

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL HELD AT
WOODHATCH PLACE, 11 COCKSHOT HILL, REIGATE, SURREY, RH2 8EF,
ON 21 MARCH 2023 COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM, THE COUNCIL BEING
CONSTITUTED AS FOLLOWS:**

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

Maureen Attewell	Eber Kington
Ayesha Azad	Rachael Lake
Catherine Baart	Victor Lewanski
Steve Bax	David Lewis (Cobham)
John Beckett	* David Lewis (Camberley West)
Jordan Beech	* Scott Lewis
Luke Bennett	Andy Lynch
Amanda Boote	Andy MacLeod
Harry Boparai	Ernest Mallett MBE
* Liz Bowes	r 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
r Paul Deach	Bernie Muir
Kevin Deanus	Mark Nuti
Jonathan Essex	John O'Reilly
Robert Evans OBE	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	* Joanne Sexton
* Tim Hall	Lance Spencer
David Harmer	Lesley Steeds
* Nick Harrison	Mark Sugden
Edward Hawkins	Richard Tear
Marisa Heath	Chris Townsend
Trefor Hogg	Liz Townsend
Robert Hughes	Denise Turner-Stewart
Jonathan Hulley	* Hazel Watson
Rebecca Jennings-Evans	Jeremy Webster
Frank Kelly	Buddhi Weerasinghe
Riasat Khan	* Fiona White
Robert King	Keith Witham

*absent

r = Remote Attendance

10/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies for absence were received from Paul Follows, Tim Hall, Nick Harrison, David Lewis (Camberley West), Scott Lewis, Julia McShane, Joanne Sexton, Hazel Watson, Fiona White.

Members who attended remotely and had no voting rights were Paul Deach, Michaela Martin.

11/23 MINUTES [Item 2]

The minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 7 February 2023 were submitted, confirmed and signed.

12/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were none.

13/23 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS [Item 4]

Buddhi Weerasinghe joined the meeting at 10.08 am.

The Chair:

- Informed Members of the deaths of former County Councillor Janet Maines and Eloise Appleby, former Chief Executive of the Grange in Bookham. She paid tribute to the contributions they had both made to the county of Surrey.
- Thanked Robert Hughes for attending Eloise Appleby's memorial on behalf of the Council and highlighted the letter of thanks and certificate of service awarded through the Chair's Office before she died.
- Invited Robert Hughes and David Harmer to speak, they paid personal tribute to Eloise Appleby and Janet Maines respectively.
- Led the Council in a moment of reflection for Janet Maines and Eloise Appleby.
- Noted that Tony Samuels had resigned as County Councillor for Walton South and Oatlands, and thanked him for his service to the Council as a divisional Member, past Cabinet Member and Chair of Council.
- Noted that the rest of her announcements could be found in the agenda.
- Highlighted her attendance at the recent Surrey Armed Forces Covenant Conference 2023, held at Pirbright. Over 150 delegates attended with many services represented, with a fantastic array of speakers on life in the services and their families' experiences. She congratulated the organisers of the conference, the Armed Forces and her office.

14/23 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 potholes were a major problem and there was a dangerous amount, it could no longer be said that Surrey's roads were improving compared to a year ago.

- Noted that the Highways service was overwhelmed and Surrey's roads were disintegrating, sufficient money was needed for repairs to ensure public safety.
- Noted that highways were a major concern for residents, and residents were entitled to expect the delivery and timely repair of potholes and to be kept informed.
- Provided examples of roads potholed to a dangerous extent in Elmbridge, loose stones, incomplete work and resurfacing not carried out, bridge replacement delayed, cars swerving to avoid potholes, residents facing poor lighting, broken suspension and significant costs; in line with encouraging cycling, Surrey's roads must be safe.
- Noted sadness at Tony Samuels' resignation and thanked him for the immense amount of hard work and help given to Members.
- Noted surprise that the Leader praised the recent national Budget which signalled the worst decline in living standards in living memory and offered no new support on the cost of living; residents would continue to struggle due to the lack of help from the Government and the Council needed to lobby the Government to help the most vulnerable.
- Noted that the Leader stated that a key priority for the Council was improving health outcomes, yet residents were suffering worse outcomes due to insufficient funding; the national Budget signalled no extra money for the NHS despite hospitals having costly repairs backlogs and NHS services were struggling.
- Welcomed the announcement of Government funding for a special needs school in the north of Surrey but noted that more special educational needs places in Surrey were needed; asked the Leader to confirm when a site selection and planning application would be done for this school.
- Residents were frustrated with the state of Surrey's roads and things were going to get worse as next year's 2024/25 Highways budget would be reduced by £51.8 million with Members losing their £100,000 divisional allowance; asked whether the Leader would reverse those cuts.
- Highlighted that Lime Tree Primary School in Redhill, approved by the Planning and Regulatory Committee in 2014, was built on a green urban site by claiming special circumstances, despite the alternative site assessment which proposed that housing could be built on that site.
- Regarding new school delivery, noted that the Planning and Regulatory Committee had rejected plans to move Reigate Priory Junior School to Woodhatch Place, asked whether the Council would apply its new transport policy and place the new school in the middle of a 20-minute neighbourhood.
- Asked whether the Council would properly assess the site options for the Reigate Priory Junior School, and for the Leader to confirm that the same scheme would not go back to a Planning and Regulatory Committee primed to approve it, instead asking for a commitment to realign the Council's new school planning to its climate strategy, transport plan and residents' wishes.
- Noted the members of the public in attendance at the meeting to protest about Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision, and asked how proposed new SEND places would impact on the ballooning Home to School Transport budget.
- Asked whether the new SEND school in Dorking would be served by the Council's expanded on demand bus service.
- Noted that the Budget statement did not refer to councils' key role in delivering climate outcomes through public transport expansion, retrofitting homes, different approaches to health and wellbeing, early help and prevention through more children's centres, not just in fixing more potholes; asked whether the Leader agreed that Government help was required.

- Noted that the Leader referred to the Chancellor's "inspirational" Budget, asked whether the Leader could provide any details of how he thought the budget would benefit Surrey's residents.
- Welcomed the Chancellor's announcement of increased childcare, but asked how it would be organised in Surrey, where would the facilities be and staff found, and would they be adequately paid.
- Regarding potholes, referred to the leaflet received by Members from the Leader investing in Surrey's future with £188 million invested on Surrey's roads and pavements, which only equated to just over £2 million per division.
- Highlighted a newspaper headline which reported that "potholes misery deepens as roads across the country would be resurfaced every 116 years"; there was a long wait to see many of the roads in Surrey resurfaced.
- Asked whether the Leader had any idea of how many new electric vehicle (EV) charging points would be provided across Surrey and whether measures would be put in place to stop people parking non-EV vehicles in these spaces.
- Asked the Leader whether there were any controls on temporary traffic lights, raising concerns that these were sometimes in use where work did not appear to be taking place.

Eber Kington left the meeting at 10.49 am and joined remotely.

15/23 CHANGES TO CABINET PORTFOLIOS [Item 6]

The Leader introduced the report noting that the Cabinet Member for Environment's portfolio would now include responsibility for all issues relating to flooding, with all aspects of waste (including oversight of future waste strategy the re-procurement of the waste contract) becoming the responsibility of the Cabinet Member for Property and Waste. The Deputy Cabinet Member for Levelling Up would have a greater focus on assisting with the work underway regarding the integration of health and social care, particularly following the publication of the Hewitt Review next week.

In response to a comment made by a Member regarding the frequent nature of changes to Cabinet Portfolios, the Leader explained that these were updated on a regular basis in order to reflect the demands of the priority focus at the time.

RESOLVED:

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

16/23 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME [Item 7]

Questions:

Notice of twenty-five questions had been received. The questions and replies were published in the supplementary agenda on 20 March 2023.

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

(Q2) Colin Cross concerning the 114 new houses to be built in Effingham, he noted that response stated that there was no consultation process because consultation had already taken place, yet that was prior to the decision and there had been over 900 objections to the previous application. He asked why Wisley Airfield was included

in the response as a reason for the new school expansion, as the Wisley Airfield application in the Local Plan already included plans for a new school with 400 places.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning reiterated that the response did not state that there would be no consultation carried out - it stated that the consultation was to be carried out by the Trust and not by the Council. She highlighted that the Trust had previously consulted widely across the area. She noted that the reference to the proposed development in Wisley Airfield was to underline the reasons why the school place planning team felt that there was sufficient growth in the population in the vicinity of the school to justify additional places at that school. The Wisley Airfield site would include an additional primary school; the school being referenced was a secondary school.

(Q3) John Beckett had no supplementary question.

Ernest Mallett MBE referring to part (f) of the response, asked whether the Cabinet Member recognised that resurfacing concrete roads had been a traditionally neglected area. Considering that fine milling had been accepted as a possible solution, he asked what alternative technology there was for dealing with concrete roads that were not suitable for fine milling.

Catherine Powell referred to the response that stated that footways to large schools with more than 500 pupils were defined as Category 3 link footways rather than primary or secondary walking routes. With the increased emphasis on Active Travel and the priorities set out in the fourth Local Transport Plan (LTP4), she asked whether the Cabinet Member would consider increasing the category of footways that serve schools, particularly in areas where schools have populations more than 1,000 pupils. She asked how many of the temporary repairs undertaken during that winter had already failed.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience noted that he would provide written responses to both Members, and asked them if they could confirm the details of their questions outside the meeting.

(Q4) Catherine Powell noted that the planning system focused on one application at a time where the use of infiltration and impact on recharging the aquifer was compounded; she sought reassurance from the Cabinet Member that it would be addressed in the forthcoming Climate Change Adaption Strategy. Referring to the response around the categorisation of flood risk that was only used for fluvial flood risk, she asked what categorisations of surface water and groundwater flooding would be adopted going forward. She asked whether the Cabinet Member accepted that once the decision had been made to allow the development without infiltration, the ability to recharge any aquifer below would have been removed forever and there would be a lasting impact on water security.

The Cabinet Member for Environment suggested holding a meeting with the Member and relevant team to consider her questions in more detail.

(Q5) Ernest Mallett MBE noted that he found the £400,000 parking surplus that Elmbridge Borough Council claimed to have received to be odd. As the Council would not be maintaining the local green infrastructure when it takes over the work, he asked why it would take it over if as an improvement would not be provided to residents.

Denise Turner-Stewart asked whether the Cabinet Member would agree that the Your Fund Surrey Small Projects Fund had been designed with improvements such as vegetation, hanging flower baskets and assets within Surrey's communities and shopping centres in mind, with a focus on environmental projects and boosting the local economy to equip all Members to work alongside their communities locally and sympathetically with what their residents wanted.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience agreed with Denise Turner-Stewart's question regarding Your Fund Surrey. Responding to Ernest Mallett MBE, he noted that the reason for taking over the verge cutting contract was to bring consistency across the county and because a number of the borough and district councils wanted to hand that power back to the Council.

(Q6) Robert King asked the Cabinet Member to respond regarding approaching local businesses to help a universal roll out of free school meals to primary schools that Surrey maintains and to ask her team to cost that so the budget shortfall could be understood.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning presumed that what the Member had in mind was similar to what the Mayor of London had announced recently for a roll out of universal school meals across all primary schools in London. She reminded the Member that all children who were in Key Stage 1/infant schools already received universal school meals. She imagined that the Member was envisaging a roll out across Key Stage 2/junior schools. She noted that she would ask officers to price up the cost of that offer. She noted that the Council's in-house catering provider Twelve15 already provided universal free school meals across 140 maintained schools, equating to around 16,000 children. However, she noted that the uptake of those free school meals in Surrey was only around 80%, and one in five children who were entitled to a free school meal chose not to. She personally felt that targeted free school meals was a better way of reaching those who needed them than blanket provision. She also noted that schools received additional funding for every child who was eligible for free school meals, which was a vital lifeline of additional funding.

(Q7) Jonathan Essex asked how the maintenance backlog of pavements had changed over the last five years as £200 million was a large amount. He asked whether the Cabinet Member could confirm that aligning highway maintenance to the LTP4 would increase the prioritisation of key walking routes, increasing the funding allocated to improve the condition of poorer pavement locations.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience explained that His Majesty's Treasury's accumulated depreciation formula was used to value the highway network, whereby a cost would be provided for turning the amount of kilometres rated as red and amber, to green. He noted that backlog calculations were different, as those factored in some of the repairs which might be rated green, the cost removal therefore of the red and amber rated repairs was higher. He noted that whilst the backlog figure for roads had been calculated, that was not the case for pavements, so the accumulated appreciation figures were used; discussions were underway with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth on the potential impact.

(Q10) Fiona Davidson noted that Guildford Borough Council, in common with a lot of other local authorities, had stopped using glyphosate other than where there were invasive species. She asked the Cabinet Member when the Council would adopt that more progressive approach to limiting the use of glyphosate on the premise that

currently there were some species that could only be controlled by it, but surely the Council should be adopting a policy to limit the use.

The Cabinet Member for Environment confirmed that the Council did have a policy whereby it only used glyphosate on invasive notifiable weeds and only on hard surfaces across the highways; rigorous training and safety procedures were in place. She noted that alternatives were currently being tested out and included hot foam, hand weeding, high pressure hot water, brushing and the use of vinegar; those solutions were not currently as effective as glyphosate. She noted that there had been a 50% reduction in use of glyphosate across the county and the hot foam treatment showed some good results, but there were issues to overcome such as the high use of water and the fact that it was labour intensive. The Council's ambition was to stop using glyphosate but had to balance the fact that people wanted their roads kept neat and tidy. The Council would only undertake one spray at road level in 2023, avoiding the grass verges.

(Q11) Robert Evans OBE asked whether the Cabinet Member had asked anyone at Transport for London or the Mayor of London's Office for a face-to-face meeting to discuss the matter, ensuring that Surrey's residents get the health benefits but not the negative impacts from the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ). He asked whether the Cabinet Member would agree in principle with the health aims of ULEZ, and whether he was aware that the original idea for the scheme came from the former Mayor of London, Boris Johnson. He asked whether the Cabinet Member was aware that in other parts of the country where similar schemes had been brought into operation, for example Bath, the Conservative Government had picked up the bill for a wider scrappage scheme, covered by point two in his response. On point three of his response around the extension of Zone 6 Oyster Card scheme, he asked whether the Cabinet Member was aware that there had been efforts in several boroughs in the county to get that scheme. They had faltered because His Majesty's Treasury and the Department for Transport would not underwrite South Western Railway or the other railway companies for any losses that they might incur; he asked whether the Cabinet Member would follow that up with the Chancellor.

George Potter welcomed that the administration raised the issue of the Council not being properly consulted concerning ULEZ, he asked whether the Cabinet Member would follow that same approach to his own department's highways schemes across the county such as that which had been imposed in his division last year.

The Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth responded to Robert Evans OBE confirming that the Council had requested a face-to-face meeting on several occasions. He noted that it was disappointing that only the threat of legal action prompted Transport for London and the Mayor of London's Office to respond. He agreed with the principles and the health benefits of ULEZ, noting that under Surrey's LTP4 an option was included for the Council to consider ULEZ for Surrey. He noted that he asked the Government regularly for additional funding and he was preparing to speak to the Secretary of State for Transport on the impacts of ULEZ.

(Q12) Liz Townsend asked whether the Cabinet Member could share how she was weighing up the financial costs with the impact of glyphosate on residents and the environment. She noted that many cities in Europe and across the world had banned - some decades ago - the use of such pesticides, particularly glyphosate. She noted that there were several councils in the UK leading the way on a ban, including Waverley Borough Council. Public awareness on the subject had increased and many were calling for a more precautionary approach. She noted that many residents had concerns with the use of glyphosate, particularly near to their homes and recreational

spaces. She asked for the Cabinet Member to provide a specific timeline for when she would phase out the use of glyphosate.

The Cabinet Member for Environment reiterated that the Council was only using glyphosate safely on hard surfaces along highways, not near recreational areas. The Council had reduced its use, using only one spray in 2023. She noted that she would await the public feedback around that and how the Council manages its highways in between then. She noted that once the trials on the alternatives had concluded, there would be a cost analysis and decision taken by the Cabinet and officers as to what would be the best way to proceed. She noted that the Council was looking at what other authorities had done, and she welcomed feedback.

(Q14) Mark Sugden on part (c) of his question, given that the Government parking consultation ended in November 2020, with 15,000 responses, he asked whether the Cabinet Member could ascertain from the Department of Transport when it might publish responses to that consultation and any associated recommendations.

Robert King asked whether the Council would assist Blue Badge holders by recognising a Blue Badge scanner on the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system rather than requiring them to go online to register their number plate, as many carers frequently change the vehicles they used.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience responded to Mark Sugden noting that he would liaise with the Department of Transport on the matter. Responding to Robert King, he noted that the Council had asked the borough and district councils for areas where they believed offences had been committed; including where disabled bays were being misused.

(Q15) John Beckett noted that the up to ten working days response time to a Member in most instances regarding parking was unacceptable. He asked whether the Cabinet Member could review Members' accessibility to the parking team regarding incidents that happen instantaneously. He noted that at his borough council, residents' issues were addressed by sending a team out.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience acknowledged that a number of parking issues were instantaneous, he noted that Members had a phone number that they could call and that their emails were prioritised. He also noted that some issues might stray into policing; things were being done on the matter.

(Q16) Catherine Powell asked whether the Cabinet Member could confirm whether the ongoing additional procurement of energy to waste capacity would be within Surrey and whether she could advise what procurement would likely be reviewed by the relevant select committee.

The Cabinet Member for Property and Waste confirmed that the energy from waste plants would be within the South East, not within Surrey. Regarding bringing contracts to select committees, she noted that it would likely be an item at a future Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee meeting, an item on waste was taken to that select committee yesterday.

(Q17) Robert King thanked the Cabinet Member for his recent engagement with him on roads in his division. He requested further information from the Cabinet Member on how or if value for money assessments within the contract period were carried out and whether there were grounds for the termination of a contract if those were not met.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience noted that he would provide a written response.

(Q18) Jonathan Essex referring to part (a) of the response, inferred that the Council does place new people in Adult Social Care placements in homes that were rated as Requires Improvement, subject to checks, but noted that all children were placed in Good and Outstanding rated children's homes. He asked whether the Cabinet Member could confirm that the Council was prepared to place its adults in homes with a lower standard than its children, and whether that was consistent with the "no one left behind" policy. He asked whether the Cabinet Member could confirm that in closing the recent in-house adult care homes, all would be placed in Good or Outstanding rated homes; it was unacceptable for the Council to move people from its homes into private homes that were rated Requires Improvement.

The Cabinet Member for Adults and Health noted that in an ideal world, the Council would place everybody in a perfect home. He noted that the Requires Improvement rating did not mean that the care was substandard or insufficient, and all those homes were independently checked for the individual's needs prior to the placement taking place with agreement sought from the individual's relatives. No one was put at risk and placements were monitored. He noted that the marketplace did not always lend itself to having every home rated Good or Outstanding, but the Council strived to help them achieve those levels of attainment with the Care Quality Commission (CQC).

(Q20) Robert Evans OBE asked the Leader where appropriate, could Members be kept informed of all relevant ventures affecting their division.

The Leader of the Council responded that yes, if that information was available, it would be shared with Members.

(Q21) Liz Townsend asked the Cabinet Member to provide the details of the cut and collect trials and where those were. She asked whether the Cabinet Member could provide assurance that where there were ongoing issues with the grass across the highway and footpaths and where that was causing drainage issues, that would be down to highways to clear up; as opposed to the borough and district councils.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience noted that he would provide a written response.

Cabinet Member Briefings:

These were also published in the supplementary agenda on 20 March 2023.

Members made the following comments:

Cabinet Member for Education and Learning: on the third bullet point in the Briefing concerning an additional 200 plus new specialist school places for children and young people starting in September 2023. **Chris Townsend** asked where the specialist school places would be, for example in specialist schools or in mainstream schools.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning referred the Member to the report to next week's Cabinet meeting, which provided detail on the capital programme for the forthcoming year and when that would be delivering additional places. She noted that she had a Cabinet Member Decision meeting next week to approve five different

schemes. Most of the schemes that would open next year would be an expansion of the current provision and the opening of additional needs units within mainstream schools; she did not believe that any new schools would be opening around the same time next year.

Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth: on the skills and economy paragraph, **Robert King** asked how that work interacted with the education offered in Surrey's technical colleges and the feedback mechanism around local employers and some councils regarding the shortfall in the number of technical skills.

The Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth noted that the Council had a good working relationship with all its further and higher education providers as well as its independent providers. He noted that he and the Leader in January met with all those providers and had regular discussions with the Surrey Chambers of Commerce and other businesses. The colleges were informed of where skills shortages and needs had been identified, Surrey's education providers were responsive as for example in the case of a shortage of lab technicians, within a year the North East Surrey College of Technology (Nescot) was running a course.

17/23 STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS [Item 8]

Buddhi Weerasinghe (Lower Sunbury and Halliford) made a statement on a campaign to bring rail stations in Spelthorne into the Transport for London (TfL) zoning system. The campaigners carried out an extensive feasibility study to prove there would be an increase of footfall which would benefit the local communities. The Department for Transport required a feasible business case to open talks with South Western Railway and that had recently been provided by Shepperton Studios. He asked the Council to lobby the Government on Shepperton Studios' letter.

Jonathan Hulley (Foxhills, Thorpe & Virginia Water) made a statement on the Thorpe Green Community Project for £68,000 approved in July 2022 by the Your Fund Surrey (YFS) Advisory Panel. The applicant, the Core Judo Academy would use the funding to provide a new community use car park and outdoor gym facility. It had been discovered that the earmarked land was common land so an application had to be made to the Secretary of State. He praised the joint working between Runnymede Borough Council and the Council to agree a solution and welcomed Runnymede Borough Council's additional allocation of £25,000. He thanked the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety, and YFS officers.

Rachael Lake (Walton) made a statement on the newly opened Heathside Walton-on-Thames free school, further to her statement a year ago noting her residents' concerns. The small roundabout at the junction of Terrace Road and Waterside Drive was becoming a hub for significant environmental impact. Within less than 500 metres on Waterside Drive there were several leisure and sporting facilities, many other sites, private dwellings and the new free school which led to more traffic problems from only one year's intake. The roundabout connecting Waterside Drive and Terrace Road was near a school and a nursery; a further school to follow. She stressed to the Leader that an in-depth environmental assessment was needed.

Mark Sugden (Hinchley Wood, Claygate and Oxshott) made a statement on Network Rail's refurbishment to three local railway bridges, two in his Division and the other in Esher. He noted that significant road diversions were in place which inconvenienced the local community, there had been a delay to the completion of Claygate bridge and the footbridge at Claygate Station had closed to carry out emergency work. He recognised the need for those works, however there were adverse impacts to local

businesses, commuters and roads. He asked the relevant Cabinet Member to reinforce to Network Rail the need to complete those works with urgency.

The Chair suggested that those Members could circulate their written statement to all Members after the meeting if they overran their time limit.

Eber Kington rejoined the meeting at 11.40 am.

18/23 ORIGINAL MOTIONS [Item 9]

Item 9 (i)

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:

Surrey County Council has a significant role in the design and implementation of new development, particularly in respect of streets and transportation in general. As such, the County Council as the local Highway Authority advises the county's district and borough councils on the transportation implications of applications for planning permission.

The Healthy Streets for Surrey guide, adopted by the Cabinet on 25 October 2022, established the standards that the County Council would expect newly designed streets to meet.

It builds on national guidance but is more detailed and takes into account the existing policies of the County Council. Such policies enable the creation of places that improve the physical and mental health of Surrey residents and reduce their environmental footprint by encouraging cycling and walking more often; streets in which children can play safely; improved air quality; re-greened streets and public spaces; a reduction in residents' transport carbon footprint; and the creation of beautiful, resilient and popular streets that will ultimately require less long-term maintenance.

This Council resolves to:

- I. Request that the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth writes to all district and borough councillors to request they adopt the Healthy Streets Guide, in order to give the guidance additional weight in the planning process. The County Council will support them to adopt it as a supplementary planning document or to incorporate it into their own design guidance/design codes.
- II. Renew its regular offer of transportation development planning training to district and borough councils' planning committee members and this will be expanded to include training on the Healthy Streets guidance and approach.

John O'Reilly made the following points:

- Thanked the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety and Liz Townsend for agreeing to amalgamate some parts of the amendment to the motion.
- Quoted from the introduction of the new Healthy Streets for Surrey design guide which encapsulated the need for change and why the new guide was a step forward, regarding streets as places as opposed to simply facilitating movement between places.
- Highlighted the frustration of those who served on a planning committee at borough and district council level when the Council as the highways authority expressed no objection to some planning applications, not taking into account the issues that the revised Guide stipulated.
- Summarised what the Guide intended to achieve: streets in which it was easy for everyone to move, streets in which it was safe, enjoyable and easy to walk for everyone, green streets that enriched Surrey's diverse biodiversity, enhanced environment and improved air quality, Streets that connected seamlessly to existing places, allowing natural movement, streets that were beautiful, and streets that supported happy, healthy and sustainable lives for all.
- Noted that the new Guide expanded the information to be considered by the Council when it commented on planning applications and by the planning authorities when making decisions - the borough and district councils.
- Hoped that since the new Guide was endorsed by the Cabinet in October that members of the planning committees, community groups and residents were already seeing the benefits.
- Noted that the Guide emphasised the importance of transparency and consultation with residents, ensuring that residents participate in the process and noted that the Council's officers were willing to help participate in any way as part of that consultative process.
- Noted that the Guide sought to improve the environment and residents' quality of life and it was vital for the Council to use its ability to assist and promote that.

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

- Noted that the motion was about improving and redefining the relationship between people, cars and streets; for streets to be comfortable with clean air, spacious with trees and green spaces and a place where people can keep healthy mentally and physically.
- Stressed the need for real change in Surrey's streets for health, life and happiness.
- Noted that the healthy new Guide was a key contribution towards making that change, it was vital for the Council to ensure that it would be used across Surrey by putting the effort needed into helping the borough and district councils adopt it as planning policy.

Liz Townsend moved an amendment which had been published in the supplementary agenda (items 7 and 9) on 20 March 2023, which was formally seconded by Lance Spencer. She noted that after discussions with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety, she agreed to withdraw resolutions two, four and five of her amendment (II, IV and V).

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

This Council notes that:

Surrey County Council has a significant role in the design and implementation of new development, particularly in respect of streets and transportation in general. As such, the County Council as the local Highway Authority advises the county's district and borough councils on the transportation implications of applications for planning permission.

The Healthy Streets for Surrey guide, adopted by the Cabinet on 25 October 2022, established the standards that the County Council would expect newly designed streets to meet.

It builds on national guidance but is more detailed and takes into account the existing policies of the County Council. Such policies enable the creation of places that improve the physical and mental health of Surrey residents and reduce their environmental footprint by encouraging cycling and walking more often; streets in which children can play safely; improved air quality; re-greened streets and public spaces; a reduction in residents' transport carbon footprint; and the creation of beautiful, resilient and popular streets that will ultimately require less long-term maintenance.

This Council resolves to:

- ~~I. Request that the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth writes to all district and borough councillors to request they adopt the Healthy Streets Guide, in order to give the guidance additional weight in the planning process. The County Council will support them to adopt it as a supplementary planning document or to incorporate it into their own design guidance/design codes.~~
- ~~II. Renew its regular offer of transportation development planning training to district and borough councils' planning committee members and this will be expanded to include training on the Healthy Streets guidance and approach.~~
- I. Implements the existing Street Design Guidance including principles for healthy streets as adopted by the Cabinet on 25 October 2022.**
- II. Directs Highways officers to assist and encourage developers with regard to the design and implementation of streets and transport in accordance with the Healthy Streets Guide.**
- III. Consults with districts and boroughs to seek their consideration for incorporating in borough/district wide Design Codes or as a material consideration subject to public consultation.**
- IV. Ensures Highways officers are incorporating the Healthy Streets Guide in their comments against planning applications and local plans.**
- V. Ensures Highways officers facilitate training on transportation development planning to district and borough councils' planning committee members, including training on the Healthy Streets guidance and approach, where required.**

Liz Townsend spoke to her amendment, making the following points:

- Noted that she agreed to withdraw resolutions 2, 4 and 5 of her amendment as she had received assurances that officers were already carrying those duties out, she welcomed seeing more evidence of that, especially in future planning applications across her own borough of Waverley.
- Stressed that the Council was the statutory consultee for planning regarding highways matters on new developments and as such provided comments and could object to planning applications on highways grounds.
- Noted that when the Cabinet agreed the draft Guide it was clear that it was being produced to assist developers, the borough and district councils and the communities to understand what the Council would be seeking when it was considering new development proposals; she hoped that was the case.
- Noted that she would like to see Surrey securing roads on new developments that would be built to adoptable standards and using the guide, currently there were many new developments being built with private roads that did not meet technical standards and that residents themselves were having to maintain.
- Noted that she was sure that most Members and local planning authorities would like to see the aspirations of the Guide being implemented, encouraging slower speeds, high quality paving, promoting Active Travel and including the newly planted street trees and maintenance of existing street trees.
- Noted that the aspirations should be sought now by the Council from developers, particularly in the pre-application stage to ensure that highways infrastructure would be built to the standard outlined in the Guide. More roads needed to be built to that adoptable standard, that was difficult to see as more private developers wanted to build to higher densities and viability arguments overruled adopted material considerations by local planning authorities.
- Noted that the reason for her amendments was that the Guide could not simply be adopted by the borough and district councils, as the Guide needed to go through a rigorous inspection by professional planning officers against national and local planning policies and documents, followed by a public consultation stage with a range of stakeholders and developers. After that consultation, the Guide might need minor or major modifications before formal adoption.
- Noted that therefore the Council must consult with borough and district councils before they assigned their resources and finances to complete that task, she was grateful that had been recognised in the acceptance of her amendments.

The amendment was formally seconded by Lance Spencer, who reserved the right to speak.

John O'Reilly accepted the amendment and therefore it became the substantive motion.

Three Members spoke on the motion and made the following comments:

- In representing a largely rural division, resonated with the overarching principles of the Guide. The villages of Shere and West Clandon suffered from too many cars and oversized lorries in narrow roads, damaging historic buildings.
- Noted that parish councils were a key agency as part of the solution, the Guide stated that communities were more likely to positively engage when they were involved early on.
- Noted that to have healthy streets that were safe, enjoyable and efficient to walk on with pleasant pavements and safe cycle routes, size restrictions were needed for large lorries and traffic calming measures needed to be brought in and local villagers must be listened to.

- Highlighted the Americanisation used interchangeably in the motion, suggested that ‘transportation’ be removed and ‘transport’ be used consistently.
- Noted that having been a member of the borough - Chairman for eleven years - and Council planning committees, recognised the challenge posed to borough planning committee by the Council’s immovable advice, members of the planning committee found it frustrating that they could not refuse an application when the Council had not supported them.
- Liked street furniture and had seen designs change over the years, for example supported the use of grey water and making more use of the local environment.
- Noted that whilst not compulsory, the borough and district councils as the planning authorities would work with the Council, acknowledging the Guide.
- Noted that the Guide would be absorbed into the local plans and with the changes to planning committees following the local elections in May, it would be vital to train the councillors of the future who would be making far reaching decisions on their environment, of the importance of the Guide in the decision-making process alongside the other planning documents.

The Chair suggested that there be a joint briefing session on the Guide in the new administrative year following the elections between Members of the Council and borough and district councillors, to understand the differing points of view.

The Chair asked John O’Reilly, as proposer of the motion to conclude the debate, he made the following comments:

- Noted that he was happy to remove the Americanisation of ‘transportation’, replacing it consistently with ‘transport’.
- Supported the comments made by Members.

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

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** that:

This Council notes that:

Surrey County Council has a significant role in the design and implementation of new development, particularly in respect of streets and transport in general. As such, the County Council as the local Highway Authority advises the county’s district and borough councils on the transport implications of applications for planning permission.

The Healthy Streets for Surrey guide, adopted by the Cabinet on 25 October 2022, established the standards that the County Council would expect newly designed streets to meet.

It builds on national guidance but is more detailed and takes into account the existing policies of the County Council. Such policies enable the creation of places that improve the physical and mental health of Surrey residents and reduce their environmental footprint by encouraging cycling and walking more often; streets in which children can play safely; improved air quality; re-greened streets and public spaces; a reduction in residents’ transport carbon footprint; and the creation of beautiful, resilient and popular streets that will ultimately require less long-term maintenance.

This Council resolves to request that the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth:

- I. Implements the existing Street Design Guidance including principles for healthy streets as adopted by the Cabinet on 25 October 2022.
- II. Consults with districts and boroughs to seek their consideration for incorporating in borough/district wide Design Codes or as a material consideration subject to public consultation.

Item 9 (ii)

Under Standing Order 12.3 the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience, Kevin Deanus, moved a proposal. The proposal was as follows:

That the motion below by Will Forster be referred to the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee for the purpose of consideration and making recommendations to the Cabinet or the Council for decision.

This Council notes that:

- Road collision statistics in Surrey have hardly changed over the last ten years.
- In 2021 24 people were killed and 647 were seriously injured.
- The effects of a road traffic collision can have a physical, emotional, social and economic impact on everyone involved.
- In financial terms the cost of road collisions in Surrey was approximately £250 million in 2021.

This Council further notes that:

- Vision Zero is a set of principles and policies aimed at eliminating serious injuries and fatalities involving road traffic. It shifts responsibility for crashes from road users to the designers of the road system - if one occurs, it is up to authorities to ensure that it does not happen again.
- Vision Zero ambition has already been adopted by comparable authorities such as Essex, Kent and Oxfordshire County Councils.

This Council calls on the Cabinet to:

- I. Adopt a Vision Zero “Safe System” approach to road danger reduction.
- II. Work closely with partners and stakeholders to take a whole system approach, working together on infrastructure, behaviour, technology and legislation to achieve this change.
- III. Set a target date for there to be zero fatalities and severe injuries on Surrey’s roads.
- IV. Embed Vision Zero in all relevant Surrey County Council policies, including, but not limited to, implementing the fourth Local Transport Plan (LTP4).

- V. Instruct officers to bring a paper to Cabinet within six months to address how these points will be achieved.

Will Forster made the following points:

- Noted that the motion sought for the Council to commit to agreeing that one day it would have a road safety policy where no one is killed or seriously injured on Surrey's roads, following in the footsteps of other local authorities.
- Questioned why in the twenty-first century, in the UK, in Surrey a huge number of people were killed or seriously injured on Surrey's roads, that number had largely been unchanged for ten years.
- Stressed that the Council needed to agree that it was unacceptable and would have such a policy, designing out accident black spots.
- Noted that in referring the motion to the select committee, it would not look at whether such a policy should be enacted, but it would look at the detail of how to enact such a policy, the exact timetable and resource needed to meet that ambition.

In speaking to his proposal, the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience:

- Noted that Vision Zero followed the principle that it was neither inevitable nor acceptable that anyone should be killed or seriously injured when travelling; he was sure that every Member would support that principle.
- Noted that the aim of Vision Zero was to achieve a highways system with no fatalities or serious injuries involving road traffic, that approach started in the 1990s in Sweden and had been adopted across the UK; those local authorities had set different targets of achieving that for example, 2041 in London and 2050 in Kent.
- Noted that in Surrey 53.4% of those tragically killed or seriously injured were from the county, that showed that a partnership approach of all partners at the regional, national, and international levels was vital.
- Highlighted that the Council's Chief Fire Officer on 1 March 2023 became the Road Safety Lead for the National Fire Chiefs Council.

Will Forster confirmed that he was in support of the referral of the motion to the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee.

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

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** that:

The motion be referred to the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee for the purpose of consideration and making recommendations to the Cabinet or the Council for decision.

Item 9 (iii)

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

Under Standing Order 12.1 Catherine Baart moved:

This Council notes that:

- Food production has a high impact on climate and the environment. The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on climate change and land estimates that 21-27% of total greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) are attributable to the food system ([Special Report on Climate Change and Land, IPCC, 2019](#)). Local, organic and animal friendly food production systems reduce these emissions.
- What we eat has a significant impact on our climate impact in the UK. This is explored by the Centre for Alternative Technology ([Zero Carbon: Rethinking the Future - Centre for Alternative Technology](#))
- What we eat has a strong role to play in our public health, including through Surrey's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

This Council believes that:

- Surrey County Council has a significant role to play in leadership in this area - including through our procurement of food, addressing food waste and through our farm ownership.
- Implementing Surrey's Climate Change Strategy will have a positive impact on our land-use in Surrey.
- Surrey County Councillors can play an active role in advocating for what is needed in this area.

This Council resolves to call on the Cabinet to:

- I. Ensure that the forthcoming Surrey Food Strategy and Local Nature Recovery Strategy are both fully aligned to Surrey's Climate Change Strategy.
- II. Engage an appropriate range of Surrey stakeholders and in particular Members in the production of these strategies through the Greener Futures Reference Group.

Catherine Baart made the following points:

- Highlighted the global context surrounding the motion, noting that food security was threatened by climate change: changing weather patterns, extreme weather events, increasing pests and diseases.
- Noted that in a vicious circle, the current food system made climate change worse, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change estimated that between 20 and 30% of greenhouse gas emissions was caused by the global food system, which included food waste.
- Noted that although not by intention, the current farming practices in the UK had contributed to a fall in natural capital, such as biodiversity and flood mitigation.
- Noted that health outcomes and therefore healthcare costs were affected by the type of food eaten.
- Noted that the Council had a significant leadership role on food, it procured food for about 16,000 school children, it processed food waste and owned around

100 farms involved in food production; and had systems to communicate effectively with its residents, allowing Members to advocate for change.

- Was encouraged to read the plans for the Norbury Park pilot mentioned in the Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment's Briefing, it set out how local farming practices would be aligned with the Council's climate change policy to enhance biodiversity and natural capital, to start reversing the losses in those areas and to provide recreational benefits to residents, which would have health benefits while still producing quality food.
- Noted that the motion called for the county's developing strategies for land use and for food to align with the Council's Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, Members' support and interest would be crucial in ensuring that the strategies lead to meaningful change.

The motion was formally seconded by Marisa Heath, who made the following comments:

- Thanked the motion's proposer for the pragmatic way in which she put the motion forward and thanked both Green Party Members for their work on Greener Futures.
- Noted that she and the motion's proposer wanted to have a meaningful motion that could support Surrey's farmers, businesses, residents and the countryside.
- Noted that food production and access to healthy and sustainable food was central to how the Council tackles issues around health inequality, environmental damage and animal welfare.
- Noted that the issues relating to food access as seen through Covid-19 and the Ukraine invasion had touched the surface of potential problems all could face concerning food chains in the future; preparation for future unknowns was crucial.
- Noted that in Surrey and more widely, soil degradation, the threat of disease spreading through animals, water pollution and use of antibiotics could pose significant risks to the population.
- Noted that working across both livestock production and protein alternatives, highlighted that the biggest challenge was intensive farming and being able to provide affordable food, but the costs to health had been immense, with huge NHS waiting lists, poor animal welfare and the farmers producing the food had been impacted.
- Noted that the consolidation of the food system to a few organisations had been disastrous, meaning that they controlled the profit and the farmers were often left at break-even; many relied solely on the former Common Agricultural Policy funding.
- Noted that the motion was not about telling people what they should or should not eat, it was focused on ensuring better systems and moving away from those large consolidated food chains into local systems; and organic systems too.
- Concerning local systems, the Council could support Surrey's farmers more directly, working with small businesses, retailers and communities; maybe even enacting a change on Surrey's high streets to create vibrancy and a break from chain retailers.
- Recognised that there were challenges around how good, sustainable and healthy food could be made accessible, particularly to lower income families; public procurement and working closely with farmers and food producers would be vital to finding ways of providing security to them whilst getting the price right for consumers.

- Noted the importance of directly involving communities in the production of food and engagement needed to be undertaken on that, also addressing the mental and physical health challenges faced.
- Emphasised that it was the Council's responsibility, it was drafting a Land Management Policy and would be leading on preparing the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the Council was supporting farmers ensuring that they could make the most of the land, it brought together the Wildlife Trust, the Surrey Hills Enterprises, the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), businesses, schools and universities to make a plan that could change things.

No comments were made by Members.

The proposer of the motion, Catherine Baart, 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:

- Food production has a high impact on climate and the environment. The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on climate change and land estimates that 21-27% of total greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) are attributable to the food system ([Special Report on Climate Change and Land, IPCC, 2019](#)). Local, organic and animal friendly food production systems reduce these emissions.
- What we eat has a significant impact on our climate impact in the UK. This is explored by the Centre for Alternative Technology ([Zero Carbon: Rethinking the Future - Centre for Alternative Technology](#))
- What we eat has a strong role to play in our public health, including through Surrey's Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

This Council believes that:

- Surrey County Council has a significant role to play in leadership in this area - including through our procurement of food, addressing food waste and through our farm ownership.
- Implementing Surrey's Climate Change Strategy will have a positive impact on our land-use in Surrey.
- Surrey County Councillors can play an active role in advocating for what is needed in this area.

This Council resolves to call on the Cabinet to:

- I. Ensure that the forthcoming Surrey Food Strategy and Local Nature Recovery Strategy are both fully aligned to Surrey's Climate Change Strategy.

- II. Engage an appropriate range of Surrey stakeholders and in particular Members in the production of these strategies through the Greener Futures Reference Group.

19/23 SELECT COMMITTEES' REPORT TO COUNCIL [Item 10]

The Chairman of the Select Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs' Group introduced the report and thanked the select committee chairmen and Task Group Leads and others for their work over the last two years, improving the scrutiny undertaken by the select committees. He noted that there was more to do and hoped that his work would be carried on by another Member in May onwards, presenting the scrutiny annual report.

RESOLVED:

1. That Council reviewed the work summarised in this report providing feedback to Scrutiny Chairs as appropriate.
2. That the next scrutiny report to Council will be the annual report.

20/23 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES ANNUAL ADJUSTMENT [Item 11]

The Leader introduced the report reminding Members that nearly three years ago the Council agreed to adopt the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel that included a provision for a Consumer Price Index (CPI) increase from 1 April annually. Due to the current high level of inflation, the increase would be 8.8% based on CPI which was unacceptable. He thanked Group Leaders for their support in agreeing the proposal of a capped increase of 3%.

RESOLVED:

That the Council approved the proposed 3% increase in Members' Allowances for the 2023 - 2024 financial year.

21/23 SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL - ELECTORAL REVIEW PHASE TWO (DIVISION BOUNDARIES) SUBMISSION [Item 12]

The Leader introduced the report noting that the review was comprised of two parts, the first phase was to agree the number of Members of the Council, following that review the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) in February had accepted the Council's recommendation to retain 81 Members. The second phase was to consider any need to redraw the divisional boundaries within the existing district and borough boundaries. Members had been invited to meetings to discuss the second phase and their comments would be fed back to the cross-party Electoral Review Task Group to ensure consensus across the Council, with a single Surrey County Council response sent to the LGBCE. The submission must be made by 8 May, which was prior to the next Council meeting. Members and political groups could submit their individual recommendations and suggestions to the LGBCE.

RESOLVED:

That the Council endorsed the suggestion that the Electoral Review Task Group agree Surrey County Council's response to phase two of the Electoral Review.

22/23 CHANGES TO BORDER TO COAST PENSION PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE [Item 13]

The Vice-Chairman of the Surrey Pension Fund Committee introduced the report noting that it sought approval from the Council on the changes identified from the review of the governance of the Border to Coast Pension Partnership (BCPP), and that future decisions in respect to BCPP matters be delegated to the Surrey Pension Fund Committee and Shareholder representative where appropriate. The recommendations were reviewed by the Surrey Local Pension Board and commended by the Surrey Pension Fund Committee. He asked Members to note that the latest UK Government budget included measures aimed at increasing the extent and pace of pooling pensions investments, making it even more necessary for the funds to be able to respond promptly to changes in the regulatory environment.

RESOLVED:

1. Approved the proposed changes to the Stakeholder agreement, Articles of Association and Inter Authority Agreement outlined in this report.
2. Approved for all future decisions in respect of BCPP matters to be delegated in the following way:
 - a) Inter authority agreement matters (BCPP Joint Committee) – to the Surrey Pension Fund Committee;
 - b) Articles of Association and shareholder agreement matters – to the shareholder representative (the Section 151 officer or their delegate, in consultation with the Chairman of the Surrey Pension Fund Committee).
3. Approved for authority be delegated to the Section 151 officer and the Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the Surrey Pension Fund Committee to update the Council's Constitution to reflect the above approvals and to approve for execution by the Council the final versions of any documents necessary to put these decisions into effect.

23/23 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION [Item 14]

The Leader introduced the report noting that it was important that the Constitution was updated to reflect any change of practices. He noted that the report contained minor amendments to the Financial Regulations which had been through an extensive consultation and the changes were approved by the People, Performance and Development Committee on 27 February 2023 and the Audit and Governance Committee on 8 March 2023.

RESOLVED:

1. Approved the amendments to the Financial Regulations and Scheme of Delegation, as set out, in Annexes 1 and 2.

[Meeting ended at: 12.20 pm]

Chair

Leader's Statement – County Council, 21 March 2023

Madam Chair, Members, I think it's safe to describe this meeting as our first of springtime despite the ever-changeable weather, and I look forward to coming out of a challenging winter period with a fresh outlook and energy for the months ahead.

I know how hard the winter has been for lots of people, with inflation across the board impacting people's household budgets, causing a lot of stress and some very difficult choices.

Those challenges won't go away overnight, and we will continue to be here to support those in need as we head into warmer months.

Madam Chair, the Chancellor's budget last week showed that we have cause for optimism in the country's economic outlook, with any downturn not as bad as feared, markets stabilised and inflation showing signs of coming under control.

It will be a relief to many that the energy support is continuing and that wholesale energy prices have reduced, easing a burden on many families.

Here in Surrey, and across local government, we welcome more money for potholes and an expansion of free childcare, as well as the anticipated transfer of Local Enterprise Partnership responsibilities to councils.

This will further empower our local economic strategy, as we push ahead alongside Surrey businesses and education providers in developing the skills and workforce for the future.

It is clear that this government is recognising the importance of strong local government, and we'll continue to work with them to bring benefits to the wider sector, but most importantly to the county of Surrey.

Madam Chair, Members, as I regularly point out, this council is an ambitious one.

We have clear priorities and challenge ourselves all the time to be better.

We have a vision and guiding principles, and we have developed the right culture to help us get there.

However, I know that talk is cheap.

I can stand here and say we want to do *this*, or we have a strategy to achieve *that*.

But what matters is what we deliver out in our communities.

What we are actually doing, or have already done over the last few years, to improve the lives of people in Surrey.

How exactly this council is making Surrey a better place.

Well members, we *are* delivering. And we should be proud of what we've delivered.

Just this month, plans for a brand-new school for children with additional needs and disabilities in Dorking received planning permission.

And the Department for Education have agreed to fund another specialist free school in the north of Surrey.

These will be excellent, modern buildings with first class facilities, to give young people a great start in life.

This is another huge boost for parents, alongside the 700 additional school places for children with additional needs that we've already delivered over the last three years.

With 200 more places available from September, this huge increase in provision tackles a very real problem of children with additional needs, often having to travel far outside their own communities to school.

Our action and delivery on this issue is helping these often-vulnerable children go to school much closer to their homes, improving their wellbeing, life chances and the lives of their parents.

We're also delivering real life improvements for adults with additional and complex needs, and those growing old and in need of extra support.

We're building new, modern, state-of-the-art accommodation here in Surrey.

We are transforming how care is delivered, focusing on what each person really needs – where their strengths lie and how we can keep people active and in their community for as long as possible, rather than the traditional residential care home model.

725 new extra care homes – brilliant places, specifically designed to help older people to live independently, with their own front door, in the community, with companionship and support.

And an increase in Supported Independent Living accommodation for adults with learning difficulties and those with mental health needs – again, modern places for

people to live, with the right level of support to boost independence, and improve the quality of life and life chances for some of our most vulnerable residents.

This is hugely important.

This council is investing in improving people's lives – people who need us most.

The biggest part of our budget is spent on adult social care. It's not something that all residents see – and many will even be unaware that their local council is responsible for this type of care. But addressing health inequalities requires a genuine partnership approach. We continue to work closely with Surrey Heartlands and Frimley ICSs as well as the VCSE to find better ways of delivering improved health outcomes for our residents, and I particularly look forward to the publication of the Hewitt Review in the next couple of weeks when I'm confident that the recommendations will accelerate the focus on that partnership working.

But we're serious about using all the technology, innovation, and expertise available in this area to deliver the best possible care when people need it.

This innovation and forward thinking is essential if we're to make sure Surrey is a place fit for the future.

Soon we'll announce a nationally leading roll out of electric vehicle infrastructure, with the UK's biggest single contract for EV charge points.

Thousands of new charge points for Surrey residents – to enable an electric vehicle revolution starting here in this great county.

Our ambitious move in this area demonstrates both our commitment to a greener future, and also our understanding of the barriers residents face when wanting to do their bit for the environment.

Well, this council is removing those barriers in a very real way.

Surrey will be *THE* place to switch to electric.

Further evidence of our commitment to rethinking transport – and actually helping residents to change the way they travel – is our on-demand bus service.

Again, this council has delivered a pioneering service that is benefiting residents in their everyday lives *AND* helping us tackle the climate emergency.

You only have to read that great local media outlet – the Surrey Live website – to see the impact of our electric, accessible, Mole Valley connect service.

As they put it:

‘A **lifesaver** on-demand bus service is taking passengers door-to-door for shopping, medical appointments, language classes and more.’

Madam Chair this is what local government should be all about – real, useful solutions to improve people’s lives, and deliver long-lasting positive change.

Thousands of journeys across one district, reducing car use, connecting communities, helping people socialise and access services, cleaning up our air and saving the planet.

I’m confident all members here will echo the thoughts of residents Beryl and Alison Wood who described the service as ‘wonderful’.

We're rapidly expanding the bus service across the whole of Mole Valley and into Waverley and Guildford, and I'm determined that we will roll this service out even further over the next 12 months across Surrey.

More delivery. More lives improved. More cars off our roads.

And for those people who are still using their car – quite a few according to our recent inboxes – we are doing the basics and getting those potholes fixed and roads resurfaced.

A continual and never-ending challenge with utility companies constantly working on our highways.

I know how annoying it is for car users and cyclists alike, especially at this time of year with potholes appearing and worsening overnight.

It's dangerous as well as unsightly.

We've stepped up, with over double our normal number of teams out on our 3000 miles of roads.

They are not superhuman, and there is a finite number of them, but they have accelerated their work, clearing any backlog and completing over one and a half thousand repairs every week – that is even more than the number reported to us.

I think the Chancellor was probably lobbied by every councillor in the country on this issue as well as Peter Martin the former deputy leader here, ahead of his budget – after all potholes don't just occur in Surrey – and thankfully he has provided some additional money to help tackle the problem.

But here in Surrey, we allocated extra resource months ago. And even more in our capital budget for roads maintenance last year, this year, next year and every year of a conservative administration.

I know potholes will keep appearing, and residents will keep complaining – understandably.

We can't resurface every road as quickly as we'd like, but members we are delivering.

We are fixing our roads.

Madam Chair, we're also planting trees.

As pledged, we're pushing ahead with our ambitious target of 1.2m by 2030.

Surrey is the most wooded county in the country – something we're hugely proud of, and an accolade we are determined to keep.

The 125,266 trees we've planted so far not only help us keep that title, but they make our county healthier, improving the air Surrey residents are breathing and the environment we are living in.

This tree planting is accelerating further and faster – even doing our bit here at Woodhatch.

Something else that residents will start to notice over the coming months is our re-wilding project for roadside verges and roundabouts across the county, now we manage these spaces directly.

More wildflowers, more insects, improving biodiversity and absorbing more carbon from the air.

This council is making Surrey a better – and greener – place.

One project that probably encapsulates the level of our ambition best is Your Fund Surrey – delivery of grant funding directly to communities.

Tens of millions of pounds dedicated to improving the places in which people live.

Projects funded and already complete include the wonderful family garden in Claygate, the 3G pitch for South Park Sports Association here in Reigate, the Limpsfield Way Cycle and Walking Trail, Weybridge's Men's Shed, and the new community picnic area in Tatsfield Village Green.

With millions more committed to successful applications all across the county, including a community shop, playgrounds, community centres, recreation ground improvements, a community swimming pool, and more sports clubs, the legacy of this project is being felt far and wide. I encourage all members to work closely with their communities to identify suitable schemes, schemes that can be transformational for local residents.

Real, tangible delivery, benefiting communities, making Surrey's towns and villages even better places to live.

Madam Chair, we're also directly supporting those in serious financial need across our county.

The last year has been extremely tough for many people, with rising costs squeezing household budgets and tipping more people into difficulty.

Councils are here, in many ways, to redistribute wealth. Using council tax to deliver services that prioritise those most in need.

Things like adult social care and children's services provide a lifeline to our most vulnerable residents.

But we also provide immediate help to those people who are facing a financial crisis, through our Surrey Crisis Fund.

In the last 12 months we've received more than 4,000 applications, approving 72% of them.

We have paid out £323,000 to help people buy food, toiletries and pay utility bills, and a further £425,000 on white goods and furniture to more than 800 households in emergency need.

This is a sobering example of the level of need in Surrey.

But we are here, delivering in real terms, for those families most in need. We've stabilised the council's finances, we've transformed our service delivery in many areas though I fully appreciate there is still more to do, particularly for families that have children with additional needs and we are seeing improved inspection outcomes. We continue to build strong foundations, foundations that have seen this council deliver for our residents during covid and foundations that will see this council deliver on its ambition that no one in this county will be left behind.

Madam Chair, all of this...

All of this investment, improvement, innovation.

It all delivers towards our four key priorities.

It helps deliver a greener future, stronger communities, a growing economy and better health outcomes.

Pulled together, all of it helps us in reaching our ambition that no one is left behind in Surrey.

We're working closer with our communities and our partners.

We're forward thinking and ambitious.

We're clear and transparent about what we're trying to do.

We are focused on delivering for the people of Surrey.

Madam Chair, when things go wrong, we'll fix them.

When things could be done better, we'll do it.

We'll keep at it. We'll keep improving. We'll keep delivering.

Because this council's leadership, and this council's workforce, are committed to making Surrey a better place.