

# CABINET MEMBER DECISION

## Decision:

PETITION: BRING SURREY CHOICES BACK INTO SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

### (i) Details of decision

The Leader considered a petition from Unison requesting that Surrey Choices be brought back in house. The full petition text and formal response were published as a supplement to the agenda.

Mr Barney Wakefield presented the petition and stated his case and asked several questions:-

- Why were terms and conditions not the same as the Council's?
- Was it considered that the consultation was adequate for the closure of hubs?
- Was it fair to expect Surrey Choices to be a first class provider when the council were implementing a £3m budget cut?
- Should the Council take a more active role in Surrey Choices?
- What action is the Council taking to lobby central government about social care funding?

The Leader stated that there was a mixed picture over the last five years regarding performance of Surrey Choices. There had been a change in the business model which had not happened at the speed one would have wanted and this was consulted on at the time. The reduction in funding was to match the change in the model, which saw a shift to providing care in the community, a large reduction in overheads rather than the money spent on front line delivery services. There was a broader issue around recruitment and retention for the Council and work was ongoing to look at allowances and this would be discussed with Unions and partners on how this could be collectively progressed. Surrey Choices as an arm's length organisation had its own business model and set their own terms and conditions but maybe there needed to be a conversation including the Legal Team about whether an arm's length organisation was the correct way to go.

The Leader also explained that the council were working very hard explaining to government the impact of changes to social care funding. With regard to council taking an active role in Surrey Choices he explained that the Cabinet Member was Chair of Surrey Choices until recently and he would routinely meet with Surrey Choices every six months.

The Leader, in listening to officers advice, was encouraged that things were improving. The focus needed to be on individuals and the team being rewarded for their role.

### **Decision**

The published response to the petition still stood but the Leader suggested that there be a further review of the current structure within the next few months.

### Decision taken by:

- (i) **Name:** Tim Oliver  
(ii) **Portfolio:** Leader of the Council

Date of Decision: 26 April 2022

Date of Publication of Record of Decision: 29 April 2022