

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL HELD AT
WOODHATCH PLACE, 11 COCKSHOT HILL, REIGATE, SURREY, RH2 8EF,
ON 11 OCTOBER 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	r Mark Sugden
Marisa Heath	Richard Tear
* Trefor Hogg	* Alison Todd
r 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

r = Remote Attendance

61/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies for absence were received from Colin Cross, Fiona Davidson, Paul Follows, John Furey, Trefor Hogg, Scott Lewis, Julia McShane, Penny Rivers, Hazel Watson.

Members who attended remotely and had no voting rights were Robert Hughes, Mark Sugden.

62/22 MINUTES [Item 2]

The minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 12 July 2022 were submitted, confirmed and signed.

63/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were none.

64/22 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS [Item 4]

The Chair:

- Led the Council in a minute's silence of respect and reflection regarding the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.
- Led Members in announcing 'God Save the King!'
- Led the Council in moments of reflection for former Surrey County Councillors David Ivison and Rosemary Scott.
- Led the Council in a minute's silence in respect of Surrey County Councillor Alison Todd (née Griffiths) who recently passed.
- Noted that in a change to normal protocol, she had been asked by Surrey County Council's Chief Executive if she may speak in tribute to Alison on behalf of the Council's officers.

The Chief Executive spoke in tribute to Alison Todd, noting that she was an impressive, dedicated and ambitious councillor and brought a real insight and knowledge to her work with officers. She used her experiences to try and make the world a better place, focussing on improving mental health services, accessibility to good health care and tackling domestic violence and spoke of her ambitions for children and young people. She was an inspiration for all those who worked with her.

- Noted that may Alison Todd rest in peace and on behalf of Members, sent love and best wishes to her family.
- Noted that the rest of her announcements could be found in the Council agenda front sheet.

65/22 LEADER'S STATEMENT [Item 5]

The Leader of the Council made a detailed statement.

A copy of the statement is attached as Appendix A. Members raised the following topics:

- Noted that there remained problems concerning Home to School Transport assistance, including communications issues experienced by parents seeking

information on their applications for assistance; many unnecessary appeals as a result of the policy being too rigidly applied, and examples of parents experiencing delays and difficulties in arranging transport for their children.

- Stressed that lessons needed to be learned quickly to avoid any repetition, and that sufficient resources were needed as well as regular communication.
- The Leader's apology was welcomed, and support was offered to finding solutions to address the problems. Surrey Live, BBC Radio Surrey and BBC South Today were thanked for publicising the issues raised above.
- Clarified that there was no suggestion from the Residents' Association and Independents Group that Your Fund Surrey should be closed down - the motion asked for a pause.
- Noted the challenging economic situation for the country and county.
- Noted that Woking Borough Council held its cost-of-living summit a few weeks ago and contributions from the Council's staff were welcomed; an action plan was being developed to help people in Woking and disappointment was expressed that the Council had decided not to do the same thing across Surrey.
- Asked where the warm hubs would be located and when these would be available, in order to provide certainty to residents.
- Whilst the Council still referred to 'no one left behind', the support on offer was not enough for people to make ends meet, more people were being left behind nationally and in Surrey. An example was given of a family without a car who challenged the mileage allowance that they had been given for the whole winter term for their child.
- Queried why youth centres and thirty-five local childcare hubs had been closed whilst started investing in community centres elsewhere through the £100 million Your Fund Surrey programme.
- The Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee had reviewed the new targeted family centre model without evidence to compare to what was there before, and it was instead suggested that there could be initiatives in all communities to help with education.
- Asked whether all poorly heated and insulated homes within Surrey should be in an Investment Zone, as a result of the cost of living and climate crises. Asked where the proposed Investment Zone in Surrey would be located, and questioned whether the Government's rush for local authorities to decide their location by the end of the week was to exclude residents from being consulted.
- Asked the Leader to provide the Government with a plan and asked whether he agreed that the Council should be investing in better universal services and delivering a greener future for the whole county.
- Quoted from the recent review of the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan about the need for the Council to lessen its funding gap which prevents the alignment of projects with what needs to happen, and asked the Leader to call on the Government to enable the Council to invest in the jobs its needs to directly deliver against those priorities to make Surrey greener and fairer.
- Acknowledged that a lot had changed since the Council last met, noting the new monarch and new Prime Minister.
- Despite the Leader saying that 'we need to batten down the hatches and hold firm', asked whether the Leader was aware that every Government department had received a letter from the Chancellor of the Exchequer telling them that they needed to make more efficiency savings.
- Noted that in facing up to more cuts in the Council's budget, asked whether the Leader had any correspondence with the Government on the matter and what support Surrey's Members of Parliament were providing.
- Asked how the Council could accommodate more cuts to vital services, and how this would impact on services and residents.

- Asked whether the Leader was aware that in the coming months and year 600,000 fixed term rate mortgages would come to an end, asked what the Leader's plan was for those people who would no longer be able to afford their mortgage payments and may soon be homeless.
- Contrary to the Leader's comment, some Members felt that the administration was abandoning Surrey's communities, noting the issues around Home to School Transport, children in care, Adult Social Care, fire service coverage, the cost-of-living crisis and youth centres; they felt that it had failed to tackle the problems.
- Highlighted the upcoming difficult winter for many nationally with rising rents, mortgage rates and energy bills, the increased use of food banks and the new warm hubs and asked whether that was all there was to show for twelve years of Conservative Party Government.
- Thanked the Leader for recognising Members' role in the community and the importance of charities and for his offer to ensure that Members could work flexibly to ensure that Surrey's communities were supported.
- Referring to the Leader's comments about building a directory of support, asked whether that would be shared with Members before it was published so that they can add their invaluable local knowledge.
- Noted that warm hubs were already being established in many areas across Surrey before the notification from the Council was released, those warm hubs would also include free food; asked that the Council and the Leader reaches out to other organisations to see what they were already doing.

66/22 CHANGES TO CABINET PORTFOLIOS AND APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES [Item 6]

The Leader introduced the report and noted that the revised portfolios and portfolio holders were triggered by the resignation of Becky Rush as the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources. He congratulated Becky Rush on her new job working with a multi-academy trust and thanked her for the detailed knowledge she provided during her time as a Cabinet Member. He welcomed Ayesha Azad as the new Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, and reported the appointment of Denise Turner-Stewart as the new Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety. He thanked Steve Bax who stepped down as the Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment and welcomed Paul Deach into that role. He asked Members to familiarise themselves with the new portfolio holders.

Two Members made the following comments:

- Noted that the former Cabinet Member for Children and Families who presided over a series of failures had moved to the portfolio for Education and Learning, and the former Cabinet Member for Education and Learning who left a Home to School Transport service in disarray had been upgraded to become Deputy Leader. He asked whether those Members were really the Leader's first choice and who came second.
- Sought clarification on the correct portfolio title for the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, having recently received an email signed-off from the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Housing.

The Leader responded noting that the Cabinet Member for Children and Families continued to have housing within her portfolio.

RESOLVED:

1. That the changes to Cabinet appointments and Portfolios set out in Annex 1 and 2 to this report be noted.
2. That Jonathan Hulley be appointed as a Select Committee Task Group Lead for the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee for the remainder of the 2022/23 Council Year.
3. That Robert Hughes be appointed as a Select Committee Task Group Lead for the Resources and Performance Select Committee for the remainder of the 2022/23 Council Year.
4. That the following committee appointments be noted:
 - Steve Bax to Resources and Performance Select Committee
 - Becky Rush to Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee
 - Mark Sugden to Audit and Governance Committee

[In addition to the above:

- Tim Hall to the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee
- Clare Curran to the People, Performance and Development Committee in place of Becky Rush]

67/22 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME [Item 7]

Questions:

Notice of twenty-six questions had been received. The questions and replies were published in the second supplementary agenda (items 7 and 9) on 10 October 2022.

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

(Q2) Catherine Powell noted that on the response to part a) she asked the Cabinet Member to advise how many Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) were actually performed within the twenty weeks and to advise whether children with social workers assigned were also included. Regarding part b) she queried whether the response noting 'to strengthen a systemic approach' entailed further paperwork as opposed to streamlining. Regarding c) she did not feel that the response answered her question, she sought a yes or no answer. Regarding part e) she asked what about previously Looked After Children and children with a social worker, those two issues had not been addressed.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning noted that she did not have the details to hand to respond to the supplementary questions and would look to provide that information in writing. She was delighted to have received many questions relating to her portfolio and highlighted that there was a monthly drop-in session covering Children, Families and Learning which was open to all and she would be happy to cover detailed questions in that forum.

(Q3) Chris Townsend queried a sentence in the response which stated: 'Where high demand exists between residential areas and places of learning, local bus services

and coaches are already provided to meet the needs of entitled pupils.' He sought an explanation as he was not aware of any local bus services that were already provided.

Jonathan Essex sought clarification on what the 'exciting proposal' mentioned in the response was.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth responded to Chris Townsend noting that the Council did subsidise and put several bus services on to get children to schools; he would ask the team to provide the list concerning the Member's area. Responding to Jonathan Essex, he noted that as stated further in the response the Council was providing a half fare bus scheme for everyone aged under twenty years old to encourage public transport use - irrelevant to whether they are in education or not - the Council from April 2023 would also be following the Government's £2.00 bus fare cap in January to March 2023.

(Q4) Michaela Martin requested more detail on the South East 19 and what it involved; she also asked what funding would there be to support schools that were struggling with high Special Educational Needs and Disabilities cross-border issues, low numbers and high costs which fall outside the remit.

Catherine Powell referred to the Leader's Statement that abandoning Surrey's communities was not something that the administration would ever do, however the response to the third paragraph seemed to indicate that the Council would be deliberately doing that, and she asked for the Cabinet Member to advise.

In response to Michaela Martin, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning noted that she would provide more detail on the South East 19 to the Member.

Regarding the second supplementary question from Michaela Martin, and Catherine Powell's supplementary question, she noted that those questions required a detailed explanation which she had tried to encapsulate in her response. She noted that schools funding was based on the National Funding Formula (NFF), which was devolved funding through the Council direct to schools; it was set nationally and was agreed annually with all schools through their statutory Schools Forum. She reiterated paragraph two of her response and noted that there was no scope for the Council to offer additional funding to schools as schools were funded on a per capita pupil basis.

(Q6) Robert Evans noted that all Surrey first preference offers were below the national average - marginally in some cases - and asked the Cabinet Member what percentage of children in the county did not receive any of their preferences of schools. He also asked what how the Council could accommodate situations where parents were only offered a place at a religious school when they had expressly asked not to be placed at such a school.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning noted that she did not have that detailed information to hand, she would liaise with the Admissions team and would circulate that information to the Member.

(Q7) Carla Morson noted that the Council held £22 million of Section 106 funding, she requested a breakdown of where that money came from and how much more the Council was likely to expect. Regarding the breakdown of funding for Education, Highways and Transport she asked which boroughs and divisions was covered and where the money come from.

George Potter noted that the Corporate Governance and Standards Committee at Guildford Borough Council (GBC) had recently conducted a review of Section 106 funding, and one of the findings was that of the Section 106 contributions received within the borough, about £8.25 million sat with Surrey County Council. GBC was undertaking an exercise to communicate with all ward councillors the allocations within their own wards, what had been received and what it was earmarked for and what was spent. He asked whether the County Council could undertake a similar exercise concerning Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions and to communicate that to all divisional Members.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth noted that he would provide the information requested to both Members.

(Q9) Stephen Cooksey asked whether one of the reasons for the decrease in waste and recycling handled by those Community Recycling Centres (CRCs) listed was the reduction in access for residents due to the limited opening hours. He also asked how requiring residents to drive from Dorking to Leatherhead to deposit materials on four days a week aligned with the Council's climate change policies, which sought to reduce vehicle use.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Environment referred to Q22 which stated that there had not been an increase in fly-tipping so people were taking their recycling on the days that the CRCs were open, there had not been any complaints on the matter and she noted that she was happy to liaise with the Member on any particular concerns about his local CRC. Resourcing was the issue and the focus must be on increasing reuse as well as increasing recycling.

(Q10) Lance Spencer noted that the Independent Travel Allowance (ITA) option did make sense for some parents, and that it would save the Council money. He referred to the last paragraph of the response that said that 'No SEND Children have had their solo transport removed' which seemed positive. However, referring to the example in his question he asked whether it was the Council's policy that to secure that sort of transport, the parent must go through both stages of the Appeals Panel, as the parent in that case was traumatised by the experience.

Catherine Powell sought clarification from the Cabinet Member regarding 16+ transport, noting that her understanding was that the policy was changed to automatically provide a bursary rather than providing transport. This had caused huge problems within her division, and she asked whether the policy would be reviewed this year to look at whether there was a reason why it was not appropriate for a particular family; for example if they did not have access to a car or if their child used a wheelchair.

In response to Lance Spencer, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning clarified that it was not the intention that any individual family would be forced through the appeals process in the circumstances that he outlined. She reinforced the Leader's apology to those families who had experienced anxiety and delays in the recent weeks relating to the Home to School Travel Assistance Policy.

Responding to Catherine Powell, she noted that the new Home to School Travel Assistance Policy was introduced in the spring term with effect from this year. The Council was currently in the process of conducting a 'lessons learned' review to see what had gone wrong this year. She noted that it was too soon to commit to a review of the Policy which was only in its very early weeks of operation.

(Q11) Catherine Baart asked the Cabinet Member to provide an idea of what the timescale was for that policy being reviewed by the Council.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience noted that he did not have an exact date but would try and find that out and let the Member know.

(Q12) Jonathan Essex noted that he understood from the response that the actual increase in High Needs Block funding was £11.5 million a year less than in the table provided because there was an equivalent decrease in the money direct to schools, which made the increase in High Needs Block funding net of the amount poached 32.5% which was less than the percentage increase to special schools and less than the EHCPs. He asked what level of shortfall the Council was getting from the Government for providing like for like as it seemed as though the Council was being asked to support special needs children with less money per pupil going forward while the Council received the same money per pupil as previous years for other children.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning noted that she did not entirely disagree with the Member's analysis of the situation. She noted that it was difficult to provide comparison on a like for like basis throughout the years because of issues such as teachers' pay and conditions, she would liaise with Finance colleagues to see whether that comparative information was available and if it was, she would provide it to the Member. She noted that the shortfall between the funding through the High Needs Block and the actual cost to the Council of providing the services that children with additional needs required had been a challenge for the Council and many other local authorities nationally. The disparity in funding was a large issue for local government, which many councils and the County Councils Network (CCN) had been lobbying about and which the Government was partially starting to address through the Safety Valve agreements with certain authorities.

(Q13) Mark Sugden noted that the reason for the change by the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames (RBK) was to restrict inappropriate use of the road by Heavy Goods Vehicles and particularly heavy plant machinery. The concern remained that because of how it would be laid out, vehicles that could only enter and exit through Chessington would now only be able to enter and exit those two industrial locations through Claygate. Referring to the traffic survey data undertaken by RBK which had been shared with the Council, he sought a detailed understanding of the Council's interpretation of that traffic survey data.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience noted that as traffic survey data was complex, he would be happy to have a discussion with the Member outside of the meeting to discuss the implications.

(Q15) Catherine Powell noted that she was not entirely convinced by the response in terms of her understanding of what the process was in place, as more than 50% of the increase in pupils - equating to six - in schools in her division were from Hampshire and that number was increasing. She sought an explanation of how the Council's interface with Hampshire County Council worked in terms of planning for school places. She also asked the Cabinet Member to advise what the Edge-u-cate tool did and how it worked. The transport data from the Government in terms of forecasting ten years ahead only referred to the numbers of houses within the districts or boroughs, it did not take account of their localised concentration.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning noted that to provide the level of detail that the Member requested, she offered the Member the opportunity to meet with the officers involved in school place planning for her area in order to explore the issue in greater depth.

(Q16) Robert Evans reiterated that the question asked what progress had been made and the response did not answer that, with the benefit of hindsight he asked the Cabinet Member whether he felt he could have done better with his answer, given more information and done more to excite the Council.

Denise Turner-Stewart asked the Cabinet Member to confirm how much involvement the communities had with the proposals, as the aspiration was that it was essential that the communities were working with officers to generate local solutions.

Responding to Denise Turner-Stewart the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth provided assurance that the communities were involved in the process, there had been a huge number of suggestions from the communities on where to put Active Travel improvements, including low traffic areas. He and officers were excited that the Department for Transport had fully funded the scheme in the Member's own area where a 'School Streets' pilot could be delivered, followed by further pilots and the delivery of low traffic 'Liveable Neighbourhoods'.

(Q18) Stephen Cooksey noted that given the increased messages from Government ministers indicating that it was a key policy of the Government to remove planning and environmental controls and due to the limited information available regarding Investment Zone policies, he asked the Leader what guarantee he had that the removal of planning and environmental controls in Investment Zones would be acceptable to the Council and would not undermine climate change policies.

In response, the Leader of the Council noted that the Member was picking up on some national noise in anticipation of what the Investment Zones would look like. There was no detail at present, and he noted that the Investment Zones in Surrey and nationally would only go ahead with the agreement of the planning authority.

(Q20) Jonathan Essex noted that the response towards the end outlined what the Government was doing going forward about the early years support for social workers, however his understanding from the exit interviews from those leaving Surrey was due to the issues of pay and workload. He asked whether the Cabinet Member thought that what the Government was doing was enough and if it was not, could she tell Members what she was doing to lobby the Government on the matter.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Children and Families noted that the point had been reiterated frequently at Council, in Select Committees and various settings, that a great deal of lobbying goes on and would continue to go on. She noted that having heard the supplementary question, the numerous questions to the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning and the Leader's apology, she reminded Members that it was a vital moment for community leadership on behalf of Surrey's children, young people and their families. The Council earlier in the year united behind a motion that committed Members to support the continuous improvement of the Council's Children's Services; all had a collective responsibility in such matters.

(Q21) Nick Darby asked the Cabinet Member when the chasing letter from the Council was sent to HM Revenue and Customs and what were its contents. He requested a copy of the letter.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources noted that she would provide a copy of the chasing letter to the Member.

(Q22) Robert Evans noted that the response was puzzling that the amount of fly-tipping had decreased because many Members were concerned that fly-tipping remained prevalent. He asked the Cabinet Member what more could be done in conjunction with the district and borough councils to address the issue of fly-tipping, and whether she, or the Council was likely to support the Local Government Association (LGA) in their call on the Government to increase the levels of fines for people found guilty of fly-tipping. An average fine was £335, which was likely not enough to deter those people who make an industry out of fly-tipping.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Environment noted that the figures provided showed the fly-tipping that had occurred on council-owned lands. Where the Council and the district and borough councils could help each other and work with partners was to try and get an overall picture of where fly-tipping was happening on private land. In her view that average fine was insufficient, fly-tipping was horrendous and should have a very high penalty to it; she would look into the LGA's lobbying on the issue and would discuss it with the Cabinet.

(Q23) Will Forster noted that the response was heartbreaking, effectively stating that 10% of the Council's staff had used a food bank in the last two years. He welcomed some of the steps that the Council was taking but noted that the first sentence in the response was troubling as it stated that the Council did not collect that information. He asked the Leader whether he would agree that the Council should be asking staff if they use a food bank and what the Council could do as the employer to help them in the future.

In response, the Leader disagreed that the Council should ask that question as it was a private matter for staff. He noted that the Council was giving support to its staff in terms of looking at salary levels, and the response outlined what the Council did to address that for those in the lower pay brackets. He was sure that the Council would do the same next year. He also noted that if the Trade Unions or staff wanted to provide the Council with that information voluntarily then they could do so.

(Q26) Catherine Baart noted that the response was faint-hearted regarding the tackling of Surrey's car habit which the figures established was strong and embedded into the Surrey way of life; it caused many problems and it was not just a highways issue. She asked whether the Cabinet Member could request each of his colleagues to look in their own areas to see what could be done to address car use.

The Chair commented that in her view, car use had helped women to become more independent, and that it was a safe and reliable form of transport which was not all bad.

Catherine Powell referred to the Zero Emission Fleet by 2030 and asked the Cabinet Member whether the zero emissions included ensuring that all hydrogen was green hydrogen produced entirely from renewable energy. The quantity of green hydrogen that was available in the UK today would not power the fleet that the Council had already purchased.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth agreed with the Chair's comments. Responding to Catherine Baart he noted that the key points of the Surrey Local Transport Plan 4 was to provide sustainable alternatives to residents. The Council was investing £49 million in zero emission buses, Metrobus

was expecting their first 2,000 buses shortly and the Council was funding an additional thirty-five; the east of the county within the next few years would be completely net zero on the bus network. The Council was working with its other operators around electric buses. He noted that the Council's walking and cycling awards from the Department of Transport of £13 million and the fact that every district and borough would have a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) would accelerate the shift away from private car use. He stressed that it would not be a one-size-fits-all solution for every resident in Surrey, car use would still be needed. Responding to Catherine Powell, he explained that the Council would be looking at using only electric or green or blue hydrogen - there would be no grey hydrogen - and the Council's bus operators confirmed that they would be using only green hydrogen.

The Chair noted that the Council had recently held a wonderful open day at Woodhatch Place exhibiting a collection of sustainable vehicles. She wished that more Members had been able to attend as it was very informative, and she hoped that if a similar event took place in future, attendance would be greater.

Cabinet Member Briefings:

These were also published in the second supplementary agenda (items 7 and 9) on 10 October 2022.

Members made the following comments:

Deputy Cabinet Member for Levelling Up: on the local area coordination function, **Nick Harrison** noted that three local area coordinators had been appointed and he asked what they did, how many more were planned to be appointed, how were they funded and what was the criteria for selecting them.

In response, the Deputy Cabinet Member explained that there were currently three local area coordinators in place and the Council was in the process of recruiting another local area coordinator for the Old Dean area. She explained that their role was to work directly with families and communities on the ground, working on a one-to-one basis supporting families and residents. That was in line with achieving the Council's ambition that 'no one is left behind'; the Council needed to get closer to its communities and the local area coordinators fulfilled that aim. The Council had funded these roles and would review the progress and the value provided.

Cabinet Member for Adults and Health: on delivery of the Accommodation with Care and Support Strategy; in the Inner Circle Consulting report that was shared following the recent Member Development Session on Housing, there was a graphic on page 43 concerning the supported housing stock which seemed to indicate that some areas had relatively high current provision versus others. **Catherine Powell** asked the Cabinet Member to explain why the provision was in those areas that already had the highest levels of provision.

In response, the Cabinet Member noted that he did not have the details to hand and would respond to the Member outside of the meeting.

Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways: on parking enforcement, **Nick Harrison** asked which moving traffic violations would also be included in the contract. Noting that the degree of enforcement that would be possible depended on the resources inputted, he asked whether there was an intention to increase or decrease the level of enforcement and asked whether the aim was to withdraw those projects and services from the districts and boroughs.

In response, regarding moving traffic enforcement violations, the Deputy Cabinet Member noted that examples included stopping on yellow boxes or non-permitted right- or left-hand turns. He noted that the Council had completed its first consultation on the Dennis Roundabout, Guildford, and the Council would look to put cameras to control stopping on the yellow box junction. He noted that there were plans for other junctions where safety risks had been identified, such plans would be consulted on fully with Members and residents before implementation. Regarding parking enforcement, the Council was bringing this in-house so that it could offer a fair and consistent service across Surrey, as there were currently different approaches in every district and borough. He noted that the intention was to increase the service, including out of hours provision, rather than reduce enforcement in response to concerns raised by residents. Regarding environmental maintenance, this had been brought back in-house in order to offer a fair and consistent service; many district and borough councils had decided to hand the service back to the County Council He noted that the new contracts would allow the Council to increase biodiversity gains, and the Council was working closely with the Surrey Wildlife Trust. He noted that the topics raised had been covered at the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee.

Cabinet Member for Property and Waste: on making savings on energy consumption and buildings through the establishment of an Energy Management Task Force, **Jonathan Essex** asked when the task force was established, what its targets were to reduce energy consumption in the Council's buildings and when it planned to achieve that target by.

In response, the Cabinet Member noted that the Energy Management Task Force was discussed at the recent meeting of the Resources and Performance Select Committee, officers were setting up the Energy Management Task Force to look at buildings such as Woodhatch Place and their lighting and heating. At present it was an officer group which she expected to also sit on as the Cabinet Member, she would provide the Member with the timescales once established.

68/22 STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS [Item 8]

There were none.

69/22 ORIGINAL MOTIONS [Item 9]

Under Standing Order 11.5 using her discretion the Chair took motion 9 (ii) first.

Item 9 (ii)

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

Under Standing Order 12.1 John O'Reilly moved:

This Council notes:

- That the Local Government Boundary Commission for England is currently undertaking a boundary review of Surrey, the recommendations of which will be implemented for the 2025 election.

This Council further notes:

- This Council's strong support for the retention of single member electoral divisions, as a way of maintaining clear democratic accountability and community connectiveness, in a county where many divisions already cover large geographical areas.

This Council resolves to:

- I. Write to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to state its request to retain single member divisions in the forthcoming boundary review.

John O'Reilly made the following points:

- Noted that the Council had begun the boundary review process which was being steered by a cross-party working group, the Council was considering whether to retain single Member divisions or to adopt multi-Member divisions.
- Noted that the working group did not favour the introduction of multi-Member divisions. The first option of keeping the current divisions and adding a Member would double the total Members which would be preposterous, and the second option of keeping the number of Members to eighty-one but to widen the divisions to contain two or three Members would detract from the communities that Members individually represent.
- Noted that on the basis that the above multi-Member options would not work, the Council was back to the system of single Member divisions that the Council had adopted for many years. It had its flaws but worked well and provided accountability and respected Members' communities.

The motion was formally seconded by Nick Harrison, who made the following comments:

- Noted that currently some of the Council's divisions were quite large, and making them even broader with multiple Members would create additional issues and conflicts between individual councillors.
- He was unaware of any other upper tier authorities that had adopted the multi-Member arrangement and noted that the Council should not change the current single Member divisions.

No comments were made by Members.

The proposer of the motion, John O'Reilly, made no further comments to conclude the debate.

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

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** that:

This Council notes:

- That the Local Government Boundary Commission for England is currently undertaking a boundary review of Surrey, the recommendations of which will be implemented for the 2025 election.

This Council further notes:

- This Council's strong support for the retention of single member electoral divisions, as a way of maintaining clear democratic accountability and community connectiveness, in a county where many divisions already cover large geographical areas.

This Council resolves to:

- I. Write to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England to state its request to retain single member divisions in the forthcoming boundary review.

Item 9 (i)

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

Under Standing Order 12.1 Bernie Muir moved:

This Council notes:

- This Government's long-term vision for transforming social care through reforms which include a cap on care costs of £86,000, a more generous means-test, a shift towards a 'fair' cost of care, and the ability for residents who arrange and fund their own care to ask their local authority to do it on their behalf.
- The consensus amongst local authorities and commentators, including the work undertaken by Newton Europe on behalf of the County Councils Network (CCN), that the £3.6bn allocated for Charging Reforms & Fair Cost of Care is substantially below the true likely cost of implementing such reforms.
- With uncertainty on whether the three-year Spending Review will proceed, financial planning in Surrey, as well as other councils up and down the country is taking place in the dark.
- The scale of additional cost impact represents a very real threat to the sustainability of the Council's finances if sufficient new funding is not provided by the Government to cover the cost of the new burdens on Surrey County Council.

This Council further notes:

- That 60% of Older People receiving Adult Social Care (ASC) services in Surrey currently privately fund their own care and will often purchase additional or enhanced services that are above meeting a person's Care Act eligible needs.
- That the Council will need to fund care for more people due to the increases to the capital threshold limits and as people reach the care cap. The changes apply to all people but will primarily impact older people.

This Council resolves to:

- I. Re-affirm its continued commitment to working with central government to seek sufficient resources and a fair distribution for Surrey, in order to meet current system pressures and fully fund reforms across the decade.
- II. Continue to push for the delay and phased implementation of charging reforms beyond 2023 to provide Surrey County Council with sufficient time to transform its operating models and prepare for effective implementation.
- III. Help ensure the development of Integrated Care Systems leads to a meaningful integration of health and social care.
- IV. Support the continued investment in public health to maximise the role councils can play in reducing health inequalities.
- V. Reinforce our commitment of tackling health inequalities across Surrey, ensuring no one is left behind.

Bernie Muir made the following points:

- Noted that with the rapidly ageing population and the increase in those with complex needs, a way needed to be found to pay for social care needs.
- The Council supported the Government's desire to tackle the long-term issue, but for Surrey the current proposals appeared to be untenable; more work needed to be done to assess the issue, and the Government timeline extended to put in place the appropriate resourcing and to discuss funding.
- Noted that the Government's long-term vision for charging reforms included a new £86,000 cap for personal care costs from October 2023, monitored by means of a care account, extension of means tested support for anyone with less than £100,000 in chargeable assets which currently sat at £23,250, and an increase in the lower capital threshold from £14,250 to £20,000.
- Noted that from October 2023, self-funders would be entitled to ask councils to arrange care on their behalf when seeking residential and nursing care placements for new people, and the phased introduction for existing self-funders would become available to all by April 2025 at the latest.
- Noted that with 60% of the Council's older people who received adult social care being self-funders, the proposed reforms would result in a significant proportion of them now qualifying for public funding.
- Noted that without Government funding, that would not be financially tenable and would require an increase in the workforce needed to manage that care equivalent to between 85-300 social workers, a rise would be required in the rates local authorities pay as part of the Government's fair cost of care policies and there would be a rapid increase in assessments.
- Noted that the Council was working hard to model the financial impacts, it was estimated that the additional cost to the Council would range from £1.2 billion to £3.2 billion over the next twelve years; it was a threat to the Council's financial sustainability and therefore sufficient funding would be required.
- Noted that the motion sought a pause in the planned October 2023 implementation date to allow the Council to gather more information, to review the policies and to give sufficient time to conduct an effective rollout.

- Reiterated that the Council would need to fund care for more people due to the increase in the capital threshold limits as people reach the care cap, the changes apply to all people, but would primarily impact older people.
- Asked Members for support for the motion which sought to work towards a workable solution to transform social care funding.

The motion was formally seconded by Riasat Khan, who made the following comments:

- Reiterated the Council's situation in which it was estimated that 60% of those receiving adult social care were self-funders due to the combination of issues surrounding the unequitable national funding formula whereby it was estimated that the Council would face a funding gap of between £8 to £20 million in 2023-24, rising to between £25 to £40 million in 2024-25.
- The Council required increased funding as a result of the loss of National Insurance contributions, inflation and the energy crisis; the funding gap would lead to an increase in Council Tax and would require an increase in trained social workers needed to conduct the means tested personal assessments.
- Noted that the consensus amongst local authorities and commentators, including the work undertaken by Newton Europe on behalf of the County Councils Network (CCN) was that the £3.6 billion allocated for charging reforms and the fair cost of care was substantially below the true likely cost of implementing such reforms.
- Noted that the Council should push for a delay and phased implementation to provide the Council with time to transform its operating models and prepare for the effective implementation.

Four Members made the following comments:

- Welcomed the opportunity that the reforms would bring for Surrey's residents but noted that there were concerns over the rushed implementation and the increased costs which would have a detrimental effect on existing recipients of packages and the Council as a whole.
- Noted that the Council was likely to have one, if not the biggest number of self-funded populations across the country, around 10,000-12,000 self-funders.
- Noted that the Government's fair cost of care review had recently been completed and Surrey's response rate of 41% care of homes and 50% of the home care providers was poor but better than most councils.
- Noted that the Care Quality Commission review of Adult Social Care would start in April 2023.
- Noted that the Council was working hard towards the reforms being implemented in October 2023 but it was challenging; around 90 new staff were being employed to undertake the assessments. The Council was also designing a new online offer which would aid the assessment process and residents would be able to monitor their care package.
- Noted that the Council was actively working to increase skills and encourage work in areas such as social care with partners such as the North East Surrey College of Technology (NESCOT). The Council was also lobbying Surrey's MPs and the Government via the South East Strategic Leaders group.
- Noted that it was the time to stabilise Adult Social Care and urged Members to support the motion to delay the implementation to at least until 2024, to have a staggered approach and increase investment across the sector.

- Noted that the Council had a bad deal from the Government, Surrey was ill-funded and was being taken for granted by asking the Council to do so much on the social care front so quickly.
- Highlighted that the Government's funding to Surrey was only £2.7 million for the current year for the Adult Social Care Grant, that was gravely insufficient to prepare Surrey for the reforms.
- Highlighted that the cumulative sum to the Council by 2033 could be as high as £3.2 billion, which would bankrupt the Council.
- Noted that the Council needed to work on three things on the social care front, workforce, funding and integration. On workforce the Council needed to properly pay and value its current social care staff, recruitment and retention were key. On funding the Government needed to properly fund social care and elderly people's retirement. On integration proper health and social care integration was needed, people should not be passed from pillar to post.
- Recommended that Members who were unable to attend the Member Development Session on Adult Social Care should watch the recording on the Member Portal.
- Noted that there were two big problems which were not being addressed: firstly, where were the people going to come from as there was a shortage of people with the appropriate skills and that needed to be solved nationally; secondly, expecting local authorities to provide all the funding was unsustainable and so the Government would need to fund a critical portion of running costs.
- Noted concern about resolution II, as it called for further delay which was unacceptable and the length of that delay was unspecified; the proposer was asked if she wished to remove this.
- Noted that the Council had never been able to keep up with assessments, yet the reforms were heavy on assessments; the original idea appeared twelve years ago and was now being discussed again.
- Recognised the difficulties in implementing the charging reforms and fair cost of care but noted that such changes were needed for the country and county.

The Chair asked Bernie Muir, as proposer of the motion to conclude the debate; she made the following comments:

- Noted that she did not wish to remove resolution II because the Council needed a workable solution, and going ahead with the charging reforms and fair cost of care that would bankrupt the Council was not a solution.
- Highlighted the Leader's comment that the Council was lobbying for the best outcomes for the people of Surrey, funding Adult Social Care was a key issue.
- Reiterated that Surrey was an outlier due to its high proportion of residents who were self-funders and the timescale was not practical in the sense that the Council would need to means test an additional 9,500 -12,000 people via detailed assessments on top of the resourcing challenges in social care.
- Emphasised that the Council was committed to finding a solution and would continue to discuss the matter with the Government and the CCN to find a solution that works for counties across the country and particularly outliers.

A Member asked whether there would be a separate vote on resolution II. The Chair clarified that the proposer had indicated that she wanted Members to vote on the entirety of the motion.

The motion was put to the vote with 65 Members voting For, 0 voting Against and 2 Abstentions.

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** that:

This Council notes:

- This Government's long-term vision for transforming social care through reforms which include a cap on care costs of £86,000, a more generous means-test, a shift towards a 'fair' cost of care, and the ability for residents who arrange and fund their own care to ask their local authority to do it on their behalf.
- The consensus amongst local authorities and commentators, including the work undertaken by Newton Europe on behalf of the County Councils Network (CCN), that the £3.6bn allocated for Charging Reforms & Fair Cost of Care is substantially below the true likely cost of implementing such reforms.
- With uncertainty on whether the three-year Spending Review will proceed, financial planning in Surrey, as well as other councils up and down the country is taking place in the dark.
- The scale of additional cost impact represents a very real threat to the sustainability of the Council's finances if sufficient new funding is not provided by the Government to cover the cost of the new burdens on Surrey County Council.

This Council further notes:

- That 60% of Older People receiving Adult Social Care (ASC) services in Surrey currently privately fund their own care and will often purchase additional or enhanced services that are above meeting a person's Care Act eligible needs.
- That the Council will need to fund care for more people due to the increases to the capital threshold limits and as people reach the care cap. The changes apply to all people but will primarily impact older people.

This Council resolves to:

- I. Re-affirm its continued commitment to working with central government to seek sufficient resources and a fair distribution for Surrey, in order to meet current system pressures and fully fund reforms across the decade.
- II. Continue to push for the delay and phased implementation of charging reforms beyond 2023 to provide Surrey County Council with sufficient time to transform its operating models and prepare for effective implementation.
- III. Help ensure the development of Integrated Care Systems leads to a meaningful integration of health and social care.
- IV. Support the continued investment in public health to maximise the role councils can play in reducing health inequalities.
- V. Reinforce our commitment of tackling health inequalities across Surrey, ensuring no one is left behind.

Item 9 (iii)

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

Under Standing Order 12.1 Nick Darby moved:

This Council notes that:

- Surrey's current Draft Capital Programme is oversubscribed against the affordability criteria.
- When Your Fund Surrey (YFS) was set up, the financial landscape of the United Kingdom was very different.
- YFS does not rely on funds that the Council already has, but instead, the council borrows the money at rapidly increasing interest rates which will impact on Revenue going forward.
- The value of the applications received for YFS already exceeds £100million.
- Residents have said in the budget survey that they support shifting investment to early intervention and prevention. This is in line with the current leadership motto of "no one left behind".
- There have been very few applications from the most deprived areas of Surrey, and none have yet been successful. In contrast there have been a significant number of applications from the most affluent areas (the top 20% in terms of affluence).
- As of the end of June successful bids have all come from the top 30% of areas in Surrey.

This Council resolves to call upon the Cabinet:

- I. Once the total amount of YFS grants approved reaches £20m, or such lower figure as Cabinet may decide by no later than 31 December 2022, to pause further YFS approvals.
- II. During that period of pause to refocus YFS to better align with the Council's priorities, the current financial challenges and the feedback from the residents in the budget survey.

Nick Darby made the following points:

- Reiterated that the Residents' Association and Independents Group by the motion had not suggested that Your Fund Surrey should be closed down.
- Noted that several months ago the Leader and the former Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources suggested openly that any questions on next year's budget should be raised early and the motion was doing exactly that; it was a proposal and the Residents' Association and Independents Group would look to form a consensus working with the Cabinet.
- Noted that through the series of briefings, the Finance team had highlighted the significant challenge around the Council's budget due to many economic pressures, crises, insufficient funding from the Government, Home to School

Transport costs heading for £56 million and borrowing costs heading for £80 million; the financial climate differed from when Your Fund Surrey was set up.

- Highlighted the comments that morning from the Institute for Fiscal Studies about the need for significant Government cuts, furthermore employment figures referenced a loss of 50,000 social care staff across the sector; the local authority sector would bear the brunt.
- Noted that the capital programme was oversubscribed, and officers had indicated that there was a need to reprioritise the projects which to be progressed must have a real rate of return.
- Noted that the value of applications was more than £100 million; preserving extra services, particularly in Adult Social Care and Children's Services, was what residents wanted and he was unconvinced that it would all be affordable.
- Did not suggest that the Council should abandon those organisations with near-complete Your Fund Surrey applications; however, a figure needed to be set at which Your Fund Surrey could be paused, such as £20 million based on the small number of approvals already given.
- Noted that the motion called for a pause and refocus, not to abandon Your Fund Surrey; time was needed to evaluate the successes and what could be done differently. Such details, together with the new fund for Members, could be discussed by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee.

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

Fourteen Members made the following comments:

- Noted that Your Fund Surrey was a central tenet of the Council's Empowering Communities priority, enabling residents across Surrey to make lasting and positive differences in their neighbourhoods.
- Noted that Your Fund Surrey was cross-cutting across the Council's and partner organisations' strategic objectives.
- Stressed that applications to Your Fund Surrey focused on priorities identified by residents, and by supporting those community-led projects, the Council was investing in accordance with what residents have identified as being important.
- The Council's records indicated that communities were positively engaged with Your Fund Surrey with over 250 applications received to date requesting £117 million. There were currently 116 live applications equating to £65 million; 14 projects for £4.5 million had been funded and there were potentially 7 applications of over £3.75 million to follow by the end of the year.
- Noted that many of the projects funded had focused on early intervention and prevention by promoting the health and wellbeing of residents and had also provided residents with a safe space to exercise, socialise and learn new skills, bringing communities together helping to reduce social isolation, there had been the development of work and apprenticeship opportunities and the referral of patients to specific projects by GP surgeries.
- Noted that the latest analysis of the data showed that more applications were coming from the most deprived areas of Surrey as a percentage of the total, the five lowest deprivation deciles in Surrey accounted for 62% of applications to date and over 50% of projects funded; projects would often provide benefits more widely outside of the immediate location.
- Noted that while data showed that all communities were submitting applications to Your Fund Surrey, the neighbourhoods with the most extreme deprivation might benefit from additional support to progress ideas through to funding.

- Announced the new Your Fund Surrey Member fund to simplify the process, whereby each Member would be allocated £50,000 from the Your Fund Surrey budget from early 2023 until the end of their current term to allocate to community-led capital projects in their individual divisions, the process would be more in line with the current Member Community Allocation process.
- Your Fund Surrey was residents' money to enhance, empower and invest in their communities in accordance with their aspirations and needs; the projects were life enhancing and ensured that 'no one is left behind', harnessing the creative energy developed during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Noted that Your Fund Surrey aligned with the Council's priorities, and the projects were fantastic such as the Normandy Community Café.
- Implored Members to get more involved in their local areas to bring projects to light which could make a difference, sustaining and empowering communities.
- Welcomed the renewed energy brought by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety and the introduction of the new fund; urged Members to use their allocation.
- Noted that officers would look to identify and understand why projects had not been coming forward in certain areas and why residents were not engaging.
- Welcomed the input into the budget setting process but would have liked to have had a discussion within that process around Your Fund Surrey concerns.
- Noted that the Council would look at the capital programme during the budget setting process to ensure that the priority capital projects would be funded first.
- Highlighted the short-sightedness of the motion, noting that Your Fund Surrey was designed to ensure funding was available to fulfil residents' priorities and to empower communities.
- Highlighted an example in Woking where Your Fund Surrey allocated £900,000 to refurbish the Old Woking Community Centre, a deprived area in receipt of little external funding; that funding was a lifeline to the centre which was a community hub for many residents. The project demonstrated the partnership working.
- Praised the benefits of Your Fund Surrey and noted that the Liberal Democrat Group believed in investing in communities and valued volunteers.
- Noted the need to acknowledge that the world had moved on economically since Your Fund Surrey was first announced, borrowing costs had risen and there was a risk of the Council not being able to fund whole services.
- Noted that prior to the meeting the Liberal Democrat Group had suggested the referral of the motion to the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee; however, the proposer wanted it debated at Council. The Council needed to review and scrutinise how it supported community groups, and to review the data around the newly announced £50,000 Member allocation for Your Fund Surrey.
- Quoted from the motion that 'There have been very few applications from the most deprived areas of Surrey, and none have yet been successful.'; this statement was incorrect in the case of the Thorpe Green Community Fitness Project, for example, as the community facility was located adjacent to significant areas of higher deprivation outputs.
- The motion referenced the budget survey of Surrey residents who supported the shifting of investment to early intervention and prevention; it was noted that Your Fund Surrey was designed to achieve that, and outlined the Fund's mission statements about providing investment in schemes that encourage community interaction, reduce social isolation and promote social wellbeing.
- Noted that there were other worthy community projects in the pipeline that deserved to be considered by the Your Fund Surrey Advisory Panel.

- Welcomed Your Fund Surrey when it was first announced; however, since then there had been three problems: the inability to control the development of the bureaucracy around submitting applications; Your Fund Surrey acted on an unfair divisional basis with some areas in Surrey receiving most of the money, and the challenging financial situation whereby Your Fund Surrey was unfunded as it involved borrowing money totalling around £189 million which was unsustainable.
- Highlighted the positive Community Safety Partnership Grant scheme which had been running for nearly two decades whereby Members in each division had an allowance of £5,000, and suggested that rather than Your Fund Surrey Members could be allocated £10,000 annually to provide real community improvement.
- Noted a local example of their division which contained two of the most deprived estates in the county, Longmead Estate and Watersedge Estate and there was no land, money or expertise for a Your Fund Surrey project; it was patronising when the administration told Members that they needed to work with their communities, as they were already doing this.
- Noted that in twenty years much could have been done to support the local residents, there was not a community centre and the youth service had been taken away. It was people on low budgets who were in need of services, the area noted above had one of the lowest car ownerships in the county and residents could not access services further afield. Residents in low income areas had not been consulted that their money would be taken to fund projects in more affluent areas; Your Fund Surrey money had been wasted.
- Confirmed that a report would be taken to Cabinet setting out the plans for the newly announced Your Fund Surrey £50,000 Member allocation and a briefing note would be sent to Members following the meeting.
- Welcomed the newly announced Your Fund Surrey £50,000 Member allocation and noted that it was depressing to hear the opposition constantly focusing on the negative aspects of what the Council was doing; more positivity was needed to recognise the great work underway including Your Fund Surrey.
- Noted a local example of the Cobham and Downside Residents' Association which was developing a project to rejuvenate both the skatepark and Cobham Football Club's facilities on the Leg O'Mutton Field and anticipated bidding for funds via Your Fund Surrey having been working with the team for the past eighteen months. The Cobham Village Partnership had been created, working alongside Elmbridge Borough Council to drive forward the application.
- Recognised what had been achieved by Your Fund Surrey however it was funded through borrowed money and the borrowing costs had increased to just under 5% and would likely increase.
- Noted that the most deprived communities often struggled to have the community instruction necessary to bid successfully, through Council Tax those communities subsidised projects which were benefiting wealthy communities; welcomed assurance that action would be taken to assist those communities better and to make the bidding process simpler.
- Questioned why the announcement of the Your Fund Surrey £50,000 Member allocation was made in the middle of the debate with no forewarning and noted that it was convenient that the 2023 launch of the £50,000 new Member allocation coincided with the next round of local elections.
- Clarified that the Council was not making any cuts and its finances were well-run. Queried the motion calling for a pause on Your Fund Surrey as the £100 million was being spent in the local communities.
- Disagreed with the argument that the funding was going to wealthy communities, noting that their division was not wealthy and was working hard

with their community to deliver the projects that were applying for Your Fund Surrey; it was Members' responsibility to work with their local communities.

- Noted that when Your Fund Surrey was established in 2019, it was warmly welcomed and considered innovative. The Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 had hampered the implementation of Your Fund Surrey, and it had only recently resumed operation as intended.
- Noted a local example of the huge amount of volunteer effort to enable projects such as the Normandy Community Shop and Café, and the Pirbright Community Amateur Sports Pavilion in a position to submit a Your Fund Surrey application; dozens of projects across the county have been supported, with many more expected to follow.
- Noted that whilst some communities might be unable to submit Your Fund Surrey applications due to a lack of support or suitable community groups, this did not mean that the rest of Surrey should not be able to take advantage of the fund where support and suitable organisations existed.
- Noted that it was not a surprise that some of the opposition groups were using the motion to their advantage.
- Appealed to the motion's proposer that on reflection it would be best to withdraw the motion for the following reasons: there was common ground amongst Members that empowering Surrey's communities to get things done by working together and supported by the Council was the right thing to do irrespective of political affiliation, and that the value of progressing Your Fund Surrey was expressed by the announcement of the Your Fund Surrey £50,000 Member allocation, which should address some of the current deficiencies.
- Recognised that the volume of applications received at the launch of Your Fund Surrey had reduced, largely due to Covid-19 which affected the ability of community groups to submit bids. It was also noted that the number of approvals had not met Members' expectations, as discussed at the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee meeting in March.
- Noted that it was unnecessary to refer the motion to the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee as it would receive another detailed report on Your Fund Surrey in December.
- Praised the initial work done by the former Cabinet Member for Communities on Your Fund Surrey and the project to empower communities, with many councils nationally seeking to adopt Surrey's model.
- Noted difficulties in their community trying to get projects off the ground because of a lack of expertise, money and resource; the pause provided an opportunity to reconsider where the money could be targeted best to help the poorest in the community and where the best value for money can be gained.

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

- Noted that having sat on the Your Fund Surrey Advisory Panel that had been discussing the applications over the last few months, most of them were worthy projects but the Council could not fund them all.
- Whilst the Council spoke about levelling up, all the successful bids so far had come from the more prosperous areas in Surrey. Many communities submitting applications for Your Fund Surrey were using professional agencies with paid lawyers and solicitors, which not every area could afford to do.
- Agreed with the comment made on the need to work with partners, and regarding levelling up noted that schools in the more prosperous areas did much better because they obtain more money from parent-teacher associations and voluntary funding than schools in the more deprived areas.

- Reiterated that the motion was not asking to end Your Fund Surrey, but to pause it in order to refocus during the uncertain national economic situation.
- Referring to the Your Fund Surrey £50,000 Member allocation, the sum of the Your Fund Surrey scheme would be £1 million for every division if funded equally; that would not happen.
- Referring to motion 9 (i) on having properly funded Adult Social Care services, suggested that rather than borrowing £100 million for Your Fund Surrey the money could be used to fund an innovative Adult Social Care system.

The Chair asked Nick Darby, as proposer of the motion to conclude the debate; he made the following comments:

- Repeated that the motion did not seek to close down Your Fund Surrey, it sought to pause it. The issue was its affordability, noting the Council's borrowing of £100 million if all the funding was to be used; it was not a question of not wanting to support the communities.
- Noted that the motion did not suggest how long that pause would be as there needed to be a complete review.
- Disagreed with the call to withdraw the motion.
- Welcomed the further review of Your Fund Surrey by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee, in which he hoped to participate.
- Noted that the Your Fund Surrey £50,000 Member allocation needed to be reviewed to understand what the circumstances were, as it would total £4 million a year for two years and that sum of £8 million was not far off from the £20 million at which he believed Your Fund Surrey should be paused at.

Under Standing Order 28.1, ten Members demanded a recorded vote, the motion was put to the vote with 17 Members voting For, 41 voting Against and 9 Abstentions.

The following Members voted For it:

John Beckett, Amanda Boote, Nick Darby, Jonathan Essex, Robert Evans, Chris Farr, Nick Harrison, Robert King, Eber Kington, Andy MacLeod, Ernest Mallett MBE, Michaela Martin, Jan Mason, Steven McCormick, Catherine Powell, Joanne Sexton, Chris Townsend.

The following Members voted Against it:

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

The following Members Abstained:

Stephen Cooksey, Will Forster, Angela Goodwin, Jeffrey Gray, Carla Morson, George Potter, Lance Spencer, Liz Townsend, Fiona White.

[*Subsequent to the recording of the vote, Catherine Baart noted that she had mistakenly voted Against when she intended to vote For. The Chair agreed that this would be noted in the minutes.]

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** that:

The motion was lost.

John Beckett left the meeting at 13.02 pm.

Item 9 (iv)

Under Standing Order 12.3 the Cabinet Member for Environment, Marisa Heath, moved a proposal. The proposal was as follows:

That the motion below by Jonathan Essex be referred to the Greener Futures Reference Group - a Task Group of the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee - for consideration.

This Council notes that:

- Advertising is successful in encouraging demand for the products advertised. For example, research by Purpose Disruptors showed that the UK advertising sector, through increased product sales had the impact of increasing UK carbon emissions by 28% (186 MtCO₂) in 2019. Similarly, research by the New Weather Institute indicates that the carbon emissions resulting from the increased demand, for cars in the EU, generated by advertising, are more than Belgium's total greenhouse gas emissions.
- The [2022](#) Climate Mitigation Report published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) highlighted the potential for behaviour change to support carbon emission reductions. It lists regulation of advertising as an example of a policy measure that can have a "*major influence on mitigative capacity*".
- In an Attitudes to Advertising poll in the UK by Opinium Research in 2022 of 2000 people, 68% of UK adults said they would support restrictions on advertising of environmentally harmful products.
- Advertising prohibitions and restrictions already exist; these include prohibition on advertising all tobacco products and e-cigarettes, guns and offensive weapons, 'obscene material'. Rules also affect marketing aimed at children; high fat sugar and salt products; medical and health claims.

This Council believes that:

- Banning advertising does not ban the products themselves; people are still free to buy the products.
- Surrey County Council has committed to work in partnership to reduce carbon emissions across Surrey. A baseline report by Surrey University on behalf of the Surrey Climate Commission showed the extent of scope 3 emissions (in what we buy and import from outside of Surrey). One area where these can be reduced in Surrey is through the impact of advertising in public spaces.

- Some advertising content undermines the Council's objectives. For example, petrol and diesel car adverts, especially for Sports Utility Vehicles, undermine air quality objectives. Airline advertising undermines carbon emission targets.

This Council resolves to call upon the Cabinet:

- I. To amend its Advertising and Sponsorship Policy to ban advertisements specifically for fossil fuel companies, flights, petrol and diesel vehicles, and wording the amendment to ban other as yet unidentified high carbon products.
- II. To implement this revised Advertising and Sponsorship Policy internally and wherever possible promote its adoption by other partners committed to Surrey's Climate Change Strategy. This should include restricting advertising of high carbon products on bus stops, billboards and advertising spaces, plus all publications by Surrey County Council.

Jonathan Essex made the following points:

- Noted that it would be useful to clarify what happens to the motion once it has been considered by the Greener Futures Reference Group.
- Noted that there was a gap in policy in that area and the Advertising and Sponsorship Policy simply stated that it adopted the Council's policy; the Council recently published a procurement strategy in the areas of environment and sustainability which clarified more strongly the Council's position in terms of procurement.
- Noted that the referral was a good idea in principle as the motion could be considered with the technical support of officers in a cross-party way which would be beneficial.
- Noted that whilst the motion had an explicit focus on high carbon consumption, which fell outside of the scope of the Council's emissions reduction targets, it was an area that the Council had an influence over, and having spoken to the Cabinet Member for Environment beforehand, there was a possibility to widen the motion slightly to look at wider environmental and climate aspects.

In speaking to her proposal, the Cabinet Member for Environment:

- Recommended that the motion be referred to the Greener Futures Reference Group to enable detailed scrutiny of the Advertising and Sponsorship Policy.
- Clarified that the motion would follow due process; the Greener Futures Reference Group was owned by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee which could provide the approval to come to Cabinet to consider.

Jonathan Essex confirmed that he was in support of the referral of the motion to the Greener Futures Reference Group.

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 Greener Futures Reference Group for consideration.

The Chair informed Members that there was seven minutes left of the time limit of one and a half hours for the total debate on original motions and would allow some extra time to debate the last motion.

Item 9 (v)

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

Under Standing Order 12.1 Liz Townsend moved:

This Council acknowledges that:

The Cabinet is scheduled to agree 'A County Wide Strategic Approach To Accommodation, Homes And Housing Needs In Surrey'.

This Council notes that:

Housing is not a core responsibility of the County Council.

This Council requests that:

The Cabinet's forthcoming strategy prioritises bringing forward key worker and affordable housing on its own land as a matter of priority and to suspend activities that are already under the statutory control of district and borough councils.

Catherine Powell moved an amendment which had been published in the supplementary agenda (items 7 and 9) on 10 October 2022, which was formally seconded by Nick Darby.

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

This Council acknowledges that:

The Cabinet is scheduled to agree 'A County Wide Strategic Approach To Accommodation, Homes And Housing Needs In Surrey'.

This Council notes that:

Housing is not a core responsibility of the County Council.

Its statutory duties include the maintaining and highways and infrastructure network as well as Public Health and Education functions.

This Council requests that:

The Cabinet's forthcoming strategy prioritises bringing forward key worker and affordable housing on its own land **and ensures that its core responsibilities of highways infrastructure, transport, education and health are aligned with the local planning authorities' development plans whilst cooperating with neighbouring counties** as a matter of priority and to suspend activities that are already under the statutory control of district and borough councils.

Liz Townsend accepted the amendment and therefore it became the substantive motion.

Liz Townsend made the following points:

- Noted that it was critical at the present time of extreme pressures on the Council's finances when it was gearing up for a renewed period of crippling austerity, with the widening gap between rich and poor and increasing rates of child poverty; that the Council concentrates its funds and efforts on its statutory services.
- Noted that residents were anxious about spiralling inflation and the cost-of-living crisis and wanted to see Members running their core services well, resolving the Home to School Transport crisis, fixing roads, providing better bus services, providing more resources targeted at education and Adult Social Care; putting political projects like the County Deal on the back burner.
- Noted that areas of responsibility across councils were defined and the housing market was complex and one in which the Government heavily intervened in.
- Noted that there was already a statutory duty for planning authorities to openly cooperate with other councils on development plans and on supplementary planning documents covering areas such as master plans and affordable housing all of which should be done in the open with formal public consultation.
- Due to current economic uncertainty, it was expected that the delivery of top-down housing numbers by planning authorities granting planning permissions within a strategic framework was expected to slow and even halt.
- Noted that when developers do not build, local plans and decision-making were overruled, a Surrey housing strategy would provide no assistance in such circumstances; it would be a talking shop.
- Emphasised that what Surrey could do was to help to lobby the Government to tackle the root causes and to remove the incentive for developers not to build, developers knew that low delivery meant that planning authorities would be forced to grant even more planning permissions.
- Noted that the Local Government Association (LGA) had repeatedly highlighted the one million plus properties across the country with planning permission yet to be completed, the trickle feed of housing onto the market kept house prices high and affordability out of reach.
- Agreed with the Leader that Surrey needed to be more cautious about new initiatives, ensuring that its own house was in order first.
- Stressed that the Council must demonstrate to residents that it was fulfilling its own key statutory roles such as to plan for and relieve the pressure on the crumbling local infrastructure due to new housing development; as well as to deliver housing through Surrey's redundant and underused assets such as brownfield sites, delivering affordable housing allocated for key workers.
- Noted that residents saw few examples of the issues being aligned with plans for development and county border communities felt that the impact of neighbouring county development went unaddressed.
- Urged the Cabinet Member for Children and Families to reconsider, rather than embarking on a quasi-planning housing strategy which had no weight and no mandate and relied on overstretched resources to deliver.

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

- Noted that if the Council wanted to show leadership on housing, it should use its own land and property and work with housing associations to bring forward

affordable and key worker housing, that was a practical suggestion that the housing strategy should prioritise.

- Noted that the Council did not do enough with its land, provided three examples of sites in Woking that the Council could use to provide affordable and key worker housing.

Three Members made the following comments:

- Noted surprise at the motion, recalling a past meeting with the motion's proposer in her division where the possibility of extra care housing was discussed with enthusiasm, acknowledging that the Council was taking a lead and wanted the best for its vulnerable residents.
- Noted that it was a misjudged motion telling the Council to keep its hands off the district and borough councils' statutory housing functions and to stick to its core responsibilities.
- Noted that the Council was ambitious for Surrey and had identified four priority objectives and good quality sustainable housing made a significant contribution to all four, a person's housing circumstances had a profound effect on many aspects of their life including their health, wealth and happiness.
- Recognised that housing played a critical role in the economy and its potential to grow Surrey's labour market.
- Noted that a significant number of Surrey residents, businesses and organisations faced serious challenges around accommodation and housing, yet there was not an evidenced and joined up county-wide strategy or ambition that directed focus and alignment across the whole housing system; the baseline assessment and the Surrey housing strategy intended to address that.
- Noted that the work to date had been endorsed by the Surrey Delivery Board, the Surrey Chief Housing Officers Association, Surrey Business Leaders Forum and One Surrey Growth Board.
- Noted that alongside the district and borough councils, landlords, developers, investors and national regional agencies; the Council had a clear role and responsibilities in many aspects of housing.
- Noted excitement at being touring the districts and boroughs with the officer team to discuss the housing strategy in more detail, responses so far had been positive and there was good engagement.
- Clarified that the Lakers Youth Centre site in Goldsworth Park was out for resident consultation and there had been a response to a Member question at Cabinet on the matter.

A Member noted that the above was an incorrect statement from the Cabinet Member for Property and Waste concerning the Lakers Youth Centre site, the Chair noted that the Member could liaise with the Cabinet Member outside of the meeting.

- Noted that the Council was having to do the work of delivering housing as the district and borough councils were not doing so; at the Leader's request the Land and Property team had identified several suitable Council sites for development, including sites for key worker housing and one was in Redhill.
- Noted that at present the Land and Property team had 128 capital projects underway which showed it was now a well-functioning service and the Council was delivering more: children's homes, SEND places, schools and supported independent living, than the Council had ever done.

- Noted that the Council had a coordinating role with the district and borough councils, for example the Council fulfilled that role well through the Farnham Infrastructure Programme.
- Disagreed with the way the Council was undertaking that coordinating role through the housing strategy and noted that it was remarkable that the motion's proposer as the portfolio holder for planning at Waverley Borough Council had heard about the housing strategy at a Member briefing.
- Noted that an external consultancy was providing an analysis of the housing strategy and was unsure about what the outcome would be, a great deal of work was going into the housing strategy but it appeared as though it would not result in much.
- Noted that the main problem with housing and planning was the planning system, and that the Council could play a role in coordinating with the district and borough councils to approach the Government to sort out the planning system.

The Chair asked Liz Townsend, as proposer of the motion to conclude the debate; she made the following comments:

- Disagreed with the comment that the district and borough councils were not delivering housing, they were delivering the planning permissions which was the only area within their control, they could not force developers to build.
- Reiterated that housing was a country-wide issue, Government policy needed to change to stop housing being trickle fed onto the market and local-decision making being overruled.
- Understood why the Council wished to be seen to have a coordinating role, however it would just be a talking shop.
- Noted that the fundamental planning issues needed to be tackled by the Government, which were that district and borough councils provided planning permission but were tested against houses being built and they had no control over that.
- Urged that in the present time of extreme budget pressures and upcoming cuts to services, that the Council should concentrate on delivering its statutory services for its residents.

The motion was put to the vote with 26 Members voting For, 41 voting Against and no Abstentions.

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** that:

The motion was lost.

70/22 SELECT COMMITTEES' REPORT TO COUNCIL [Item 10]

The Chair of the Select Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs' Group introduced the report and noted his thanks to the Vice-Chair of that Group and the Scrutiny Business Manager for their support. The report outlined what the Select Committees and the Budget Task Group had been up to between April and September 2022 and the key ask of the Council would be for Members to direct any questions to the four relevant Select Committee Chairs.

RESOLVED:

1. That Council reviewed the work summarised in the report providing feedback to Scrutiny Chairs as appropriate.
2. That the Select Committees report to Council once more this calendar year.

71/22 GOVERNANCE CHANGES - LOCAL AND JOINT COMMITTEES [Item 11]

The Deputy Leader introduced the report and recommendations. She noted that the proposed changes supported the Council's priority objective for empowering communities and were consistent with residents' desires to be more involved in what the Council was doing through events and conversations rather than through boards and meetings. The proposed changes were borne out of evidence as in the past year far higher numbers of residents, over 50,000, had engaged with the Council online. The Council was committed to continue to work with its partners to ensure that local engagement and partnership arrangements enabling the Council to listen to local priorities and to deliver effectively for Surrey's residents; exploring the use of a multi-agency approach to local delivery. The Council's intention was to give divisional Members more accountability, responsibility and visibility, engaging with residents and officers to resolve local issues. The report also included detail on the Petitions Scheme, the chairmanship and the extensive consultation which had taken place.

The recommendations were not agreed by general assent therefore a vote was taken, with 39 Members voting For, 27 voting Against and no Abstentions.

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** that:

That County Council:

1. Agreed that Local Committees will cease, with effect from 31 October 2022.
2. Agreed to serve six months' notice of the Council's intention to withdraw from the Joint Committee in each appropriate borough, to expire on or before 30 April 2023.
3. Agreed to the transfer of all Public Rights of Way (PRoW) functions from Local and Joint Committees with effect from 11 October 2022. Non-contentious, non-executive decisions which affect PRoW will be delegated to officers in consultation with the relevant local Divisional Member/s. All contentious issues such as decisions for Traffic Regulation Orders or PRoW on County Council owned land or land relating to a planning application will be referred to the Planning and Regulatory Committee (PRC) to be heard and a decision made.
4. Agreed that where the local Divisional Member(s) or Officer(s) do not agree, or where they feel a determination should be made by committee, the case can be referred to the PRC. In cases where one or more divisions are involved, then the delegated officer will work in consultation with all relevant Members.
5. Noted that a list of proposed changes to PRoW or modifications to the definitive map received by the Council will be maintained and accessible to all Members.
6. Agreed that the Director of Law and Governance makes the relevant changes to the Council's Constitution to reflect the new arrangements.

7. Noted that the Director of Law and Governance will work in conjunction with democratic service officers from Guildford, Runnymede, Woking, and Spelthorne Borough Councils to update their respective constitutions.
8. Agreed the consequential amendments to the Council's petition scheme as described above.
9. Noted that appointments of Chairs and Vice Chairs to Joint Committees will lapse on 31 October 2022 and Joint Committees will appoint a Chair as required if meeting in the six-month notice period.

72/22 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION [Item 12]

The Leader introduced the report which outlined the changes approved by him on 27 September 2022 as set out in Annex 1.

A Member referred to Standing Order 30 of the Constitution that 'Members will sign a register of attendance', he noted that he was not aware of such a register and since the move to Woodhatch Place Members had not been signing in. He asked whether such a register had been deleted, or whether every meeting held at Woodhatch Place had been invalid.

The Chair noted that she had been advised that Democratic Services record the attendance of all those present and any apologies given. She noted that the Council meetings for example were recorded and streamed, there was not a method of signing in at Woodhatch Place and she would liaise further with Democratic Services.

RESOLVED:

That the executive function changes approved by the Leader on 27 September 2022 be noted.

73/22 REPORT OF THE CABINET [Item 13]

The Leader presented the report of the Cabinet meetings held on 26 July 2022 and 27 September 2022.

Recommendations on Policy Framework Documents:

There were no reports with recommendations for Council.

Reports for Information/Discussion:

26 July 2022:

- A. Increasing Access to Library Buildings
- B. Sunbury Hub
- C. Outline Business Case for the Re-Procurement of Waste Treatment and Disposal Services

27 September 2022:

- D. Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy
- E. Revision to Procurement and Contract Standing Orders

F. Quarterly Report on Decisions Taken Under Special Urgency Arrangements: 2 July 2022 – 30 September 2022

RESOLVED:

1. That Council noted that there had been no urgent decisions in the last three months.
2. That the report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 26 July 2022 and 27 September 2022 be adopted.

74/22 MINUTES OF CABINET MEETINGS [Item 14]

No notification had been received by the deadline from Members wishing to raise a question or make a statement on any matters in the minutes.

The Chair informed Members that the Peacock Room in the Lodge had officially been designated as the Members' Room and for Members to feel free to start using the room and to note that it was a work in progress - furniture and decorations to follow.

[Meeting ended at: 13.35 pm]

Chair

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Leader's Statement – County Council, 11 October 2022

Madam Chair, Members, a lot has changed since the last time we met here almost three months ago.

We have a new Prime Minister, with a fresh agenda for the country.

We have a new Monarch.

The temperature has dropped, and winter is coming.

As an organisation we have achieved a great deal over the last few weeks, but we have also been faced with crises and challenges that have tested our services to the limit.

We haven't always got it right, but we will always hold up our hands and look to help people as quickly as possible when things go wrong.

I will touch on that more a bit later on, and I'm sure other Members will want to discuss in more detail later in the meeting.

One very sad moment in recent weeks has been the death of our dear friend and colleague Alison Todd, formally Griffiths.

Alison was a valued member of our team, and universally popular across the Council and with Members. She always wore her heart on her sleeve; she was fiercely passionate about where she came from and the people she represented in Sunbury and Ashford Common.

She will be a huge loss to the Council, and to everyone who knew her.

My thoughts remain with her husband Phil, her four children, and her five grandchildren, who all loved Alison dearly.

Madam Chair, this is also our first full Council meeting since the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

It was a moment that perhaps shifted our collective sense of stability and identity more than we expected it would.

It was something that we had all prepared for, that was in many ways expected, but one that still felt like it took us by surprise.

Queen Elizabeth II had been a constant, consistent, and reassuring figure in all of our lives and someone that we maybe took for granted at times.

Her death, while a sad moment in itself, brought about a sense of togetherness as a nation that we haven't felt for some time.

The images and stories from 'The Queue' were heart-warming. The pomp and ceremony felt uplifting, provoking a renewed sense of pride in our country.

And the dedication and sense of duty demonstrated by all those who had important roles to play in the period of mourning, the proclamation, and the funeral – including very many people here in Surrey and in this Council – was inspirational.

Our staff – particularly people like Ian Good, Alan Morris, and the Emergency Planning team who guided the county through – yet again stood up and were counted.

Council Officers, from Traffic Management to Communications, worked 24/7 to ensure that all plans went smoothly, that the Queen's funeral cortege passed through Surrey safely, and that the public were kept safe and informed.

They didn't put a foot wrong, and for that we should thank them.

Another seismic change to the country happened just before the Queen's death – a change that all of us have seen before, more than once - and that was the confirmation of a new Prime Minister.

And she quickly appointed a new Chancellor – someone we know well here in Surrey – and a new Cabinet.

It's been a challenging start for them.

As we have done with many governments before, we will monitor policy changes and implications closely, and we will lobby hard to try and get the best outcomes for the people of Surrey.

We continue our conversations with government, and the Civil Service, around a good County Deal for Surrey and the forthcoming Adult Social Care reforms that will potentially have a huge impact on us as a Council, and therefore our residents.

The Prime Minister's in-tray will be dominated by the cost of living crisis facing the country – like many of our inboxes, full of residents understandably concerned by increasing costs, and colder weather on the horizon.

Members, as many of you will be aware, the Council has established a priority workstream to coordinate our response to the cost of living crisis – to ensure that we are able to support our residents, especially those most in need.

We are working hand in hand with partners across the public and voluntary sector in Surrey, with the Local Resilience Forum coordinating welfare efforts and ensuring we're able to react and step-up support in areas where it is most needed.

The Surrey Crisis Fund is continuing to support people in a very practical sense, day in day out, with grants for emergency items such as white goods, fuel, and clothing for those that need that financial lifeline at times of real hardship.

We are in the process of establishing a series of 'warm hubs' across the county, using libraries and other public buildings as places for people to spend time in, meet and work, where they don't need to worry about the heating bill to keep warm and well.

There is specific support for carers, for Veterans, for young families, for lower earners, for small business owners, and real practical advice for all of us about how to reduce our bills.

We must make sure that people are aware of the help available and can access it – help from the Council, from Government, and from the charity sector.

To that end, residents will soon receive a directory of support, delivered through their door, outlining many of the support services and advice available to help.

This will be supported by a wider communications campaign, with a strong focus on promoting our contact centre helpline and welfare hub online.

We are also mindful of the impact of this crisis on people's mental health, and the knock-on effect on general well-being.

This is going to be a hugely stressful time for a great many people across Surrey, and that pressure can manifest itself in many different ways.

There is help available – tips and steps people can take to help their mental wellbeing, people to talk to and crisis support.

But we all have a role to play out in our communities, rallying around, encouraging those networks of support that came to the fore through the covid pandemic, in particular to help the more vulnerable members of society.

We have wonderful community groups, charities, and local associations across Surrey, and they are vital at times like this. We will support them in whatever way we can, and we as Members are an important part in that link between the Council and the communities we serve.

To that end, we are establishing more flexible ways for Members to fund community initiatives where they are needed – big and small, and the Cabinet Member for Communities will set out more detail this morning, but be assured this administration will always put our residents' interests first.

Ultimately, we all want to unlock that perennial problem of funding, to enable our communities to flourish and thrive.

We have listened, and residents should know that where there is a positive initiative, an opportunity to improve a public space, a willing community group wanting to make a difference, then we will make it happen.

Madam Chair, the cost of living crisis, and the global economic turmoil largely brought about by Putin's senseless war in Ukraine, is also having a big impact on the Council as an organisation.

Demand on services is increasing, costs in our supply chains are going up, our energy costs, our infrastructure costs, and the costs of borrowing are all rising.

But our finances are in a solid and stable state, thanks to the hard work of the organisation over the last five years.

Having reached that secure position, we were anticipating now being the time we could push our ambition forward and implement innovative change across the Council and across the county.

However, the current economic climate means we will be facing challenges to our financial position.

Thankfully, our stable finances as well as our improved services, put us in the best possible position to weather these storms.

But it does mean that we will almost certainly have to slow down some of our more ambitious agendas and projects and focus on protecting our critical services – to ensure our objective that no one in Surrey is left behind, can be fulfilled.

We must focus on the basics, to protect our most vulnerable residents through this time.

That being said, we remain an ambitious and forward-looking organisation.

A Council that never shirks a challenge and will always strive to be better.

The things that we may need to pause or scale back in the short term are not being abandoned; we just have to be more cautious, staying realistic and practical about how we spend the money we do have. However, the residents group motion later in this meeting to close down Your Fund Surrey, a knee jerk reaction just at the time when we need to be supporting our communities more than ever, is not the way to approach the situation. Of course we need to continue to be prudent in our budgeting, prioritising services to the most vulnerable children and families, but abandoning our residents and communities is not something this Conservative Group or this administration will ever do.

Madam Chair, we should be optimistic in our ability to overcome these challenges. We have a track record of facing up to issues and finding solutions.

As well as improvements in our services over the past few years - like Children's Services and Surrey Fire and Rescue Service - we also have a great deal of experience to call upon in facing adversity in a positive and proactive way, adapting, and overcoming for the benefit of the people who call Surrey their home.

We are not complacent, nor do we have our heads in the sand - we know there is much to do - but we are determined, and we are focused.

We have overcome severe, albeit different, financial challenges before, when we took a lead in protecting Surrey's residents through the Covid Pandemic.

As we stated last year when setting our budget, we've done the hard yards to base camp, ready to scale the mountain.

But the storms ahead have intensified, and we have no choice but to batten down the hatches, hold firm and ride out the coming challenges in the safest, most prudent, way.

Madam Chair, a very real challenge we've faced over the last month or so has been the issue of Home to School Transport assistance.

As many Members here will be all too aware, we faced a tricky combination of increased demand, shortages of drivers, alongside a well overdue change in policy, which led to a backlog affecting some families who were faced with real stress and anxiety in getting their children to school.

This has been a very complex, and difficult situation, and we have to hold our hands up on occasions like this to say that we have let some people down.

However, I know that the Home to School Transport Team have been working day and night alongside our Customer Services Team. to help as many families as they can.

Specific reimbursement has been offered where parents have had to make their own arrangements and applications have been fast tracked and resolved as quickly as possible.

Members, I know – as does our Cabinet Member in this area, and our staff – just how much this worry can affect families, some of whom are already facing challenges every single day.

I commit to you that we will learn lessons from the start of term, we have put mitigations in place, and we are doing everything that we should be doing now to get every child in Surrey to school on time.

Our new policy is the right one – I'm confident in that – as we work to ensure we support those who need us most.

And as we welcome more people into the county, for a variety of reasons, we will put the infrastructure and support in place so that our communities and our services can cope with increased demand and expectation.

Madam Chair, while challenges of varying scale and longevity come our way, Surrey County Council does not and will not shy away.

We don't put our heads in the sand or look to someone else to sort it out.

We are an organisation that puts in the hard yards, takes responsibility, and stands tall. We share a clear determination to make the lives of Surrey residents better.

When we get it wrong, we'll put it right.

When we get it right, we'll keep looking to get better.

Our staff, our leadership, our Members, and our partners, will keep working as one.

We're in this together, with shared values and a sense of duty that has been more evident than ever in recent weeks.

We have a serious job to do over the coming months to protect and support our residents so lets get our heads down and get on with it.

Now is not the time for the feint hearted; we are living through a significant global economic crisis that shows no sign of easing up any time soon.

Madam Chair, Members as Civic Leaders we should and must now more than ever, stand in front of our communities, beside our communities, and right behind our communities.

Thank you.

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