the Greener Futures Reference Group for their work in developing the Plan thus far.

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

- B. Surrey Infrastructure Plan - Phase 2 Schemes
- C. Minerals and Waste Development Scheme
- D. 2021/22 Outturn Financial Report
  
- E. Quarterly Report on Decisions Taken Under Special Urgency Arrangements: 14 May 2022 - 1 July 2022

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That Council noted that there had been no urgent decisions in the last two months.
2. That the report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 31 May 2022 be adopted.

## **60/22 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.

[Meeting ended at: 12.59 pm]

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**Chair**

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## **Leader's Statement – County Council, 12 July 2022**

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Madam Chair, Members, I doubt any of us here in this chamber have been oblivious to the unprecedented times in our national political landscape.

The events of last week, and beyond, have demonstrated the importance of good, clear leadership in being able to deliver your ambitions, whether that's in public service or private enterprise.

There are many fine examples within this council, from Joanna Killian down through the organisation, and indeed within our elected Members – committed to public service and making the lives of our residents better.

Politically, we also stand by these principles.

We have reviewed and revised our Select Committee system and put a renewed emphasis on scrutiny – to give Members across this chamber the chance to properly engage, question, understand the work that is going on and the policies we aim to put in place.

As a Cabinet we welcome scrutiny, from Members, from residents, from the local media – as we know it's an essential part of leadership.

Without that confidence and trust, we would not have been able to make the progress we have.

We have set out our ambition and we are steadfast in our determination and our effort in delivering it.

Enabling a greener future for Surrey, tackling health inequality, empowering our communities, growing a sustainable economy, and ultimately ensuring no one is left behind.

Whilst chaos and uncertainty have spread through our national politics, here in Surrey we carry on, united in our mission and delivering day in day out for the people who call our county home.

Madam Chair, as well as our great teams here within the council, we couldn't truly deliver a better quality of life for our residents without working with our partners across the county.

We are one part of a Surrey-wide ecosystem, all interdependent on each other, and when working together what we can achieve is limitless.

County Council, Surrey Police, Surrey Fire & Rescue Service, the local NHS, Districts & Boroughs, the voluntary and community sector, transport providers, utility companies and many more.

COVID showed in the clearest, quickest terms the impact of that partnership, coordinated through Surrey's Local Resilience Forum.

That Forum remains in place day-to-day, assessing and understanding risks, mitigating those risks, and ready to stand up quickly to respond to any incident. Forty-four organisations across Surrey working together – our residents should rest easy that the systems are in place to keep us safe – and I'm pleased to see the new Independent Secretariat now in place to coordinate that work going forward.

Another really positive recent development in our partnership working has been the formal introduction this month of the new Integrated Care System – an evolution of our



relationship as a council with our local health services, ensuring that people's health and care needs are met more effectively and efficiently.

It will help make sure people are not passed around the system, that acute health providers and the social care system is more joined up, with joint working and joint appointments already in place to take that integration forward.

It will also help us take that next step together in reducing health inequalities – tackling the wider determinants of health more effectively – things like education, housing, pollution - to relieve pressure on our health and care system in the long term and ultimately to improve life outcomes for our residents. In essence to deliver our prevention and early intervention agenda.

This partnership will also be evident through our work together 'on the ground' in our communities – listening, understanding, and better targeting tailored support.

That local engagement is so key in delivering our No One Left Behind ambition, and everything that strengthens that community understanding and partnership should be celebrated.

We are determined to use every tool at our disposal to improve that work – whether it's co-designing the future of town centres with the community like in Horley; using our library spaces to bring more support together in one place and opening access for communities to use more flexibly; creating new, modern community hubs like the plans in Sunbury; or ensuring we support local community events - getting under the skin of what local areas need and want to make them better places. And of course, we are rolling out community link officers to be our eyes and ears, so we truly understand what issues we need to address in those communities.

We'll be there – the council and its partners – for all residents.

Members, at the last council meeting I announced that the member allocation for highways improvements in your divisions would double, and since then there has been a workshop to demonstrate how the council is putting the tools in place to support us to engage with residents effectively around this type of local decision making.

The old, tired, and bureaucratic local and joint committee system does not properly engage residents in the things that matter to them – we must show more imagination, more energy, and have more meaningful conversations with more residents and partners, in order to really help our communities thrive.

For every one of us, that is our passion, that's why we're here – talking and understanding the people who elect us.

Let's embrace new ways of doing that more effectively.

Let's make it happen.

Madam Chair, I am incredibly proud of Surrey as a place.

I'm proud of our communities, our people, our businesses big and small.

I'm proud of our schools and our young people.

I'm proud of our villages, our towns, our universities.

And I'm proud of our environment, our beautiful countryside that offers so much benefit to everyone here and beyond.

It is one of our most treasured assets, and I'm proud of the role Surrey County Council has in managing, protecting, and enhancing that rich biodiversity and nature.

Last week I had the honour of attending the Queens Baton Relay for the Commonwealth Games that start in Birmingham later this month.

The baton had travelled to over 70 countries around the world before coming to the UK, and Surrey was chosen from a competitive list of entries across the country to host a leg of the relay.

The setting, at Newlands Corner, was superb – with the added bonus of our magnificent new Visitor Centre being open.

There have been many inspirational Surrey residents chosen to be baton bearers and our wonderful county was chosen to host it.

Thanks to the efforts of some brilliant council officers and colleagues from Active Surrey, the event was a great success, with local school children sharing in the moment, along with our partners at Surrey Police, Surrey Fire & Rescue Service, Surrey Hills, and Guildford Borough Council.

It really encapsulated what a great place this county is.

But it also demonstrated what a responsibility we have, together with residents and partners, to protect our county.

We have acted over the last few weeks to restore and put protections in place for some hugely important rural sites in Surrey, including working to restore the chalk grassland at the Downs near Caterham.

We're working with Surrey Wildlife Trust – another important partner – to develop a nature reserve in East Ewell, and we recently worked with five other councils to purchase Tice's Meadow in Farnham to protect the long-term future of its natural habitat.

We also stand ready to react quickly – with no better example of this than the excellent response of Surrey Fire & Rescue Service last week to contain the wildfire at Bisley Ranges.

The cause of that fire is not yet known, but I should take this opportunity, ahead of the summer, to remind everyone to be careful and considerate when out in our wonderful countryside – please do not take barbeques out with you, pack a picnic instead and dispose of cigarettes and litter correctly.

As you all know, we have a comprehensive Climate Change Delivery Plan in action, with good progress already underway but plenty more to do.

Our transport plan is a huge part of that – aimed at cutting the 41% of Surrey's carbon emissions that is caused by transport with practical measures to help people to get around Surrey easily and sustainably.

More walking and cycling routes, more electric vehicle charging points, more bus services, as well as improving internet connections for home-working and redesigning neighbourhoods to enable easier access to local services, lessening the need to travel by car.

We also saw the on-demand bus service go live in Mole Valley last week. Two electric minibuses offering a shared door to door bus service for residents which can be used

to take them to a doctors or hospital appointment, to access further education and training, or to go shopping.

With the ability to book trips to and from outside the area and running alongside the existing bus service this will help people who may be isolated due to their rural location or have had little choice but to use their car.

We will roll this service out across the whole county over time, and it will be a really important part of not only hitting our carbon neutral targets but also opening up our communities.

Travelling more actively – walking, cycling, scooting, running, whichever you prefer – also has huge health benefits for our residents and can save money. It's win-win, but we recognise it's not always easy in Surrey – this plan helps to tackle that.

We're committed to this agenda, and there is yet more to come. We will not falter.

It's our collective responsibility to protect this wonderful place of ours.

Madam Chair, last time we assembled as full council, I spoke at length about the measures we have put in place to support our residents with the cost-of-living crisis.

Our dedicated welfare support webpages and helpline, Surrey Crisis Fund, our work with the Community Foundation for Surrey and other voluntary sector groups, our lobbying of government and use of the hardship fund.

That work continues in earnest, with targeted support reaching the most vulnerable.

One achievement since that meeting in May that I'm particularly proud of is our pay agreement for Surrey County Council staff, through positive and productive discussions with the unions.

We are implementing a phased salary increase, meaning those paid the least get the most – our lowest paid workers seeing an increase of 7.85%.

The percentage increase drops further up the scales, with those in the top pay bands receiving no increase.

We think this is fair, responsible and, in very real terms, enables us to help those who need it most.

We will continue to work collaboratively with our partners, always striving to improve people's quality of life and life chances.

To protect our wonderful county and make it the best place it can possibly be – for everyone.

On that note I will update our next council meeting on where we are with our county deal ambitions, but I have had some productive conversations with our District and Borough colleagues over the past few weeks and I am confident that we will put together a compelling bid for the benefit of the residents of Surrey.

Madam Chair, while other areas of our political landscape grab the attention, we crack on and stay true to our ambitions and principles.

We won't falter, we'll adapt to work with the new government that is formed, tackle any challenge that is put in our way, be open to new ideas and opportunities.

Always working hard on behalf of Surrey's residents and businesses.

Thank you.