

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

Saj Hussain (Chair)
Tim Hall (Vice-Chair)

Maureen Attewell	Eber Kington
Ayesha Azad	Rachael Lake
Catherine Baart	Victor Lewanski
r 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	Michaela Martin
Natalie Bramhall	* Jan Mason
Helyn Clack	Steven McCormick
* Stephen Cooksey	Cameron McIntosh
* Colin Cross	* Julia McShane
Clare Curran	Sinead Mooney
Nick Darby	* Carla Morson
Fiona Davidson	Bernie Muir
* Paul Deach	Mark Nuti
* Kevin Deanus	John O'Reilly
Jonathan Essex	Tim Oliver
Robert Evans OBE	Rebecca Paul
Chris Farr	* George Potter
* Paul Follows	Catherine Powell
Will Forster	Penny Rivers
* John Furey	John Robini
Matt Furniss	Becky Rush
Angela Goodwin	Joanne Sexton
Jeffrey Gray	Lance Spencer
David Harmer	* Lesley Steeds
Nick Harrison	Mark Sugden
Edward Hawkins	Richard Tear
Marisa Heath	Ashley Tilling
Trefor Hogg	Chris Townsend
Robert Hughes	Liz Townsend
Jonathan Hulley	Denise Turner-Stewart
Rebecca Jennings-Evans	* Hazel Watson
Frank Kelly	Jeremy Webster
Riasat Khan	Buddhi Weerasinghe
Robert King	Fiona White
	Keith Witham

*absent

r = Remote Attendance

44/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies for absence were received from Liz Bowes, Stephen Cooksey, Colin Cross, Paul Deach, Kevin Deanus, Paul Follows, John Furey, Jan Mason, Julia McShane, Carla Morson, George Potter, Lesley Steeds, Hazel Watson.

Members who attended remotely and had no voting rights were Steve Bax.

45/23 MINUTES [Item 2]

The minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 23 May 2023 were submitted, confirmed and signed.

46/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were none.

47/23 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS [Item 4]

Richard Tear joined the meeting at 10.04 am.

The Chair:

- Noted that a Surrey Arts 'Singing Picnic' was held last week at Woodhatch Place, it was good to see many local school children participating.
- Noted that his full announcements could be found in the agenda.

48/23 LEADER'S STATEMENT [Item 5]

Amanda Boote joined the meeting at 10.06 am.

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

Members raised the following topics:

- Stressed that Members cross-party were concerned with the inadequate provision of the services that residents received, evidenced by the many Member questions on vulnerable children and grass verges.
- Noted disappointment that the Leader did not mention climate change despite the Council's declaration of a 'climate emergency' four years ago, a step change was still awaited on climate change.
- Noted concern that the Council was still ignoring the Government and a Liberal Democrat original motion in 2018 by charging householders for taking DIY waste to Community Recycling Centres, the Council must change its policy and not charge householders.
- Hoped that the detailed input the Residents' Association and Independent Group provided to the task and finish groups would be part of the rapid improvement and positive change to highways.
- Noted that residents in a 2021 consultation on council tax spend, wanted funding protected for services to support the vulnerable, more investment in early intervention and prevention, and those most at risk of being left behind at the heart of decision-making.

- Noted that contrary to the above, efficiencies were made in the 2022 and 2023 budgets affecting services to the most vulnerable: children and young people including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) with cuts in funding to charities that delivered early intervention, and older adults and adults with disabilities and their carers.
- Asked how officers chose which children would benefit from the Local Early Autism Programme funding and who would be left behind, the demand was four times the places available.
- Noted that there were 1,300 Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) outstanding against the twenty-week limit.
- Welcomed early engagement on the budget and the commitment to provide the Equality Impact Assessments in October to the select committees but noted the need to act now to reinstate the early intervention and prevention services that were lost.
- Noted that the 2024 budget must deliver for all residents, placing those most at risk of being left behind at the heart of decision-making; officers and Members must work collaboratively and use local knowledge.
- Asked for the Leader to provide detail on the Integrated Care Systems and how new partnerships had been forged across the county.
- Noted that the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) found that the Council had failed SEND children and young people were not receiving the education to which they were entitled, asked whether those responsible for the failures in the system had been held to account.
- Asked the Leader to comment on the leaflet by UNISON which referred to the current dispute with the Council regarding the low pay offer, it was highlighted that one in ten members of UNISON resorted to food banks.
- Asked what measures the Leader would propose to improve the health of people in Surrey, particularly those in the more urban areas who were more subjected to nitrogen oxides; and whether the Leader would consider something similar in Surrey to the Ultra Low Emission Zone.
- Asked what the connection was between the declaration of a climate emergency four years ago, the equal need to declare a 'biodiversity emergency' now and the commitment to leaving no one behind; an emergency called for action rather than tweaking existing strategies.
- Highlighted that the Council underspends on special needs provision in schools by around £2.4 million, equivalent to 2,365 children waiting twelve weeks over the twenty-week limit.
- Noted that schools were experiencing the underspend through a lack of Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, other children and teachers were affected; asked the Leader to commit to address the shortage.
- Asked whether the ambition of 'No One Left Behind' would be treated as a public declaration, an emergency to act on now.
- Welcomed the Leader's focus on the provision of essential services and ambition of 'No One Left Behind', whilst acknowledging that difficult decisions needed to be made in light of the current financial context.

Edward Hawkins joined the meeting at 10.34 am.

- Emphasised that Your Fund Surrey was enhancing and improving communities and providing essential services; thanked the Cabinet for the £3 million awarded to the Yvonne Arnaud Theatre in Guildford.
- Noted that the Your Fund Surrey Small Community Projects Fund was vital and noted an upcoming allocation to 1st Send Scouts which would transform their ability to be a community facility on the River Wey.

- Noted that the Surrey Scouts headquarters, Bentley Copse, was delivering opportunities and experiences for young people across the county; and this would be pursued with the relevant Cabinet Member.
- Noted that 70% of Surrey was rural and those areas had a different feel and need to urban areas; praised the work of parish councils in their rural division, Members' funding from the Council had supported the parish councils; would like to see parish councils recognised going forward in the positive opportunities arising from the task and finish groups.
- Noted that allowing grass verges to grow long in rural areas was beneficial, they were havens for wildlife and a natural traffic calming tool.
- Encouraged the Leader to explore how children could be supported in the classroom who may not need an ECHP but need extra help.
- Referring to the Council's takeover of parking enforcement on 1 April from the borough and district councils, noted inaction from the parking enforcement team regarding several emails sent to them.
- Noted that verge cutting was not being done and the issues were not anticipated, cuttings were left in gutters and drains blocked; the weather was not to blame.
- Referred to the Equality Act 2010 and the requirement to make reasonable adjustments to the Council's buildings such as Woodhatch Place, only a few actions and recommendations from the 2021 report were completed. A witness to recent select committee meetings produced a report listing many problems around accessibility, concluding that the whole building urgently required safety improvements.
- Referring to the Leader's comment on people having pride in their neighbourhoods in Surrey, noted that many residents were appalled by the state of their verges and roundabouts; roads signs being obscured due to the failure to cut grass verges was not due to encouraging biodiversity.
- Noted that as with filling potholes, the Council needed to get the basics right, otherwise the claims of success and modernisation would be lost.
- Asked when the conclusions and recommendations of the two task and finish groups on highways would be available to Members.
- Thanked the Leader and the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth for expanding the bus network in Surrey and urged them to press on with providing more services particularly in rural areas.
- Highlighted that the Surrey Connect Demand-Responsive Transport bus service was due to start at the beginning of September with five routes, filling in the infrequent services provided by Arriva and Stagecoach; residents were astounded by the new bus service available from 7.00 am to 7.00 pm Monday to Friday and from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm on Saturdays.

Becky Rush joined the meeting at 10.55 am.

49/23 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME [Item 6]

Questions:

Notice of thirty-five questions had been received. The questions and replies were published in the supplementary agenda (items 6 and 8) on 10 July 2023.

The Chair noted that as Kevin Deanus had given apologies, Members could ask supplementary questions which would be responded to in writing. A Member requested that the written responses to supplementary questions to the Cabinet Member be circulated to all Members collectively and in a timely way.

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

(Q1) Catherine Powell asked the Cabinet Member to share the timelines for the review and when she envisaged the plans being presented to the select committee. She noted that whilst alignment with the nationally used terminology had merit, the change would impact Surrey residents who would need to be kept up to date to avoid any unnecessary stress and concern if the specialist placements were to remain the same type of provision as they were.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning noted that she would keep the Member updated with the proposed timeline for the review and would liaise with her about whether that was required to go through the select committee.

(Q2) Joanne Sexton referred to the Leader's comment about wanting residents to have pride in Surrey's neighbourhoods and asked why the administration blamed everything on the weather and did not take ownership and accountability by working with its residents to deliver services that they deserve and pay for. She noted that residents in her division were appalled that they had a substandard service and that the Council did not consult with residents and political groups. She asked for assurance that the Council would work with all going forward. She also asked why there was no centralised list of works.

On Kevin Deanus' behalf, the Leader corrected the Member's continual comment that there was no consultation with political leaders, noting that he attended several meetings with the Surrey Leaders' Group where it was discussed in detail. Furthermore, Council officers had several conversations with district and borough council officers. A written response to the other points made would be provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience.

(Q3) Fiona Davidson noted that she was surprised and disappointed that when negotiating with NSL there was no benchmarking against the best performing districts and boroughs in Surrey, such as Guildford which produced a significant parking surplus. She noted that she was receiving an increasing number of complaints about enforcement and a lack of communication from NSL, she had been waiting since 11 May for a response to an enforcement issue. She asked whether the Cabinet Member was happy with the current service provided by NSL, both in terms of enforcement and their communications.

A written response would be provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience.

(Q4) Lance Spencer asked the Cabinet Member to ensure that the social media material would be made available to Members so they could distribute it to the younger people in their divisions. He asked how long the Cabinet Member expected that it would take to get to the target of 12,000 residents aged 20 years old and under using the Surrey LINK bus card scheme.

The Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth encouraged all Members to share the link provided in the response to the Surrey LINK bus card and noted that several Cabinet Members and other Members had shared it around social media. He clarified that the 12,000 figure was not a target, the scheme had been budgeted for that amount. It was hoped that every young person aged 20 years old and under would have the Surrey LINK bus card, which the Council was providing

free of charge and provided half price bus travel across the whole of Surrey on single and return fares.

(Q5) Will Forster noted that the former Debenhams site in Winchester was now worth £3.6 million having been originally purchased for £15.8 million, he asked whether the Cabinet Member thought it provided value for money.

Jonathan Essex referred to part d) asking whether there was also a requirement to pay business rates on the empty property and if that was the case, how much.

The Cabinet Member for Property and Waste responded to Will Forster noting that the Council's external valuers had conservatively re-estimated the value of the site at £8.75 million. She responded to Jonathan Essex noting that she believed that there had been a cost and would provide a written response.

(Q6) Ashley Tilling noted that Members' inboxes were full of questions and comments about the Council's takeover of the contract for cutting grass verges. He noted that the contractor who used to undertake the contract for Elmbridge Borough Council now operated the contract for Surrey and was ashamed about the inadequate provision of four urban cuts at county level compared to eight to ten at borough level; the length of the grass between the last and first cut needed cutting with agricultural machinery and was a safety concern at road junctions. He sought reassurance that the contract would be reviewed so that the job would be done properly.

On behalf of Kevin Deanus, the Leader explained that there would be meeting with the chairs of the select committees in July to look at the findings of the task and finish groups, to be reviewed by the relevant select committee in September. He noted that the Councillor was an Elmbridge Borough Council Cabinet Member when it took the decision to cease the funding of the service. He noted that the task and finish group had done a thorough job, he appreciated Members' examples and information provided which would be reviewed and result in a clear process and a revision to the contract for next year. If additional information was required, a written response could be provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience.

(Q7) Jonathan Essex referring to the response which noted that it could cost the Council £1 million per year, he asked whether the actual cost saving through reduced fly-tipping from the change could be explored and how the change in the amounts of DIY waste dumped in household bins might reduce. Following the upcoming Cabinet Member Decision to be taken, he sought confirmation on whether the Cabinet Member would actively promote it as an opportunity for residents to better separate and reuse their DIY waste.

The Cabinet Member for Property and Waste agreed that Community Recycling Centres should be used more for reusing and recycling, she had conversations with the Cabinet Member for Environment about that. She would look into household waste going into rubbish bins that were collected by the borough and district councils, and explained that lots of the fly-tipped rubbish across the county was carried out by workers rather than householders as evidenced by prosecutions. The Council was working closely with its waste contractor to enable more reuse, it was looking at expanding the reuse shops and network.

(Q8) Catherine Baart had no supplementary question.

Catherine Powell wondered whether the Cabinet Member could provide more details on how the vehicle assets were being maximised as part of the roll out. For example,

were there opportunities for addressing some of the Home to School Transport issues and was data being collected on mileage and usage with and without passengers and what was the number of passengers.

The Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth would provide the data requested and would share it with all Members. He noted that regarding the trial in Mole Valley demand had increased weekly and some diesel minibuses were used to cope with the demand. There were a lot of benefits such as usage to attend medical appointments as it was a door-to-door service. Whilst it would be a more expensive option, it would enable the Council to meet its ambition of 'No One Left Behind' in the rural areas.

(Q9) Eber Kington asked whether the Leader agreed with him that an open and transparent council should provide for easy access to published reports from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) as soon as they are received and via an obvious link on the Council's website. He noted that was not happening and asked for him to review the accessibility and timeliness.

The Leader explained that whilst some LGSCO reports went to the Cabinet, he would review where the reports were published on the Council's website.

(Q10) Robert Evans OBE noted that of the figure of 1,292 asylum seekers in Surrey, he asked whether the Leader was aware that over 100 of those were in his division and that had not caused the problems feared initially. Referring to the Home Office's statement recognising the additional pressures locally to school places, transport and health services; he asked whether the Leader discussed those areas of concern in his meetings with the Home Office and if so, whether that information could be shared with him and other Members whose divisions were most affected by asylum seekers.

Helyn Clack noted that there were around 200 asylum seekers in her division and asked whether the Leader was aware that the Council had a good relationship with the Home Office and Mole Valley District Council to ensure that their needs were met. Also, whether he was aware of the meeting between herself, local leaders, parish councils and the Home Office to discuss further help.

The Leader noted that there were nine Initial Asylum Accommodation sites, three Overspill Dispersal Accommodation sites, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy or 'bridging' accommodation across three sites, Afghan refugees resettled in permanent accommodation across the county; as well as the Hong Kong British Nationals (Overseas) Welcome Programme, Home for Ukraine Scheme and the Ukraine Family Sponsorship Scheme. He noted that the Council had drafted a letter to go to the Home Secretary - under review by the Surrey Leaders' Group - setting out the concerns and impact in Surrey particularly with the imminent closure of some bridging hotels. Areas affected were highlighted in the letter particularly Horley. He noted that coordination work was underway regionally and nationally. Once agreed by the Surrey Leaders' Group, he would circulate the letter to Members and would keep Members informed when their areas were affected.

(Q12) Nick Darby regarding the rear fire escape in the Council Chamber, he asked what the escape procedure was for those partially sighted or disabled.

The Cabinet Member for Property and Waste noted that her response clarified that when a fire alarm sounds, a visitor or officer with a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) would be contacted by the Facilities Management team directly and would be assisted to leave the Council Chamber.

(Q13) Angela Goodwin asked whether the communications team would be willing to work with Members to develop some communications to encourage residents to cut back their vegetation that spills over onto the public highway.

A written response would be provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience.

(Q14) Mark Sugden noted that he was aware of the Road Safety Working Groups which operated biannually in each borough and district, he sought further clarity on what those discussed and who decided the outcomes and how. He asked whether the Cabinet Member could facilitate an onsite meeting with residents on the matter with an officer from the Road Safety Team. He noted that the implication in the final paragraph of the response about action taking at least two years and would be subject to a countywide Integrated Transport Scheme (ITS) bid was incorrect, he would not wait two years for action to be taken and there were various allocations that Members could use.

A written response would be provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience.

(Q15) Catherine Powell noted that she was alarmed that regarding the mainstream maintained schools in Surrey the notional budget towards the cost of fulfilling their duty to 'best endeavours' was set at £6,000, which was 40% lower than the national average. She asked whether that could be resolved in less than two years, recognising the current pressures faced by schools.

Jonathan Essex asked whether in considering whether the Council should remain with the notional budget set at £6,000 or for it be increased, for the Council to benchmark its performance in delivering EHCPs on time or late.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning responded to both Members explaining that any change of the notional figure of £6,000 per child needed to be agreed by the Surrey Schools Forum. She would raise that with them to see whether that work could be accelerated.

(Q16) Joanne Sexton had no supplementary question.

Eber Kington asked whether the Cabinet Member was aware that residents in his division were advised by Surrey County Council's contact centre that Epsom and Ewell Borough Council had asked the Council to take back verge cutting because Epsom and Ewell Borough Council wanted to spend the money on other priorities, that was incorrect. He asked whether the Cabinet Member could investigate how that false messaging was allowed to be issued and to apologise to the Chief Executive of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.

A written response would be provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience.

(Q17) Lance Spencer noted that it was unfortunate that the roads in Woking were not dry or clean enough to paint the white lines and that had led to a significant nine-month delay. He asked the Cabinet Member to work with the contractors to ensure that the works in Woking would be completed by the end of summer 2023.

Catherine Powell asked how the Cabinet Member intended to address the yellow lines that were approved as part of the 2021 parking review, in her division that had still not been undertaken including some outside a school where there had been a recent incident.

Written responses would be provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience.

(Q19) Jonathan Essex noted that he asked the question because no action had been taken through the normal channel of the highways inbox, he hoped that would be remedied rather than relying on the Cabinet Member to intervene to fix temporary tarmac in a town centre for example. He asked whether more could be done regarding the specification sent to utility companies to ensure that there was more reuse of materials like granite blocks. He suggested that the Council and the borough and district councils could work together on individual town locations to ensure that the utility companies get the works right first time.

A written response would be provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience.

(Q22) Steven McCormick asked whether an alternative approach to addressing Home to School Transport issues might be required. He asked the Cabinet Member to consider undertaking an alternative root cause analysis approach to provide more school places in the areas of need.

Catherine Powell noted that the provision of school places report did not account for the significant localised housing development near her where there were 8,000 new homes spread across Surrey and Hampshire. The report talks about additional schooling in Ash Manor, however there was no easy bus service between the two. She asked the Cabinet Member to commit to reviewing secondary school places in Farnham to take account of the house building in both Surrey and Hampshire.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning responded to Steven McCormick reiterating that school admissions was a statutory process and was subject to parental preference and choice. She noted that it was not necessarily possible to redesign a school admissions process to take geographic issues into account.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning responded to Catherine Powell noting that she had asked her the same question around a year ago and she arranged a one-to-one meeting between her and the School Place Planning Team; she was happy to arrange for that again. She noted that she had been given assurance by that team that when they did their school place projections, they considered projected future residential development both in the immediate area and across the border in other counties.

(Q24) Catherine Powell asked whether the Cabinet Member recognised that families with SEND children had been disproportionately impacted by the cost-of-living crisis and that the Council needed to address that going forward.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning noted that the issue had been satisfactorily covered in her response.

(Q25) Lance Spencer asked whether the Cabinet Member would agree that the current death rate which had plateaued at around thirty deaths per year and a further 600 serious road casualties per year was too high. He asked whether he supported

the principle of targeting zero deaths as put forward in the Vision Zero original motion at the March 2023 Council meeting.

Nick Harrison asked why the report on twenty miles per hour zones had been withdrawn from the agenda of the July meeting of the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee.

Written responses would be provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience.

(Q27) Jonathan Essex asked the Cabinet Member whether in the Adequacy of Consultation (AoC) representation, he would highlight the inadequacy of consultation by Gatwick Airport Limited, covering areas including: the miscalculation of climate costs, the public being misled over the economic benefit, and the failure to properly consult on noise and transport impacts such as replacing roundabouts with grade-separated highway interchanges.

The Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth agreed that the Gatwick consultation and evidence provided were insufficient. The Council would be writing to the Government to request that they decline the Development Consent Order (DCO).

(Q29) Robert Evans OBE asked whether the Cabinet Member was aware that temporary traffic lights were the source of frustration amongst many motorists, causing more traffic delays than they stopped and blocked roads unnecessarily. He asked whether he had seen cases where pavements were dug up and soil was dumped on the road, he asked for him to review his response regarding permits being granted and Streetworks officers inspecting works, as the wrong conclusions were being made.

A written response would be provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience.

(Q30) Steven McCormick asked the Cabinet Member for further help and support in gaining answers to the other questions which he raised on the Chalk Pit issue, but to date had not had any replies.

John Beckett welcomed the reassurance regarding the two Conditions and sought assurance that the appropriate enforcement action would be undertaken by the Council where required.

Bernie Muir noted the problematic handling of the Chalk Pit issue by all three agencies: the Environment Agency, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council and Surrey County Council. She asked the Cabinet Member to state what was being done as a matter of urgency to protect the residents from the noise, dust and vehicle movements on the site; given the recent communications from the site owner and residents.

The Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth noted that regarding the extra information requested, all three Members had been invited to a community stakeholder meeting for the Members and residents affected to hear directly from the Council's Planning Enforcement Team about what was being done. He noted that it was a single operator on a multi operator site and resolving the issues required the Environment Agency and Epsom and Ewell Borough Council to work with the Council.

(Q32) Lance Spencer noted that he asked the same question a year ago and the plan then was to have EHCPs completion back at national levels by May 2023, the current plan was to reach national levels by December 2024. He asked whether that was realistic considering the financial constraints faced by the Council and the efficiencies that would have to be made.

The Cabinet Member for Education and Learning noted that there was a recovery plan in place to improve the timeliness, that had not gone as well or as quickly as planned. The issue was being revisited to see what additional resources could be brought into the system and more recruitment into the Educational Psychology Service to improve the timeliness. An end-to-end review of additional needs services was also underway. The process would take until 2024 to reach the goal for all EHCPs to be completed on time.

In line with Standing Order 10.12, the time limit of 45 minutes had been reached. Members could ask supplementary questions on Q33 - Q35 via email.

A Member raised a point of order regarding Standing Order 10.1. Mindful of the procedure adopted by the Chair for the current meeting, he requested that officers review how the Council manages original Member Questions and supplementaries in the absence of the relevant Cabinet Member. The Chair agreed that the matter would be considered.

Cabinet Member Briefings:

These were also published in the supplementary agenda (items 6 and 8) on 10 July 2023.

The Chair noted that he had been informed that there was an error relating to Natalie Bramhall's Cabinet Member Briefing on page 54, the location of Lakeside Primary Academy was Frimley and not Farnham.

Members made the following comments:

Cabinet Member for Education and Learning: on the Council's failure regarding SEND children's education and that several young people had not received the education to which they were entitled to, **Robert Evans OBE** asked what personal responsibility she had.

The Cabinet Member noted that it was distressing to read the LGSCO reports and where fault had been found with the Council that recompense was provided to the affected families; it was right for the Council to acknowledge its failings and for public apologies to be issued - she was happy to do that. She noted that the LGSCO reports referred to situations in the past and that the Council aspired to do better.

Cabinet Member for Property and Waste: Nick Harrison was pleased that settlements had been reached with SUEZ and asked whether the Council would be seeking the grants that were held back by the Government in relation to the waste arrangements.

The Cabinet Member noted that the Council was working with officials from the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs and hoped to bring that to a conclusion within the month.

Regarding the investments to reduce the impact of hauling recyclable materials over long distances, **Jonathan Essex** asked whether there were plans to do the same for composting material and have that more locally dealt with across Surrey.

The Cabinet Member noted that she would discuss the matter with officers and would respond to the Member.

Regarding the Council's takeover of the Edge Leisure Centre in Haslemere by Facilities Management, **David Harmer** noted that the Edge Leisure Centre was used by a wider community than what was advised as the local users, he asked how wider local users would be advised on the use of facilities and activities.

The Cabinet Member noted that Waverley Borough Council took the decision to close the Edge Leisure Centre, Surrey County Council had taken back that facility and was working with the school that has use of that facility to enable them to continue to use it. The groups that had paid their fees to Waverley Borough Council for a year's membership were directed to them to receive a refund and could be signposted to one of their other facilities. The closure was unexpected and Surrey County Council was pursuing a dilapidations claim against Waverley Borough Council.

Liz Townsend stated that Waverley Borough Council did not close the Edge Leisure Centre and that it had leased the Edge - run by contractors - from Surrey County Council; she welcomed the opportunity to speak to the Cabinet Member about her use of language. She noted that Waverley Borough Council had been in talks with Surrey County Council for a couple of years about the future of the Edge. She noted that Waverley Borough Council already ran another leisure centre in Haslemere.

The Cabinet Member refuted the Member's comment noting that Waverley Borough Council's officers gave six-months' notice to Surrey County Council's officers in January 2023. Waverley Borough Council had a 99-year lease which around a decade ago it was decided that the lease be pulled back to 2023, it was not anticipated that the Edge would close; it was well used by several groups. She noted that Surrey County Council's Land and Property officers had worked hard to try and come to an acceptable work in progress for Waverley and Hampshire residents, that was not to be so Surrey County Council put in place arrangements for the local school and others to continue to use it.

Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways: regarding the parking enforcement updates to Members in July with an offer to attend a parking task group for their area, **Chris Townsend** asked when those would be available.

The Deputy Cabinet Member noted that the parking task groups on a borough basis would begin later in the month and he would ensure that the dates would be circulated to Members.

50/23 STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS [Item 7]

Steve Bax (East Molesey and Esher) made a statement on the positive feedback received from residents about Ringway which resurfaced the Walton Road in Molesey at the end of May. The Ringway crew undertook the noisiest of the work before midnight, efforts were made to accommodate residents and the resurfacing was completed swiftly. He thanked the foreman and his team for their hard work and the Council for providing the funding.

Becky Rush left the meeting at 11.59 am.

Mark Sugden (Hinchley Wood, Claygate and Oxshott) made a statement on the redevelopment of the existing outdoor swimming pool at Claygate Primary School - Claygate Community Pool. A new building had been built to cover the pool including showers and changing rooms to achieve the ambition of swimming year-round, the pool made a positive difference to the local community. The project team raised significant funds including from Claygate Parish Council and Elmbridge Borough Council, and Your Fund Surrey granted a substantial £363,500 contribution.

Robert King left the meeting at 12.01 pm.

Tim Hall (Leatherhead and Fetcham East) made a statement on the Leatherhead and Dorking Gymnastics Club expansion, there were a variety of grant applications and Your Fund Surrey provided a £550,000 contribution to expand the facilities including a sensory room and the site had been connected onto mains drainage. The focus was on children and adults with learning disabilities, there were positive relationships with local schools. It was a charity and the volunteers had worked hard to provide an inspirational facility. He recommended Members to visit various Your Fund Surrey projects.

51/23 ORIGINAL MOTIONS [Item 8]

Item 8 (i)

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 Lance Spencer 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:

- At the Council meeting on 9 July 2019 an original motion resolved that the Council:
 - 4. declares a 'Climate Emergency', and commits actions to support businesses and all local authorities in their work to tackle climate change by providing a strong unified voice for councils in lobbying for support to address this emergency, and sharing best practice across all councils.
- At the Council meeting on 21 March 2023 an original motion resolved that the Council noted 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.
- At the Council meeting on 21 March 2023 the aforementioned original motion resolved that the Council believed 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 further notes that:

- The Government's independent Climate Change Committee advises that meat consumption should be reduced by a fifth, and that public bodies should lead the way by promoting plant-based food options. Leading by example on this, and food waste, should be fundamental components of our commitment to cutting carbon emissions.
- Furthermore, in the UK, only 18% of children consume the recommended five portions of fruit and vegetables per day, and most young people's diets lack fibre. Providing appealing plant-based school meals along with education on healthy, climate-positive food choices are excellent ways to address these problems.
- Currently school meals services have plant-based menus available as part of their regular offer.

This Council calls on the Cabinet to:

- I. Ensure that food provided at all council catered events and meetings is predominantly plant-based, preferably using ingredients sourced from local food surplus organisations.
- II. Ensure that school meals service have a totally plant based menu one day per week, ideally Mondays.
- III. Continue to outreach to schools and young people to actively influence and inform on climate change and in particular on food choices and their impact on the environment, health and animal welfare.
- IV. To further encourage and empower students to make informed decisions about the food available in their school.
- V. Inspire, promote and support initiatives surrounding climate change and in particular food growing, preparation and waste avoidance, especially as part of school and community projects.

Lance Spencer made the following points:

- Noted that he was against the referral of the motion.
- Noted that in July 2019 the Council passed a motion recognising the climate crisis and that it had a key role to work with local communities to find a way

forward to reduce the amount of carbon emitted in Surrey: 6 million tonnes annually.

- Noted that June 2023 was the hottest June ever recorded and was 1.46 degrees Celsius above the pre-industrial average, close to the 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold for irreversible damage to the planet.
- Noted that between October 2021 and the current Council meeting, there had been six motions on various subjects related to climate change and those sought to engage with communities to highlight the need to act; minimal action had been taken.
- Noted that debating the motion at the current Council meeting would encourage more people to talk about climate change.
- Noted that there was no technological solution that would fix the problem, until the Government and the Council makes the environment a priority, then it could be assumed that the 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold for irreversible damage to the planet would be passed soon.

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

- Noted that a lot of the work the motion called for was already being done, the contractor Twelve15 provided Meat-free Mondays and the take up of vegetarian meals was up to 30%, work was underway with the Eco-Schools project around food sustainability and nutritious diets.
- Noted that Twelve15 was working with the Council to figure out how locally sourced food could be supplied and reviewing how the Council could ensure that it would meet its net zero guidelines regarding food.
- Noted that the motion at the March 2023 Council meeting was referred to the Greener Futures Reference Group for consideration, the topic of locally sourced food was broad and as the Surrey Food Strategy work remained underway, it was vital to refer this motion to the relevant select committee to scrutinise all the work underway in-depth.
- Noted that it was a complicated matter, involving land management, nature recovery, working with Surrey's schools and many other elements that could not be addressed at a Council meeting.

Lance Spencer confirmed that he was against 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 was carried.

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 8 (ii)

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

Under Standing Order 12.1 Catherine Baart moved:

This Council notes that:

- Four years ago, Surrey County Council declared a Climate Emergency. Our already changing climate has a significant impact on biodiversity, alongside degradation from habitat loss, pollution, overexploitation, increases of non-native species and flooding.
- In May 2019, the United Nation's Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) raised the alarm about the urgent ecological emergency the world also faces. The UK's State of Nature 2019 report also highlights the critical decline in biodiversity in the UK - 41% of species studied, including much loved butterflies and hedgehogs, are currently in decline ([State of Nature 2019 - National Biodiversity Network \(nbn.org.uk\)](https://www.nbn.org.uk)).
- In December 2022 the UK was amongst 188 signatories of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and committed to reversing biodiversity loss and to protect 30% of land and oceans, all by 2030 ([2030 Targets and Guidance Notes \(cbd.int\)](https://www.cbd.int)).
- The UK Environment Act (2021) has led to consultation on new binding targets, including for air quality, water, biodiversity, and waste reduction (March 2022). Planning authorities are required to implement at least 10% biodiversity net gain from November 2023 for developments in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Surrey Nature Partnership planning position statement has recommended adopting a 20% minimum biodiversity net gain target across Surrey.
- The latest State of Surrey Nature Report (Surrey Wildlife Trust, 2017) noted that there are 972 species in decline in Surrey, and 626 that are now extinct in Surrey ([State of Nature in Surrey Web.pdf \(surreywildlifetrust.org\)](https://www.surreywildlifetrust.org)). Surrey Wildlife Trust have a strategic plan to restore Surrey's nature (2018-23, [5 Year Plan 2018 Master_0.pdf \(surreywildlifetrust.org\)](https://www.surreywildlifetrust.org)).
- The Surrey County Council is due to agree to a new duty as responsible authority for production of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Surrey in July 2023.

The Council resolves to:

- I. Declare a Biodiversity Emergency, and reflect this in forthcoming strategies, including Surrey's Local Nature Recovery, Food and Land-use Strategies.

Request the Leader and Cabinet to:

- II. Within six months to set out how Surrey County Council will contribute to the UK meeting its 30% by 2030 biodiversity target, both for its own estate and for all of Surrey.
- III. Proactively work with Surrey's boroughs and districts to develop and agree deliverable and robust strategies and plans to increase biodiversity, including restoration of degraded habitats, restricting invasive species, allocating defined areas across Surrey that have high potential for increased biodiversity that should be protected from housing development and reducing pollution.

Catherine Baart made the following points:

- Noted that yesterday the Council issued a press release which announced Government funding received to develop the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Surrey.
- The press release explained that the Strategy was vital to tackle the 'nature crisis', noted that if her wording of 'biodiversity emergency' could be replaced with nature crisis then perhaps Members could agree the original motion.
- Noted that the continuing decline in nature was on the trajectory to catastrophe, many species in Surrey had become rare or extinct; a small removal could cause the whole system to collapse.
- Noted that a nature crisis was dangerous as humans relied on natural systems which carried out essential jobs for free: pollination of food crops, providing flood and drought resilience and heat mitigation.
- Noted that the above services required an abundance of creatures to work, lower biodiversity makes natural systems less resilient to climate change; making it harder and more expensive for the Council to meet its net zero targets.
- Recommended Members read the People's Plan for Nature, an initiative in response to the recent BBC Wild Isles series narrated by Sir David Attenborough; the response from one of its producers about biodiversity was that the UK could not escape a nature collapse.
- Noted that there was a vital difference between noting a decline in biodiversity as in the proposed amendment, compared to declaring a biodiversity emergency and target; which would be a call to action.
- Noted that the motion referred to the national and local State of Nature scientific reports, voting against the motion suggested that Members overall did not understand or care to acknowledge that data.
- Noted that the above was the same pattern for climate change, time had been lost and so the costs and dangers were higher; quoted a well-known naturalist who did not 'think enough of those people who are in the decision-making process are feeling it quite enough yet.'
- Noted that the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Surrey was due in twelve to eighteen months, in all that time the Council would not have any target for limiting biodiversity loss; suggested the target of protecting 30% of Surrey's nature by 2030, calling on partners and stakeholders immediately to consider their own actions.
- Noted that other Conservative-led councils had declared a biodiversity emergency: Dorset Council, Devon and Cambridgeshire County Councils.
- Noted vision statements provided in the People's Plan for Nature whereby: nature is valued and cared for, species are abundant and all look after and are a voice for nature, there is a collaborative long-term approach to prioritising nature in all decision-making, creating an empowered and healthier world; the motion could move towards that.

The motion was formally seconded by Catherine Powell, who reserved the right to speak.

Marisa Heath moved an amendment which had been published in the supplementary agenda (items 6 and 8) on 10 July 2023, which was formally seconded by Denise Turner-Stewart.

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

This Council notes that:

- Four years ago, Surrey County Council declared a Climate Emergency. Our already changing climate has a significant impact on biodiversity, alongside degradation from habitat loss, pollution, overexploitation, increases of non-native species and flooding.
- In May 2019, the United Nation's Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) raised the alarm about the urgent ecological emergency the world also faces. The UK's State of Nature 2019 report also highlights the critical decline in biodiversity in the UK - 41% of species studied, including much loved butterflies and hedgehogs, are currently in decline ([State of Nature 2019 - National Biodiversity Network \(nbn.org.uk\)](https://www.nbn.org.uk)).
- In December 2022 the UK was amongst 188 signatories of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and committed to reversing biodiversity loss and to protect 30% of land and oceans, all by 2030 ([2030 Targets and Guidance Notes \(cbd.int\)](https://www.cbd.int)).
- The UK Environment Act (2021) has led to consultation on new binding targets, including for air quality, water, biodiversity, and waste reduction (March 2022). Planning authorities are required to implement at least 10% biodiversity net gain from November 2023 for developments in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Surrey Nature Partnership planning position statement has recommended adopting a 20% minimum biodiversity net gain target across Surrey.
- The latest State of Surrey Nature Report (Surrey Wildlife Trust, 2017) noted that there are 972 species in decline in Surrey, and 626 that are now extinct in Surrey ([State of Nature in Surrey Web.pdf \(surreywildlifetrust.org\)](https://www.surreywildlifetrust.org)). Surrey Wildlife Trust have a strategic plan to restore Surrey's nature (2018-23, [5 Year Plan 2018 Master 0.pdf \(surreywildlifetrust.org\)](https://www.surreywildlifetrust.org)).
- The Surrey County Council is due to agree to a new duty as responsible authority for production of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Surrey in July 2023.

The Council resolves to:

- I. **Note that this Council has recognised that there has been biodiversity decline in Surrey** ~~Declare a Biodiversity Emergency,~~ and **will be reflecting** this in forthcoming strategies, including Surrey's **emerging** Local Nature Recovery, Food and Land-use Strategies.

~~Request the Leader and Cabinet to:~~

- II. ~~Within six months to set out how~~ **Note that this Council is proactively working with Surrey's districts and boroughs, as well as other partners and landowners through the development of the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy to reverse the decline in biodiversity and restore degraded habitats as well as consideration of how** Surrey County Council

will contribute to the UK meeting its 30% by 2030 biodiversity target, both for its own estate and for all of Surrey, **though this will be in the timeframe of the development and agreement of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.**

- III. ~~Proactively work with Surrey's boroughs and districts to develop and agree deliverable and robust strategies and plans to increase biodiversity, including restoration of degraded habitats, restricting invasive species, allocating defined areas across Surrey that have high potential for increased biodiversity that should be protected from housing development and reducing pollution.~~
Commit to its role as Lead Authority for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to proactively engage with the WWF People's Plan for Nature and ensure Surrey residents are fully involved in the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Marisa Heath spoke to her amendment, making the following points:

- Noted that she had amended the motion for three reasons: firstly, to acknowledge the existing vehicles that the Council was working in and the work underway, secondly, to reflect the People's Plan for Nature as Members were the custodians looking after the countryside in Surrey for their residents, and thirdly, to remove the word emergency as the Council was beginning to develop its Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Surrey and the use of the word could be damaging to people's mental health, particularly young people.
- Noted that she did not underestimate the challenge set out in the 2017 State of Surrey's Nature report, the amendment noted that the Council accepted that nature recovery was important moving forward and would be integrated into business-as-usual work, using the mechanism provided by the Government.
- Agreed with many of the principles in the motion, it was evident that there was a problem with nature and that needed to be addressed.
- Noted that outline work was underway on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Surrey; there had been workshops with Surrey Hills nature groups and it would be vital to include the experts and baseline data, ensuring that the outcomes could be measured and delivered.
- Recognised that the People's Plan for Nature was crucial ensuring that all residents are engaged with and that had been added in the amendment, she thanked Jonathan Essex for raising that with her.
- Noted that she welcomed Members' involvement and that they would be kept regularly updated on the progress of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Surrey through her Cabinet Member Briefings.

The amendment was formally seconded by Denise Turner-Stewart, who made the following comments:

- Noted that the amendment helped to shine a light on Spelthorne, one of Surrey's most nature depleted boroughs, the greatest opportunity for nature recovery was in Surrey's nature depleted boroughs, and urban and suburban areas.
- Noted that compared to twenty years ago when the rural restoration programme was established including tree planting, hedgerow restoration and green corridors which saw the return of nature; biodiversity had become a mainstream priority and commitment.
- Noted that the Council's commitment to reversing the decline in biodiversity was evident through: the River Thames Scheme and numerous

environmental projects, supporting the BLUE Campaign, working with borough and district councils to rewild open spaces, the Eco-Schools programme, Your Fund Surrey Small Green Projects about to launch, the tree planting programme and supporting the Surrey Tree Warden Network, the imminent stump removal and tree replacement programme, and protecting nature conservation areas.

- Noted that the amendment supported the endeavour to collectively work together to reverse the decline in biodiversity, restore degraded habitats and meet the 30% by 2030 biodiversity target.

Catherine Baart did not accept the amendment and therefore the amendment was open for debate.

Two Members spoke on the amendment and made the following comments:

- Noted that June 2023 was the hottest June on record in the UK, seas around the UK's coast in some places were 4.6 degrees Celsius hotter than average June temperatures, the weather caused the unprecedented deaths of fish in rivers and affected insects and plants.
- Noted that Thames Water had aerators running in the River Bourne for ten days to try and recover the water after a massive sewage spill from Chobham Sewage Treatment Works.
- Hoped that Members accepted that the climate emergency was having a bigger impact on the flora and fauna in Surrey than it was on people.
- Noted that the 2017 State of Surrey's Nature report stated that Surrey was an impressively diverse county biologically, in Surrey there was over 4,242 species and in 2017 it was estimated that 11.5% of those species were locally extinct, compared to the 2% figure nationally.
- Noted that the priority species for national conservation accounted for about 400 of those species, in 2017 31% were already extinct in Surrey, 37% were threatened or remain in worrying decline, leaving only 31% that were considered stable or recovering.
- Stressed that Members needed to reflect on whether the motion once amended would have any impact, or would it fall into the category of the previous six motions that related to climate change over the last two years, where the impact had been negligible; whilst the motion called for action, with dates and commitments.
- Welcomed the addition in the amendment to proactively engage with the People's Plan for Nature, however sought clarity on whether that engagement would include the backers of the plan: the National Trust, the World Wide Fund for Nature, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; as well as the Surrey Wildlife Trust, and the Woodland Trust who had all declared a biodiversity emergency.
- Hoped that once proactive engagement had been undertaken, the administration might submit its own version of the motion calling on the Council to declare a biodiversity emergency as part of the production and delivery of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Surrey.

The Chair asked Marisa Heath, as proposer of the amendment to conclude the debate:

- Noted that the best way forward was to do the work, that was already underway.

- Noted that regarding the declaration of a biodiversity emergency, the best people to decide in due course were the experts involved in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Surrey work.

The amendment was put to the vote and was carried and became the substantive motion.

No comments were made by Members on the substantive motion.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and was carried.

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** that:

This Council notes that:

- Four years ago, Surrey County Council declared a Climate Emergency. Our already changing climate has a significant impact on biodiversity, alongside degradation from habitat loss, pollution, overexploitation, increases of non-native species and flooding.
- In May 2019, the United Nation's Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) raised the alarm about the urgent ecological emergency the world also faces. The UK's State of Nature 2019 report also highlights the critical decline in biodiversity in the UK - 41% of species studied, including much loved butterflies and hedgehogs, are currently in decline ([State of Nature 2019 - National Biodiversity Network \(nbn.org.uk\)](https://www.nbn.org.uk)).
- In December 2022 the UK was amongst 188 signatories of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) and committed to reversing biodiversity loss and to protect 30% of land and oceans, all by 2030 ([2030 Targets and Guidance Notes \(cbd.int\)](https://www.cbd.int)).
- The UK Environment Act (2021) has led to consultation on new binding targets, including for air quality, water, biodiversity, and waste reduction (March 2022). Planning authorities are required to implement at least 10% biodiversity net gain from November 2023 for developments in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The Surrey Nature Partnership planning position statement has recommended adopting a 20% minimum biodiversity net gain target across Surrey.
- The latest State of Surrey Nature Report (Surrey Wildlife Trust, 2017) noted that there are 972 species in decline in Surrey, and 626 that are now extinct in Surrey ([State of Nature in Surrey Web.pdf \(surreywildlifetrust.org\)](https://www.surreywildlifetrust.org)). Surrey Wildlife Trust have a strategic plan to restore Surrey's nature (2018-23, [5 Year Plan 2018 Master_0.pdf \(surreywildlifetrust.org\)](https://www.surreywildlifetrust.org)).
- The Surrey County Council is due to agree to a new duty as responsible authority for production of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Surrey in July 2023.

The Council resolves to:

- I. Note that this Council has recognised that there has been biodiversity decline in Surrey and will be reflecting this in forthcoming strategies, including Surrey's emerging Local Nature Recovery, Food and Land-use Strategies.
- II. Note that this Council is proactively working with Surrey's districts and boroughs, as well as other partners and landowners through the development of the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy to reverse the decline in biodiversity and restore degraded habitats as well as consideration of how Surrey County Council will contribute to the UK meeting its 30% by 2030 biodiversity target, both for its own estate and for all of Surrey, though this will be in the timeframe of the development and agreement of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.
- III. Commit to its role as Lead Authority for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to proactively engage with the WWF People's Plan for Nature and ensure Surrey residents are fully involved in the development of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Item 8 (iii)

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

Under Standing Order 12.1 Catherine Powell moved:

This Council notes that:

- Increasing cycling and walking is a key objective of this Council, this is part of the Surrey's Community Vision for 2030 and Local Transport Plan (LTP4, 2021).
- The Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience has recently committed to align all existing highways policies, procedures etc., with LTP4 and bring this through scrutiny to Cabinet by the end of 2023, including the frequency of highway inspections.

This Council further notes:

- The Council's progress in developing plans to encourage walking and cycling but is aware that more needs to be done.

Therefore, this Council calls upon the Cabinet to:

- I. Review and update the Surrey Highway Hierarchy Definition to align with the sustainable travel hierarchy in LTP4 and to support a higher priority grading on routes for local walking and cycling journeys, particularly to areas of high employment, schools, hospitals, and leisure facilities. This work should be included within the review that the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience has committed to.
- II. Develop and fund a proactive maintenance approach to vegetation impacting on walking and cycling routes. This approach should prioritise areas of high employment (including town centres), schools, hospitals, and leisure facilities to ensure that these routes are consistently safe, enjoyable, easy, and

- convenient to use to promote them as an alternative to private vehicle use, whilst continuing to promote biodiversity.
- III. Ensure that the approach to highway inspection is extended from surveying highway defects to inspections of issues that impact on all road users (not just vehicles), for example encroaching vegetation, left-behind signs, debris on pavements and cycleways and blocked drains.
 - IV. Use the knowledge of Members, local organisations and cycling and walking groups to enable the relevant officer team to create local walking and cycling maps for schools, businesses, health, and leisure facilities etc. to use within their own plans and strategies. These maps should proactively encourage sustainable travel across the county using tools such as Surrey Interactive Map.

Catherine Powell made the following points:

- Noted that climate change was already impacting on the weather, communities and ecosystems.
- Noted that people's travel choices were driven by how convenient, safe, easy, and enjoyable the options were; such choices impacted on the individual's carbon footprint and their health and wellbeing.
- Noted her dependence as a young person on walking, cycling or the bus - services were reliable and well-used - and not the car.
- Noted that in recent decades, the increasing prevalence of the car with its door-to-door convenience had made it the easiest option for many.
- Noted that the challenge was how to increase walking, scooting, cycling and use of public transport; involving and learning from residents had the highest chance of success to increase uptake.
- Noted that firstly, the Council needed to show residents that it was serious about the issue by making the most of the infrastructure it had invested in by proactively maintaining surfaces, managing vegetation and prioritising the routes that people valued and uses most.
- Noted that secondly, the Council needed to involve residents in identifying the routes on and off road that they valued most that linked to schools, offices, hospitals and the local public transport system; involving them in creating maps that would allow them to share their knowledge and to identify opportunities for future improvements.
- Urged Members to support the motion to ensure that residents were not put off walking, cycling or scooting because of overgrown paths, poorly repaired surfaces or the absence of a map showing the cut throughs; key routes should be signposted and should be convenient, safe, easy and enjoyable options so that residents would choose to use those instead of their car.

The motion was formally seconded by Jonathan Essex, who made the following comments:

- Noted that the motion called for a shared commitment by all Members, including to progress the links between highway maintenance and the Local Transport Plan (LTP4).
- Noted that the first recommendation called for bus and cycle lanes, and pavements to be inspected more frequently, leading to better journeys, and less trip hazards and buses diverted due to potholes.
- Noted that the motion called for the Council to be proactive, not reactive. Undertaking basic verge maintenance so that people can walk or cycle on pavements without overgrown vegetation and for safety inspections to look

beyond simply spotting road defects, removing signs at the end of a utility job for example.

- Noted a meeting where he would be guided with simulation spectacles by the Royal National Institute of Blind People, to experience what it was like to walk on Surrey's pavements as a blind person; cars parked on pavements and overspilling vegetation were hazards, the motion sought to address that.
- Noted that the motion called for simple and inexpensive changes to be better promoted, so that more residents could choose to get on a bus, walk and cycle as attractive alternatives; that was aligned to the Government's National Active Travel Commissioner who said that people need to drive 25 to 30% less for massive health benefits.

Tim Oliver (on behalf of Kevin Deanus) moved an amendment which had been published in the supplementary agenda (items 6 and 8) on 10 July 2023, which was formally seconded by Jordan Beech.

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

This Council notes that:

- Increasing cycling and walking is a key objective of this Council, this is part of the Surrey's Community Vision for 2030 and Local Transport Plan (LTP4, 2021).
- The Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience has recently committed to align all existing highways policies, procedures etc., with LTP4 and bring this through scrutiny to Cabinet by the end of 2023, including the frequency of highway inspections.

This Council further notes:

- The Council's progress in developing plans to encourage walking and cycling but is aware that more needs to be done.

Therefore, this Council calls upon the Cabinet, following the review of the work of the task and finish groups by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee, to:

- I. Review and update the Surrey Highway Hierarchy Definition to align with the sustainable travel hierarchy in LTP4 and to support a higher priority grading on routes for local walking and cycling journeys, particularly to areas of high employment, schools, hospitals, and leisure facilities. This work should be included within the review that the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience has committed to.
- II. Develop and fund a proactive maintenance approach to vegetation impacting on walking and cycling routes. This approach should prioritise areas of high employment (including town centres), schools, hospitals, and leisure facilities to ensure that these routes are consistently safe, enjoyable, easy, and convenient to use to promote them as an alternative to private vehicle use, whilst continuing to promote biodiversity.
- III. Ensure that the approach to highway inspection is extended from surveying highway defects to inspections of issues that impact on all road users (not just

vehicles), for example encroaching vegetation, left-behind signs, debris on pavements and cycleways and blocked drains.

- IV. Use the knowledge of Members, local organisations and cycling and walking groups to enable the relevant officer team to create local walking and cycling maps for schools, businesses, health, and leisure facilities etc. to use within their own plans and strategies. These maps should proactively encourage sustainable travel across the county using tools such as Surrey Interactive Map.

Tim Oliver spoke to Kevin Deanus' amendment, making the following points:

- Agreed with what the proposer and seconder said regarding the Council's ambition and desire to further promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport.
- Agreed that residents should be actively involved in helping to identify appropriate walking and cycling routes, for example via the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs).
- Noted that the amendment called on the Cabinet to act following the review of the work of the task and finish groups by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee because the motion had budgetary and operational impacts.
- Highlighted to opposition party Members his commitment as Leader that any policy changes within the Council would first be scrutinised by the select committees and their task and finish groups, which could then make recommendations to the Cabinet.

The amendment was formally seconded by Jordan Beech, who confirmed his support for the Leader's comments.

Catherine Powell accepted the amendment and therefore it became the substantive motion.

No comments were made by Members on the substantive motion.

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

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** that:

This Council notes that:

- Increasing cycling and walking is a key objective of this Council, this is part of the Surrey's Community Vision for 2030 and Local Transport Plan (LTP4, 2021).
- The Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience has recently committed to align all existing highways policies, procedures etc., with LTP4 and bring this through scrutiny to Cabinet by the end of 2023, including the frequency of highway inspections.

This Council further notes:

- The Council's progress in developing plans to encourage walking and cycling but is aware that more needs to be done.

Therefore, this Council calls upon the Cabinet, following the review of the work of the task and finish groups by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee, to:

- I. Review and update the Surrey Highway Hierarchy Definition to align with the sustainable travel hierarchy in LTP4 and to support a higher priority grading on routes for local walking and cycling journeys, particularly to areas of high employment, schools, hospitals, and leisure facilities. This work should be included within the review that the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience has committed to.
- II. Develop and fund a proactive maintenance approach to vegetation impacting on walking and cycling routes. This approach should prioritise areas of high employment (including town centres), schools, hospitals, and leisure facilities to ensure that these routes are consistently safe, enjoyable, easy, and convenient to use to promote them as an alternative to private vehicle use, whilst continuing to promote biodiversity.
- III. Ensure that the approach to highway inspection is extended from surveying highway defects to inspections of issues that impact on all road users (not just vehicles), for example encroaching vegetation, left-behind signs, debris on pavements and cycleways and blocked drains.
- IV. Use the knowledge of Members, local organisations and cycling and walking groups to enable the relevant officer team to create local walking and cycling maps for schools, businesses, health, and leisure facilities etc. to use within their own plans and strategies. These maps should proactively encourage sustainable travel across the county using tools such as Surrey Interactive Map.

52/23 STATUTORY LEAD MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES [Item 9]

RESOLVED:

Council noted that the Leader has appointed Sinead Mooney as the Statutory Lead Member for Children's Services in accordance with Section 19 of the Children Act 2004.

53/23 SURREY YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2023/24 [Item 10]

The Chair noted that following discussion with the Group Leaders, it was proposed that the item be deferred to the next Council meeting in October to allow for it to be considered by the relevant select committee prior to Council approval.

RESOLVED:

That the Surrey Youth Justice Plan 2023/24 item be deferred to the next Council meeting in October to allow for it to be considered by the relevant select committee prior to Council approval.

54/23 MEMBER CONDUCT PANEL REPORT [Item 11]

The Director of Law and Governance introduced the report noting that as the Council's Monitoring Officer he was required to notify the Council of decisions taken by the Member Conduct Panel as set out in the Annex.

A Member noted that the sanctions available were limited. Whilst he understood that the list of sanctions was prescribed nationally, he asked the Leader to use his influence at the Local Government Association (LGA) to revisit the issue so that sanctions for breaches of the Member Code of Conduct, especially for actions external to the Council itself, are more reflective of the alleged breach.

The Leader noted that he had no influence at the LGA - unlike the County Councils Network - but would be happy to raise the matter there.

RESOLVED:

That Council noted the decision sheet of the Member Conduct Panel of 22 May 2023.

55/23 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION: REPORT OF THE CONSTITUTION REVIEW GROUP [Item 12]

The Chair noted that there was a correction to recommendation 1 (c) whereby the correct Standing Order was 85.5, not 85.6 as drafted in report.

The Leader introduced the report and thanked the Constitution Review Group for their work. He highlighted the changes to the length of speeches to six minutes by the leaders of the two largest opposition groups in response to the Leader's Statement, explicit reference made to Deputy Cabinet Members being able to answer questions on their Briefings and other updates such as no requirement to sign an attendance register. He noted that the Group Leaders had discussed and agreed the proposals.

RESOLVED:

1. That Council agreed the following amendments to the Constitution:
 - (a) The proposed amendment to Part 4 - Standing Order 18.
 - (b) The proposed amendment to Part 4 - Standing Orders 9.3, 10.2, 10.3 and 10.12.
 - (c) The proposed amendment to Part 4 – Standing Order 85.5.
 - (d) The proposed amendment to Part 4 - Standing Order 30.
 - (e) The proposed amendment to Part 4 - Standing Orders 15.1, 23.2 and 28.1.
 - (f) The proposed amendments to Part 6 – Codes and Protocols – (02) – Arrangements for dealing with Member Conduct, paragraph 10 and (04) Member-Officer Protocol Annex A – Member Role Profiles, Chair of Council Key Duties and Responsibilities, paragraph 8.
 - (g) The proposed amendment to Part 3, Section 2 - Scheme of Delegation, paragraph 6.10(a).
2. That Council delegated the approval of the Risk Management Strategy to the Audit & Governance Committee, with the document continuing to be included in Part 5 of the Constitution as agreed by the Audit & Governance Committee.

56/23 REPORT OF THE CABINET [Item 13]

The Leader presented the report of the Cabinet meetings held on 30 May 2023 and 27 June 2023.

Recommendations on Policy Framework Documents:

There were no reports with recommendations for Council.

Reports for Information/Discussion:

30 May 2023:

- A. Surrey County Council's Adoption of the Revised Surrey Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

27 June 2023:

- B. Modernising our Library Estate, Libraries Transformation - Phase 1

A Member highlighted the importance of the Council's Library and Cultural Services Transformation programme, since 2019 the increase in capital spending on Surrey's libraries had delivered benefits to many residents. She welcomed the increased investment in Woking Library, which was a key part of the town centre and was one of the first original models for creating library hubs back in 2012. Following increased investment Woking Library expanded to provide a quiet room for book clubs to meet, more computers, free Wi-Fi, and a shop. It served as a key community hub for both children and adults. She noted the need to continue with the modernisation of libraries which would meet the Council's commitment of 'No one being left behind', she thanked the Leader and portfolio holder.

- C. Weybridge Hub Redevelopment
- D. Surrey Infrastructure Plan - Phase 4 Schemes
- E. Quarterly Report on Decisions Taken Under Special Urgency Arrangements: 13 May 2023 - 3 July 2023

RESOLVED:

1. Noted that there had been no urgent decisions in the last two months.
2. Adopted the report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 30 May 2023 and 27 June 2023.

57/23 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.

[Meeting ended at: 12.51 pm]

Chair

Leader's Statement – County Council, 11 July 2023

Mr Chair, Members, welcome to the final Council meeting before our summer recess.

While the meetings might be pausing, the sun might be shining and the tennis is on the television, our work goes on, and the work of Council staff goes on - to improve the lives of the people of Surrey.

I want to touch on that work today – that intense effort that goes on day-in, day-out from this organisation.

As we've demonstrated over the last few years, Surrey is an ambitious, forward-looking Council.

We are constantly looking to innovative new ideas, new ways to deliver better outcomes for our residents, new technology, new opportunities, new ways to collaborate.

It is only with this mentality that we can deal with the serious and sustained pressure that local government is under.

As we saw coming many months ago, huge challenges are upon us.

In many ways these challenges are greater and more varied than we expected, and that has meant that service delivery has not always kept up pace with the changing landscape and demands.

But our work, our vision and taking our responsibilities seriously, has enabled us to stand strong.

We have given ourselves the room to adapt, and work in such a way that helps us overcome these challenges.

The impacts of climate change that we are already experiencing, the war in Ukraine, rapid inflation, the cost-of-living pressures, increasing demand on services, the after-effects of the Covid pandemic – all of these issues, all coming together at the same time are contributing to noticeable and very visible pressures on services.

From our roads to our classrooms, from our countryside to our high streets. Our society is changing and adapting.

We have to adapt too.

It's not easy, it's not straightforward, and the solutions are not always within reach.

But as a Council, we are focussed.

We are committed.

We are working hard.

I personally, as Leader of this council, I am fully focussed on the priorities our residents want us to address.

One of these most important priorities is supporting children and young people who really need extra support as they grow and learn – particularly those young people with additional needs and disabilities.

For parents and carers, this is all-consuming.

As a parent myself I get it.

There is nothing more important than your child's wellbeing, and I completely accept how passionate and frustrated parents and carers can be with the system when they are seeking advice and support.

Applications from parents for Education, Health and Care Plans – EHCPs – are through the roof.

This is a symptom of many factors, and it is not unique to Surrey.

The system around EHCPs is frankly not good enough – it's a national issue, and a very complex issue – but here in Surrey we take our responsibilities very seriously and I am personally committed to improving the situation.

We need to get the assessment process moving quicker, clear any backlog and ensure parents have the confidence that their child will be supported in the most appropriate way.

In many instances, this will not require an EHCP, and for those children the current support in school has to be there, and it has to be of a high standard.

We are creating more SEN places in both mainstream and special schools across the county, hundreds more already delivered over the last couple of years and hundreds more to come, with committed funding and sites identified.

We are also investing in additional staff to tackle this.

It is not always about throwing more money at the problem – in professions like Educational Psychologists, who are needed to undertake assessments, there are simply not enough qualified in the country – but where we can, we will do everything to get these professionals to Surrey, to help us improve the system for parents.

It is not a simple situation to fix – there are many different layers, different stakeholders, different funding streams and solutions.

But we're lobbying government around policy and funding, we're working with schools to provide the right support and communication with parents, and we're constantly reviewing and adapting our own processes to make the system work better.

I accept it's not good enough right now, but please believe me when I tell you that we're totally focussed on making it better in Surrey, and I will continue to engage with officers, parents, and carers as we do that.

Another area where we have undertaken a rapid review and put in place a clear plan for improvement is around Surrey's street scene – our roads, highways verges, and localised flooding – as well as our management of tree felling and planting.

These are things that our residents understandably care deeply about.

We want people to have pride in their neighbourhoods - where they live, our environment, and the roads they travel on every day.

We want people to be able to move around our towns and our county safely and comfortably.

Over the last couple of months Officers from our Highways and Countryside Teams, along with Cabinet Members and Senior Leaders in the organisation have worked tirelessly on these issues, to review service delivery, policies, communications, and put in place both immediate actions where possible and a series of recommendations that will result in noticeable improvements for residents.

Hundreds of discarded signs have been cleared, pothole backlogs have been dramatically reduced, more grass cuts have been added to the schedule and a surge in additional line painting is underway.

We've identified a wide range of further costed interventions, which will be scrutinised and taken forward through the proper channels.

Again, many external factors have seriously impacted these areas and how quickly and severely issues arise.

The weather has been a perfect storm for pothole development – a record breaking hot summer followed by a very wet and cold winter means more cracks, more water, more ice that combines to break up our road surfaces.

It has also played its part in the maintenance of grass verges – something that this Council has only just taken over management of - with a wet and sunny spring leading to rapid growth of long grass. Unfortunately, we are still having to work through which areas of verges and green spaces are the responsibility of the County Council and which remain with the District and Boroughs as this has become blurred over the years but that will be resolved over the coming weeks.

While we welcome the biodiversity of letting our verges rewild, this has to be balanced by giving road users the ability to see across junctions, as well as the attractiveness of our highways.

Those verges that have been designated appropriate for rewilding should now be clearly signposted, helping residents understand the benefits for their local area.

While many other grass verges are now in the process of receiving their second cut of the summer.

The impact of the weather on our most visible assets is compounded by the huge increase in cost when it comes to maintenance.

Inflation has impacted all aspects of all of our lives – everything is costing more and the things we deliver in local government are no different.

Over the last year, the money we have simply buys less.

But money is not the only answer.

We have reviewed every element of service delivery to make sure we are adapting to the challenges we face, to deliver the best possible service for our residents.

That's our mindset as a Council.

We are ferociously committed to making Surrey the best place it can be.

Whether that's looking after children who need extra help, or making sure our towns and villages are places to be proud of.

We are ambitious, we are creative, we are dedicated to public service.

In local government, challenges come at us all the time, from many different angles and in many different guises.

At the LGA Conference last week I talked to many Councillors and Senior Officers from across the country – from counties, Districts, London Boroughs, Unitaries, Mayoral Combined Authorities.

We all face huge challenges, with new ones emerging.

It is how you approach those challenges that makes the difference.

When you have the responsibility for delivering vital services, on the frontline, you cannot shirk that responsibility. You cannot be complacent, or half-hearted.

You must be prepared and be prepared to act.

Five years ago, many of the challenges this council faced had not been fundamentally and robustly addressed.

We recognised that and transformed our mindset, our culture and how we deliver.

Thanks to that transformation, we've come a long way and made great strides as an organisation.

We are seen as leaders in many areas of our work – our finances are robust thanks to sound judgement and leadership, we are delivering major infrastructure improvements, we're more actively supporting local community projects, we're modernising care and building new children's homes.

We have delivered and we will continue to deliver.

But challenges keep coming, and we never rest.

There is no let-up in local government, there is no time to waste when you're here to serve the public.

We can, and must improve, in everything we do.

When problems emerge, we interrogate why and relentlessly work to fix them.

When things don't go right, we listen, learn, and adapt.

This is a Council full of great people, doing some great work every single day trying to make sure Surrey is the best place it can be, for everyone.

And that no one is left behind.

I know that at times we fall short of that ambition but what is important is that we recognise where those shortcomings exist, that it strengthens our resolve and that we put in place a robust plan to get it right first time, every time.

This is not a Council that puts its head in the sand. It listens, it looks elsewhere for good practice, and it acts.

Indeed, when new opportunities arise, we try to grasp them with both hands. I am hopeful that we will be able to progress a devolution deal for Surrey over the coming months – giving us more control over our adult education budget, which is a key aspect of addressing our skills shortage across the county, more levers to support our businesses that are the life blood of our local economy, as well recognising this historic county of Surrey as the footprint for further devolved powers and funding from this and future governments.

This plays strongly in to our towns and villages initiative as the basis of delivery of improved health outcomes and opportunities along with our partners in health, the third sector, the police, and of course our community groups.

But Members, I also want to pay tribute to the fantastic things we've seen delivered recently by Your Fund Surrey.

We launched that fund a couple of years ago now, and it was always going to take a period of time for projects to come to life.

Now we're really seeing that wonderful scheme truly delivering for our residents.

Claygate Community Pool – opened with the help of an Olympic swimmer no less – will make swimming more accessible to a whole new generation of people, improving health and wellbeing in Claygate for years to come.

Leatherhead and Dorking Gymnastics Club has undergone a huge upgrade with a new gymnasium and sensory room, catering specifically to individuals with disabilities. Again, opening up a whole new world of opportunity to a new group of people.

A brand new pavilion is now open for Pirbright Community Amateur Sports, giving that community a new beating heart with a new environmentally sustainable building with new changing rooms, toilets, kitchen, and a community café.

A new community shop and café in Normandy, which is nearly complete, will bring people together to shop locally, sustainably, and build new friendships and connections that will benefit that community long into the future.

Big new applications are being approved all the time and Members are putting to really good use their £50k fund, boosting culture, sport, environment, wellbeing, health, and inclusivity across the county.

Your Fund Surrey is delivering exactly what we set out to deliver – stronger, thriving communities throughout Surrey.

Mr Chair, I believe this Council is unrecognisable from the Council it was several years ago – it had to be.

As the world changes, we must change with it.

As the challenges grow, we must grow to tackle them.

If the work gets harder, we must work harder to improve.

It is my responsibility as the Leader of this Council, to set the tone of the organisation and it's a responsibility I don't shirk from. I am clear that we must continue to drive harder and faster our transformation agenda and improve the quality of the services we deliver to the benefit of our residents.

We are not and will not be complacent.

We will never stand still.

Members, as we formally part ways over the summer, I hope we can reflect on all of this work that continues throughout the Council.

The shared endeavour between Members and Officers.

The collaboration with our partners, with our residents, and with our communities.

We are all striving for the same goals – for the benefit of Surrey – a strong and vibrant local economy, better health outcomes, equal opportunity, a greener and sustainable future and above all for everyone in this great county to have the support from families and their communities as they start out in life, through their education, their working lives, and as they glide in to retirement.

This Council must be there every step of the way.

And we will be.

Thank you.