

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL HELD AT
WOODHATCH PLACE, 11 COCKSHOT HILL, REIGATE, SURREY, RH2 8EF,
ON 12 DECEMBER 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
Steve Bax	David Lewis (Cobham)
* John Beckett	r David Lewis (Camberley West)
Jordan Beech	Scott Lewis
Luke Bennett	Andy Lynch
Amanda Boote	Andy MacLeod
Dennis Booth	Ernest Mallett MBE
Harry Boparai	Michaela Martin
* Liz Bowes	Jan Mason
Natalie Bramhall	Steven McCormick
Helyn Clack	Cameron McIntosh
Stephen Cooksey	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
r 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

73/23 ELECTION OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR [Item 1]

The Chief Executive formally reported that Dennis Booth was duly elected as the new County Councillor for the Horsleys division following the by-election held on 19 October 2023.

The Chair welcomed the new Member and offered him support.

74/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 2]

Apologies for absence were received from John Beckett, Liz Bowes, Nick Darby, John Furey, Angela Goodwin, David Harmer, Trefor Hogg (remote), Riasat Khan, Rachael Lake, David Lewis (Camberley West) (remote), Carla Morson, Fiona White.

75/23 MINUTES [Item 3]

The minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 10 October 2023 were submitted, confirmed and signed.

76/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 4]

There were none.

77/23 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS [Item 5]

Edward Hawkins joined the meeting at 10.04 am.

The Chair:

- Informed Members of the deaths of a former Chairman of Surrey County Council, Baroness Susan Thomas of Walliswood OBE DL, and Maureen Furey - wife of Councillor John Furey - whose funeral would be taking place on 13 December; and led the Council in a moment of reflection.
- Encouraged Members to submit their nominations by 20 December for the Chair's annual Volunteers' Reception.
- Highlighted the social media drop-in session for Members with the Communications and Engagement team.
- Noted that the rest of his announcements could be found in the agenda.

78/23 LEADER'S STATEMENT [Item 6]

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

Members raised the following topics:

- Congratulated the Leader on receiving the Leader of the Year award and for leading the way as the Chair of the County Councils Network in flagging to Government the inadequate local government funding.
- Noted that limiting the funding for non-statutory services had led to the increase in the need for statutory services' use and cost, exemplified by the Cabinet's release of the £20 million risk contingency.

- Welcomed the increase in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) places in Surrey with nearly £230 million allocated over the next five years, but noted concerns in the programme's delivery.
- Noted that due to the Government's formula the Council received inadequate funding for highways, the draft capital budget outlined that the Council would need £300 million in borrowing over the next five years.
- Asked whether there was a plan to close the Your Fund Surrey (YFS) scheme with a stop to large applications and reduction of the budget.
- Highlighted that people were being left behind and the voluntary sector had to fill the gaps in early intervention, short breaks and respite, with waiting lists growing or services closed.
- Noted the increase in safeguarding activity in the draft budget, more children were presenting at a later stage to social services with greater need.
- Questioned whether the Council had the right balance of revenue choices in the draft budget concerning No One Left Behind, noting the investment in capital budget of new SEND provision, children's homes, extra care housing.
- Noted that to prevent escalating need, stressed that it was no longer a choice to not provide early intervention for vulnerable children and young people, Autism Spectrum Disorder and Speech and Language Therapy assessments were needed.
- Regarding the Ofsted inspection on SEND services, the inspectors found the allocation of additional funding and other measures were not yet making a real difference, the Council needed to make improvements more quickly so it does not leave SEND children behind.
- Noted the disastrous implementation of the new IT system from June 2023, having been delayed from its launch date of December 2021, asked whether the Leader was sorry that there was a £10 million overspend.
- Noted that the draft budget contained £55 million in efficiencies but with a further £13.5 million savings to find, asked whether the Council would need to target more service reductions to balance its finances.
- Noted concern in three of the proposed efficiencies: review of older people in-house services, stopping the fire cadet service, cuts to grants to the voluntary sector; leading to a disproportionate effect on vulnerable people.
- Asked the Leader to explain how he felt the changes around the County Deal and the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) would benefit residents.
- Noted that the Local Government Association was inviting contributions to a Local Government White Paper and asked what the Leader had in mind for the next stage of local government reorganisation.
- Noted that the inspectors reported in their SEND inspection review examples of families feeling that there were not being listened to or involved in decisions, asked whether the Leader had full confidence in those charged with delivering those changes, taking parents on that process.
- Noted that the Council would continue to rely on expensive places at non-maintained independent schools, the Safety Valve Agreement had not bridged that gap and had forced the Council to take £8 million annually from schools' budgets, schools therefore could not afford teaching assistants unless SEND children had Education, Health, and Care Plans (EHCPs).
- Noted that EHCPs provided that additional funding to schools yet there was a backlog and the Council's target of 20% reduction for EHCPs would further reduce schools' funding, welcomed the £15 million over three years to address that, yet the Council was reliant on inadequate NHS support.
- Asked what the Council would do to address SEND underfunding and fix Adult Social Care before autumn's budget.

- Noted that the Government's climate change research found that local climate action would achieve net zero by 2050 at half the cost of a national approach, delivering three times the financial and wider benefits.
- Asked what response the Leader had from the joint letter sent on 19 October to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero calling for a national climate action framework to provide councils with adequate funding to lead decarbonisation and to ensure that the Government's policies and funding decisions lead to local climate action.
- Regarding the delivery of the County Deal, sought reassurance that the devolved powers from Government would be properly funded.
- Asked the Leader for detail around the NHS representative's answer at yesterday's special Cabinet meeting on the SEND inspection where they would provide a follow up response regarding SEND funding.
- Asked whether the Leader was aware of a joint visit to the Amber Foundation's opening of a new teams unit jointly funded by a YFS small grant which made an improvement to young people's lives.
- Welcomed the YFS success stories, noted a recent example of the old Woking Community Centre where the £1 million grant transformed the building into a multifunctional and green space; thanks to a partnership agreement Woking College's Performing Arts department was located there.
- Noted that the UK Shared Prosperity Fund would be under the Council's sole control and asked whether the Leader would continue to collaborate with the district and borough councils to ensure money would be spent county-wide.
- Noted that the briefing information shared with Members on the draft budget showed the heavy reliance on the hope to make large savings across the board, however historically such savings had not been fully delivered.
- Noted that the Council had a sizeable property investment portfolio yet due to market trends it was likely that the return on those would be less, noted caution that the Council's finances were not as robust as stated to be.
- Noted the unprecedented volume of parents with issues concerning children with SEND and noted frustration that they had not received responses from the Council; yesterday's special Cabinet meeting was dominated by senior officers, yet what was needed was more people on the frontline.
- Noted an example of a young child who developed meningitis and become dependent requiring an EHCP and that EHCP had been delayed therefore the child could not choose the right school.

79/23 CHANGES TO CABINET PORTFOLIOS AND APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES [Item 7]

The Leader introduced the report noting that the minor changes to the Cabinet Portfolios reflected the number of transformation improvement programmes underway and the changes to the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT); Steve Bax had become a Deputy Cabinet Member.

RESOLVED:

1. Noted the changes to Cabinet appointments and Portfolios set out in Annex 1 and 2 to this report.
2. Appointed Keith Witham as a Select Committee Task Group Lead for the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee, replacing Steve Bax, for the remainder of the 2023/24 Council Year.

80/23 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME [Item 8]

Questions:

Notice of twenty-four questions had been received. The questions and replies were published in the supplementary agenda (item 8) on 11 December 2023.

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

(Q1) Robert Evans OBE hoped that the Cabinet Member was aware that there were other buildings in Surrey with Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) such as Frimley Park Hospital, three more schools highlighted by the BBC on 21 October, Harlequin Theatre and Cinema in Redhill and Reigate Police Station. He asked why those buildings were not included, even if not the direct responsibility of the Council it should be concerned. He asked what the plans were for the Leatherhead and Walton-on-Thames Fire Stations which contained RAAC.

The Cabinet Member for Property, Waste and Infrastructure noted that Frimley Park Hospital, Reigate Police Station and those three schools were not the Council's responsibility; yet the Council had offered help to Reigate Police Station which was relocating part of its service to Reigate Fire Station. She was aware of the RAAC in Harlequin Theatre and Cinema and in Redhill Library. Desktop surveys and visual inspections of all the Council's properties had been undertaken, intrusive investigations were underway. RAAC had worked well for several decades, it was the Government that called for investigations to be carried out. It was expected that Redhill Library would reopen in January. She noted that those two fire stations were operational and management plans had been developed.

(Q3) Joanne Sexton asked whether the Council had considered that the number of visits undertaken in the permit areas was disproportionate compared to the visits to the borough in general. Regarding access routes to resident parking zones C, E, H and Fairfield Avenue, it appeared that NSL focused on permit areas neglecting other hotspots. In permit areas there was no observation time so NSL could issue tickets immediately. She asked what the total dwell time was in each of those areas by NSL's civil enforcement officers.

The Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth explained that permit areas had limited parking availability so it was appropriate to prioritise those areas. He asked Members to inform NSL or the Council's parking team about any hotspots. He noted that Members would receive updated monthly statistics. The Council had exceeded the numbers of employees on its behalf who were issuing more Fixed Penalty Notices than before.

(Q4) Catherine Powell asked the Cabinet Member to share the details of the storage and transport arrangements from port to vehicle from the start of operations in February 2024, and asked who was funding the other twenty buses. She asked how he planned to learn from initial operations for the ZEBRA 2 bid, she would forward the latest research paper.

Lance Spencer noted that the saving in carbon emissions was described as 3 billion kg or 3,000 tonnes equating to only 0.04% of the total emissions and asked whether the Cabinet Member would agree that it was vital to find new ways to encourage greater bus use.

Catherine Baart asked whether the renewable hydrogen was green, blue or grey.

George Potter asked for the details of the certification of the renewable hydrogen 'from well to wheel' to be shared with Members. Noted that Air Products' website indicated that they did not currently have any operational projects producing green hydrogen, they did have a facility in the UK producing hydrogen from fossil fuels.

Edward Hawkins sought reassurance that a hydrogen pipeline was not being planned by the Council.

The Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth noted that he would request the details asked for by Catherine Powell from Air Products and Metrobus regarding the hydrogen delivery, there was a storage facility in Crawley and tankers. The Council was producing its own ZEBRA 2 bid and was supporting West Sussex's bid for further hydrogen buses. Regarding Lance Spencer's question on promoting greater bus use he noted that the LINK card had been well received by those aged 20 years and under - on capped fares bus fares were halved to £1. The Council would be doing an advertising campaign. He noted that it was green hydrogen produced from biogas and would get that confirmation for Catherine Baart. Regarding George Potter's question, he would request the certification. Responding to Edward Hawkins, the Council was not proposing a hydrogen pipeline across Surrey.

(Q6) Jonathan Essex noted that the response did not provide details of any meetings or work following the agreed motion at October's Council meeting, he asked what communication the Cabinet Member had with the Government on expanding Travelcard zones.

Robert Evans OBE asked whether the Cabinet Member was aware that the car scrappage scheme requested for Surrey was not the Mayor of London's financial responsibility, in other local authorities which had requested such as scheme the Government had funded that. On extending the zone 6 Oyster card system to Surrey, Transport for London (TfL), the Mayor of London, South Western Railway and Southern Rail were supportive of that. He asked whether the Cabinet Member was aware that the reason that zone 6 had not been extended to Surrey was that TfL had not agreed to cover the rail companies' potential losses.

The Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth responded to Jonathan Essex noting that the Council had requested a meeting with the relevant Government ministers to discuss zone expansion; that was being pursued. Responding to Robert Evans OBE, the Council had engaged with TfL and was working with the Campaign for Better Transport on zone expansion and cheaper integrated ticketing. He noted that the Mayor of London could offer outside of London, the scheme he instituted was unfair on non-London residents.

(Q7) Jonathan Hulley was pleased that the County Planning Authority expected the developer to comply with all 21 planning conditions, conditions 6 and 7 protected the mature Oak trees on site. He asked the Cabinet Member to confirm that the developer would comply with the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 180 c) regarding the tree category methodology; and that future construction would begin without amendment to the approved highway design.

Bernie Muir noted that the operators at the Chalk Pit were not complying with the planning conditions, enforcement was needed to hold them to account.

George Potter noted that expecting the developers to comply with those conditions was not the usual role of a County Planning Authority, it was to ensure that conditions were being applied via monitoring and enforcement not simply expecting that to happen. He asked whether such monitoring and enforcement was being undertaken.

The Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth responded to Jonathan Huley that the Council would be complying with the planning permission. He recognised the concerns regarding the trees, reassessments had been undertaken which did confirm the original report; more trees would be planted. Responding to Bernie Muir, he noted it was disappointing and the Council was taking enforcement action. Responding to George Potter he was sure that the developer - the Council - would comply and continue its monitoring.

(Q8) George Potter hoped that the report being prepared would include a methodology. Highlighted that the explanation given for the 28% reduction in pupils between primary and secondary school was not credible, for example most secondary schools in Guildford were oversubscribed. New homes were being built without secondary school places.

Catherine Powell noted that the response raised concerns given the number of secondary school places required, in Farnham and Ash school place planning had again been underestimated and all schools exceeded the places. She asked whether the Cabinet Member would commit to reviewing the accuracy of the methodology for each school place planning area.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning noted that she would commit to reviewing the methodology being used, the team used Educate software which was accurate at predicting the number of school places. Earlier in the year she organised individual Member Development Sessions by quadrant on school place planning and the methodology used, she was happy to organise those sessions again and could put Members individually in touch with officers from the School Place Planning team. She recognised the strain on places in Farnham.

(Q9) Hazel Watson welcomed the commitment to end the backlog of installing road signs and asked whether the Cabinet Member would welcome a question at July's Council meeting to celebrate the end of the backlog.

The Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth was happy to celebrate the end of backlogs, he would ask the team to improve its communication around the batching of road signs and to provide reasons for the delays.

(Q10) Will Forster referring to his questions b) and c), was concerned that Surrey residents might accidentally travel into the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) area. When the Mayor of London publishes the data and there is evidence of that, would the Council revisit its decision on signage to ensure that Surrey residents do not accidentally go into the ULEZ area and be wrongly charged.

The Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth noted that the Council had requested from TfL whether there were any specific sites that it might occur, only one had been provided on safety grounds and that had been dismissed. If the Council received the granular detail requested, a discussion would be had looking at whether anything needed to be done.

(Q13) Robert Evans OBE thanked the Cabinet Member for visiting his division, he welcomed his guarantee that some of the repairs were underway and asked him to join him in keeping the pressure on ensuring that those roads do not continue to repeatedly flood.

The Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth confirmed that the Environment Agency (EA) was responsible for the ditches and watercourses and he would be putting pressure on the local MP for the EA to continue to maintain those. The EA was not obliged to do so on some of those watercourses and that was why in the past the Council and Runnymede Borough Council had done so. There was extra money targeted at drainage, he was keen that as many defects could be fixed as possible so those do not cause flooding.

(Q15) Catherine Powell awaited the outcome of the review, she asked for confirmation that the review would cover all ongoing projects including the Walton-on-Thames site that recently had planning permission for Hopescourt School.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning confirmed that it would be a full review and was confident that it would cover Hopescourt School. She noted the risks around the projects regarding inflation, market and workforce pressures, and planning delays. She had a high level of confidence in the joint teams regarding the delivery of the capital projects and emphasised the careful planning, robust management and oversight concerning the projects.

(Q16) Catherine Baart had no supplementary question.

Robert King asked the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member to review the Council's inability for Members to use their £5,000 and £50,000 allocation for the same YFS project, noted issues around capital and revenue products.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities explained that revenue and capital had separate funding streams, she suggested that the Member speak to officers where the Member had a project that involved both funding streams.

(Q17) Jonathan Essex referred to the response which stated that Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) was relatively new for Surrey and there were lessons learnt. He asked whether a comparison had been done with other places outside of Surrey using DDRT to undertake benchmarking against the experience in Mole Valley. He asked whether the Council might consider an incentive for shared use, lowering fares.

The Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth asked for more advanced notice on such detailed granular questions going forward. He noted that comparisons had been done and Hertfordshire was a good comparator, he highlighted the Government website on DDRT. Mole Valley Connect had transported more people than other schemes funded by the Rural Mobility Fund. The five additional areas added this year were performing similarly to Mole Valley when it started. He was unsure about what bus sharing would incentivise as all the fares started at a £2 cap, those fares increased over three miles. He noted that promoting the service was vital, an advertising campaign would happen in 2024.

(Q21) Robert Evans OBE noted that whilst the response stated that youth services had not closed, he noted it was a shadow of what it had been particularly in three areas in the north of the county. Those services had provided activities to young

people occupying them. He asked whether the Cabinet Member felt shame regarding her response and asked whether she felt it had any impact on ASB seen in some parts of Surrey.

Steven McCormick understood that districts and boroughs were responsible for creating and submitting applications to the Safer Streets Fund - supported by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey (PCC). He noted a successful application for funding by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, benefits of it addressing ASB had been seen. He asked what the Council's specific plans and action points were to address to issue of ASB across Surrey.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning noted that Robert Evans' OBE question presumed that all ASB came from young people. She responded to him noting that her response was not untrue or that she was ashamed as it represented the reality. Noted that she had previously been the Deputy Cabinet Member leading on services for young people and compared to around a decade ago the current provision for young people was not dissimilar. The work done over the past few years had opened the market to active and effective voluntary services providers. She noted that youth work did not provide leisure services, it was a regulated service to further personal development.

(Q22) Catherine Powell asked for the pipeline to be shared with Members, and for the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member to explain the strategy for closing the large YFS scheme and when it would be introduced based on the pipeline.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities noted that the pipeline could be seen via the Member Portal. Regarding the pipeline, there were several elements to consider for example the applications were self-selecting assessed on rigorous criteria by officers and not all elements would be supported. None of the applications scheduled for tomorrow's YFS Advisory Panel were ready, without the relevant detail and assessments it was not possible to predict which of those applications would be successful.

(Q23) Catherine Baart noted that the local parking review team had been helpful in sorting out an exception.

(Q24) Lance Spencer noted that when he highlighted the issue last year there were 284 incidents which breached the legal twenty-week period for EHCPs provision, that number has risen to 1,038 incidents. He asked what the Cabinet Member believed to be good levels of timeliness to be reached by May 2024.

Jonathan Essex requested that the Council does all it could to ensure that in addressing the EHCPs response times it remains within its legal obligations regarding the levels of evaluation and support provided for children.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Lifelong Learning responded to Lance Spencer acknowledging the deterioration of the timeliness of completion regarding EHCPs needs assessments and annual reviews; hence the recovery plan's acceleration and £15 million investment over the next three years. The existing backlog had halved. She would send the Member the recovery plan's trajectory as published in the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee's December agenda. By the end of May 2024, the target for a good level of timeliness of EHCP completion would be at least 67% based on the previous year. She would follow up with Jonathan Essex on his question.

Cabinet Member and Deputy Cabinet Member Briefings:

These were also published in the supplementary agenda (item 8) on 11 December 2023.

Members made the following comments:

Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources: on the problems with payroll processing, **Andy MacLeod** noted that whilst he stated that there were some improvements there had continued to be problems regarding processing schools' payrolls with reports of over 800 emails being received in one day requesting help. Asked for assurance that all payrolls including schools would be processed in time this month; and for an update on when the issues would be resolved.

The Cabinet Member apologised for the disruption caused, which affected schools and corporate payroll. Improvement had been seen in the November payroll. He noted that no evidence had been seen regarding those 800 emails. Work was underway via an action plan and additional resource was in place, by February it was intended that the issues be resolved. Regarding December's payroll, the date had been brought forward to 20 December to resolve issues before Christmas.

Nick Harrison on the closing down of the Digital Business and Insights (DB&I) programme on 15 December, noted that the Surrey Pension Fund (SPF) and Surrey Local Pension Board had written to the Chief Finance Officer to express concern that the staff at Surrey Pension team had difficulties such as processing new joiners and were using workarounds to keep the system live. He thanked the team for their work, he noted that the Council's work was regulated so it was vital that it does not close anything down until the work was completed.

The Cabinet Member noted that nothing has been closed down, the Council was moving from hypercare towards the business-as-usual phase of the project. Resources would continue to be provided to the team, he anticipated further development work and system improvements.

Cabinet Member for Property, Waste and Infrastructure: on the Edge Leisure Centre in Haslemere, **Paul Follows** noted that it took a meeting with the Council's Leader to break a deadlock for the Council to engage with Waverley Borough Council. The Council left the legwork to Waverley Borough Council, yet leisure centres were not a statutory duty of either council; the Council could have engaged directly with Woolmer Hill Sports Association but did not. Noted a recent constituency update by the local MP who believed that the delay was down to Waverley Borough Council, that appeared to be resultant from the word 'still' in the Cabinet Member's Briefing. He confirmed that Waverley Borough Council would have completed the work by 18 December. He asked the Cabinet Member to recommit to a better working relationship with Waverley Borough Council.

The Cabinet Member noted that the Council's Land and Property team met with Waverley Borough Council's officers to discuss the matter, an agreement had been reached but it had sat with Waverley Borough Council's officers for over three weeks. She had worked hard with partners to try to get the leisure centre reopened at the beginning of December.

Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth: on Gatwick Airport's growth plans, **Helyn Clack** thanked the Cabinet Member for following up her Member's Statement at October's Council meeting by holding a meeting this

morning with local Members focusing on the impact of those growth plans such as increased traffic in rural areas. One of her local parish councils had committed over a third of its annual budget on a vehicle activated sign as a traffic calming measure. The Council's budget for such signs was small and only one officer provided the relevant assessments. She had pledged some of her Member's highways allocation to such signs and asked the Cabinet Member to commit additional resources to deliver more vehicle activated signs in rural villages.

The Cabinet Member noted that the Council took road safety seriously, having provided the additional £3 million for road safety outside schools and the annual budget had increased; he would speak to the Road Safety team. Noted that additional money had been identified for road safety via the renewed partnership scheme with Surrey Police and Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) regarding the new Surrey RoadSafe Partnership Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy.

Cabinet Member for Fire and Rescue, and Resilience: on the Community Safety Partnerships (CSP) and PCC relationship in tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) and changes to ASB powers. **Steven McCormick** referred to the last paragraph of the Cabinet Member's Briefing around the work to update Surrey's frameworks regarding ASB powers and the operation of community safety problem solving groups once the Home Office introduces revised guidance and legislation. He asked what role the Cabinet Member saw for CSPs in districts and boroughs.

The Cabinet Member noted that it was guidance at present and that he saw the districts and boroughs to have an extremely important role regarding CSPs, as it was a partnership role between them and the PCC, and Council.

Eber Kington on the His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services' (HMICFRS) inspection report published in September, noted that it showed that SFRS required improvement in seven assessment areas and HMICFRS was disappointed that SFRS had not made the progress expected since the 2021 inspection. He asked what assurance the Cabinet Member could provide that all improvements required would be achieved by the next inspection.

The Cabinet Member noted disappointment in the inspection findings, he highlighted the improvement plan which had been discussed at the relevant select committee. He was confident that improvements would be made.

81/23 STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS [Item 9]

Buddhi Weerasinghe (Lower Sunbury and Halliford) made a statement on the NetZero Sunbury and Halliford Project which aligned with Surrey's Climate Change Strategy. A survey had been conducted to understand residents' awareness of climate change, the most engaged respondents were aged over 65 years and 65% of respondents committed to the project. The next steps included building the capacity of local community groups to increase awareness to achieve a sustainable future. He thanked the Cabinet Member for Environment and the Deputy Cabinet Member to the Leader of the Council for their support.

82/23 ORIGINAL MOTIONS [Item 10]

Item 10 (i)

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

Under Standing Order 20.3 (a) Paul Follows moved a proposed alteration to the original motion standing in his own name, which had been published in the supplementary agenda (item 10) on 11 December 2023.

The proposed alteration to the motion was as follows (with additional words in bold/underlined and deletions crossed through):

This Council notes:

- The disruption to potable water supply across large parts of the boroughs of Guildford and Waverley that commenced on Saturday 4 November, the ongoing water supply issues in Cranleigh and surrounding villages, and the repeated discharge of raw sewage into the river network;
- All efforts from across the community to support people, and in particular those who are vulnerable, in accessing alternative supplies of water during the period of disruption;
- The legitimate concerns of residents about raw sewage being regularly discharged into our river network from Sewage Treatment Works and from Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) and from raw sewage back flowing onto their private property and highway network;
- Concerning elements of Thames Water's response to the disruption, including but not limited to:
 - (a) poor communication with those impacted in the community, and
 - (b) limited actions to ensure the vulnerable or those unable to queue for water, were able to access alternative supplies.
 - (c) delayed environmental cleanup operations.
- The chronic underinvestment from ~~the government towards~~ the water industry which risks the possibility of future water shortages and increased raw sewage discharges and notes the three lead executives at Thames Water during the previous financial year were estimated to have been paid a total of £1.52 million, exclusive of bonuses, benefits, pensions and other incentives.

This Council resolves to:

- I. Ensure the Leader of the Council writes to the leadership of Thames Water, to request:
 - a. a detailed report of the cause of the disruption to water supply and the steps taken to resolve the matter;
 - b. a detailed report on the instances and quantity of raw sewage discharges into the river network and Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) assurances over the past four years and the investment plans to resolve this;
 - c. that residents and businesses receive timely and full compensation for the disruption to water supply and sewage spills;

- d. an improved communications plan for informing the local community should a similar disruption to water supply occur again and/or raw sewage incidents; and
 - e. a reassessment of its processes, procedures, and criteria for ensuring the vulnerable or those unable to queue are able to access alternative supplies of water in the event of a disruption.
- II. Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to commission an investigation into the most recent water supply incident and the agency response, in addition to the requirement for water companies' to record and report raw sewage spills onto private property and the public highway through their assets.
- ~~III. Task the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee with:~~
- ~~a. reviewing the Council's emergency response measures regarding water and sewerage infrastructure.~~
 - ~~b. reviewing how and when the Council determined the need to enter into emergency response measures.~~
- III. **Work with Guildford Borough Council, Thames Water and Waverley Borough Council to collectively learn lessons from this incident and the emergency response measures taken.**

Under Standing Order 20.3, the proposed alteration to the original motion was put to the vote and Council agreed to the proposed alteration and it was therefore open for debate.

Paul Follows made the following points:

- Noted that the recent Thames Water outage just over a month ago impacted around 13,000 residents in Waverley and Guildford, that figure could have increased to 40,000 households if a third reservoir was affected.
- Highlighted the poor communications from Thames Water throughout the outage and thanked the Council officers and officers from Waverley and Guildford Borough Councils that stepped in.
- Noted that water stations were not equipped to meet the demand or geographic spread, Thames Water did not take up offers of support from the councils to set up more leading to traffic gridlock in some parts.
- Noted that local councillors made water deliveries to vulnerable residents missed by Thames Water, that was Thames Water's legal duty and in some cases it claimed to make such deliveries but had not or left a few bottles.
- Noted that the situation was manageable only through partnership working, Farncombe Day Centre had used its vehicles and staff to help others.
- Noted that the cause of the outage at Shalford Water Treatment Works was Storm Ciaran, a mild storm, which raised questions about the resilience of the local water infrastructure.
- Noted that Godalming Town Council and Waverley Borough Council held sessions to collate residents' views and questions for Thames Water.
- Welcomed the meeting later in the week between Guildford and Waverley local MPs with the University of Surrey and Thames Water, and its outcomes.

- Noted the resolutions empowering the Leader to write to Thames Water to request formal answers to the questions listed; and to write to the Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) requesting further investigation.
- Noted that Thames Water had pledged upgrades and spending to the local water infrastructure, however past promises had not been met and external auditors had questioned the company's short-term financial stability.
- Noted that Thames Water was concluding its internal review of the outage, there was a history of local authorities trying to engage with Thames Water and similar companies and so there was value with Surrey adding its input via the different local government levels and MPs.
- Welcomed further joint working going forward concerning incident response.

The motion was formally seconded by Liz Townsend, who made the following comments:

- Noted that for too long water supply security and the impact of raw sewage spillages had been ignored.
- Noted that for the last ten years her division had faced such issues with frequent pipe bursts, supply interruptions and poor sewage infrastructure and spillages, without fixes for months or years in some cases; was not confident that the separate pollution issues were being accurately recorded.
- Noted that Thames Water loses a quarter of drinking water to leaks, equivalent to 600 million litres daily.
- Noted the unsustainable removal of water from rivers and aquifers and worsening water quality, treatment works were unable to cope in heavy rain or hot weather.
- Stressed that water companies had not invested enough, as a result Thames Water faced spiralling debt, yet it funded bonuses.
- Noted that last year her division suffered three major outages, the last one coincided with a heatwave and residents queued for hours in high heat for a few litres of bottled water, residents on the priority list were overlooked, schools and businesses shut, there was not enough bottled water or people to distribute that, and communication was poor.
- Requested that the Council uses its powers behalf of residents to find out what went wrong and how it could be prevented in the future.

Six Members made the following comments:

- Noted that the major water supply outage in parts of Guildford and Waverley lasted for days and in some cases almost a fortnight, in the past week some parts of Guildford experienced intermittent water supplies.
- Welcomed the Council's declaration of a major incident.
- Noted Thames Water's poor response, large vehicles pumped water supplies into hospitals without any thought to the impact of the noise on residents.
- Noted that it had been discovered that the register of vulnerable people held by Thames Water was wiped daily from their system.
- Noted that where residents experienced no water or polluted water, Thames Water repeatedly reported that the problems had been addressed when they

had not been, there was nowhere to report issues on their website, information was incomplete and inaccurate and calls went unanswered.

- Noted that in some cases water distribution points were far away from many residents.
- Stressed that Thames Water had a lot of work to do to improve its services, apologised that residents were let down and noted the importance of collectively putting that pressure on.
- Noted that the Council had seen the letter sent to the MP for South West Surrey from Thames Water's Interim Co-Chief Executive Officer and hoped that it would set out its plans at the upcoming meeting.
- Noted that the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee had set up focused Special Sessions on Utilities to work with the utility companies to ensure ongoing water security and better communication links.
- Noted that raw sewage overflow data was publicly available.
- Noted that Thames Water was providing reports to the Council and had set out its investment plan.
- Welcomed the unlimited penalties introduced to those that pollute the environment.
- Recognised the awful situation faced by residents, had raised the issue last week with the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in DEFRA who promised that there would be a follow up meeting; would chase that.
- Suggested that the Council should also write to Ofwat.
- Noted regular news reports mentioning sewage spills into rivers in the South East and the poor excuses given around rainfall; noted the new reservoir being built in Hampshire.
- Called for the greater use of greywater, and water limitation methods and storage in building design at all levels of local government.
- Noted disappointment in the deletion of the wording in resolution III around reviewing the Council's emergency response, noted that emergency powers were needed on Sunday morning in Godalming North as there was only one water collection site which needed to be resupplied and traffic was gridlocked.
- Noted that the communication from Thames Water was extremely poor, Shalford Water Treatment Works required constant repairs.
- Noted that the Surrey Local Resilience Forum (SLRF) included the district and borough councils and other partners, anyone of which could have declared it as a major incident. The Council did so once it realised that Thames Water's assurances were not credible.
- Noted that the SLRF repeatedly offered help to Thames Water which refused, communications could have been set up through those channels early on.
- Noted that the SLRF had invested in a new vulnerable people reporting system which was used successfully and would continue to be updated.
- Hoped that at the upcoming meeting Thames Water would be held to account and would listen to the feedback on how poorly they performed, it would be interesting to hear what their internal audit had done.

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

- Agreed that it was an opportunity to work together, collectively putting forward one Surrey voice to ensure that it is heard.

- Reiterated the comment that Thames Water was offered help from all levels of local government and refused it.
- Agreed that including Ofwat in the letters by the Council would be useful.

The motion was put to the vote and was carried.

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** that:

This Council notes:

- The disruption to potable water supply across large parts of the boroughs of Guildford and Waverley that commenced on Saturday 4 November, the ongoing water supply issues in Cranleigh and surrounding villages, and the repeated discharge of raw sewage into the river network;
- All efforts from across the community to support people, and in particular those who are vulnerable, in accessing alternative supplies of water during the period of disruption;
- The legitimate concerns of residents about raw sewage being regularly discharged into our river network from Sewage Treatment Works and from Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) and from raw sewage back flowing onto their private property and highway network;
- Concerning elements of Thames Water's response to the disruption, including but not limited to:
 - (a) poor communication with those impacted in the community, and
 - (b) limited actions to ensure the vulnerable or those unable to queue for water, were able to access alternative supplies.
 - (c) delayed environmental cleanup operations.
- The chronic underinvestment from the water industry which risks the possibility of future water shortages and increased raw sewage discharges and notes the three lead executives at Thames Water during the previous financial year were estimated to have been paid a total of £1.52 million, exclusive of bonuses, benefits, pensions and other incentives.

This Council resolves to:

- I. Ensure the Leader of the Council writes to the leadership of Thames Water, to request:
 - a. a detailed report of the cause of the disruption to water supply and the steps taken to resolve the matter;
 - b. a detailed report on the instances and quantity of raw sewage discharges into the river network and Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) assurances over the past four years and the investment plans to resolve this;
 - c. that residents and businesses receive timely and full compensation for the disruption to water supply and sewage spills;

- d. an improved communications plan for informing the local community should a similar disruption to water supply occur again and/or raw sewage incidents; and
 - e. a reassessment of its processes, procedures, and criteria for ensuring the vulnerable or those unable to queue are able to access alternative supplies of water in the event of a disruption.
- II. Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to commission an investigation into the most recent water supply incident and the agency response, in addition to the requirement for water companies' to record and report raw sewage spills onto private property and the public highway through their assets.
- III. Work with Guildford Borough Council, Thames Water and Waverley Borough Council to collectively learn lessons from this incident and the emergency response measures taken.

Item 10 (ii)

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

Under Standing Order 12.1 Jonathan Essex moved:

This Council notes:

- Surrey County Council spends around £80 million per year on travel assistance and transport, across three key directorates (Children, Families and Lifelong Learning; Adult Social Care; and Environment, Transport and Infrastructure), the majority of which (£55 million) is for Home to School Transport Assistance (H2STA).
- To deliver on the Surrey Climate Strategy transport targets there is a need to increase overall bus use, both fixed bus routes as well as Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT). Surrey County Council is already extending its rollout of DDRT with an aspiration for a Surrey-wide service.
- At the same time the NHS procures non-emergency transport services and also there are workplace transport providers plus community and voluntary sector transport provision.

This Council further notes:

- Surrey County Council has a Freedom to Travel (F2T) transformation programme. Phase 1 is to improve Home to School Transport Assistance up until 2025. Phase 2 will then explore the benefits of pooling of transport provision across Surrey County Council directorates.
- Bringing forward Phase 2 and extending it to include the NHS and borough and district councils would increase bus use, helping deliver on our Local Transport Plan and improving the viability of fixed bus routes and DDRT.

This Council resolves to request that Cabinet:

- a. Brings forward and extends Phase 2 of the Freedom to Travel transformation programme across Surrey County Council in collaboration with other partners.
- b. Works with Surrey Heartlands and NHS Frimley to explore pooling the funding of non-emergency patient transport for the NHS across Surrey.
- c. Works with all district and boroughs to pool community transport provision (including taxi vouchers) to deliver DDRT across Surrey.
- d. Works with key workplaces (e.g. hospitals and large businesses) to strengthen incentives for travel to work by public transport.

Jonathan Essex made the following points:

- Noted that the motion sought to improve bus travel, balancing the expansion of fixed route bus services with the planned expansion of community transport or Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT).
- Focused on how the Council might minimise the net subsidy to maximise DDRT and leverage new bus travel rather than funding holding back growth in bus patronage elsewhere.
- Noted that the motion was based on the concept of total transport, whereby procuring transport together could increase viability.
- Noted that a representative of East Surrey Rural Transport Partnership noted that if Surrey procured minibuses for DDRT on restricted hours and used the same vehicles for Home to School Transport Assistance (H2STA) and SEND routes the vehicles would be better used reducing the cost of DDRT roll out; that could include doubling up with mainstream school buses.
- Noted that linking to existing community transport services could increase the extent to which DDRT roll out would be covered by existing budgets; £20,000 was spent on taxi vouchers in Reigate and Banstead yearly.
- Queried why there could not also be joined up on transport, referring to the joint Better Care Fund between the Council and the NHS; door-to-door care contracts could be procured such as in Salford.
- Queried why the Council could not via DDRT deliver the sharing of buses with the NHS as a better way to commission non-emergency patient transport, as called for by the Community Transport Association.
- Queried why DDRT could not provide mini routes to workplaces and train and bus services with ticketing options, reducing DDRT journeys and making them more cost effective, linking villages to towns.
- Noted that the Council's Freedom to Travel (F2T) transformation programme aimed to do most of what was set out in the motion but only within the Council and expanding the current focus on H2STA from April 2025. The motion calls on that to be brought forward to 2024 and to join up transport with providers across Surrey, engaging with major workplaces like hospitals.
- Noted that if the Council owns the vehicles there could be wider brokerage and usage such as for the community and voluntary sector.

- Noted that less spending on DDRT would free up spending for new fixed bus routes from the Government's Bus Service Improvement Plan funding, reducing the risk of DDRT being too expensive leading to future bus cuts.
- Noted the challenge of moving away from individual solutions towards different providers working together towards a common goal in partnership.

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

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

- Was committed to creating a more robust and sustainable public transport system.
- Recognised the success of the Moley Valley Connect DDRT.
- Could circulate more detail of the work underway and was happy to set up a Member Development Session on the matter.
- Noted that the first six months of F2T was focused on H2STA, the cost of £55 million needed to be contained; the Council was looking at personalised travel budgets, safer routes, and reducing demand on single taxis.
- Noted the many discussions with community transport providers such as East Surrey Dial-a-Ride, was working with Woking Community Transport through the Bustler service, collaborating with emergency patient transport; noted the review of technology that would support the commissioning of provision.
- Noted confidence in a county-wide DDRT roll out in 2024 costing £13 million, 32,000 trips had been made, whilst it reduced the volume of vehicles on the road it also helped address social isolation in rural communities.
- Hoped that the £10 million used to subsidise the main bus companies reduces, the £6 million Government grant had been crucial.
- Noted the struggle to get NHS partners and hospitals to engage in the conversation, a new five-year contract been awarded for non-emergency patient transport starting in April 2024, discussions were underway to see how the community transport providers could be included in the roll out.
- Noted that the working group would report back in March 2024, the findings would be reviewed.
- Noted that in key workplaces there were discussions with local businesses on Active Travel and greener options.
- Noted that DDRT services were well-received by residents.
- Noted that Surrey was nearly back to pre-pandemic levels of bus patronage, there were 21 bus operators and all were engaging.
- Supported the need to continue to link with hospitals and Dial-a-Ride.
- Clarified that DDRT did not compete with commercial operators, the Council could provide more services working with community transport providers.
- Noted that Surrey's total carbon emissions in 2018 was 6.6 million tonnes, of that the anticipated reduction by 2025 was only 1.3 million tonnes.
- Noted that the reduction of petrol and diesel cars on the roads anticipated by 2025 was 376,000, the average number of cars per household in Surrey was nearly a third greater than the national average. A recent review by the Greener Futures Reference Group reported that the reduction made was only tens of thousands of tonnes; ways needed to be found to increase that.

- Noted the increase in emissions from motorised vehicles in 2021 was 41% of the total emissions, compared to 39% in 2019.
- Recognised the challenge of encouraging people to take public transport but stressed the Council's key role to make that happen.

Catherine Baart, the seconder of the motion, made the following comments:

- Thanked Members for their support.

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

- Welcomed the supportive comments and hoped the motion would further the efforts to make Surrey's transport more joined up and for it to make a contribution on carbon emissions reduction across Surrey while addressing issue of rural isolation, and reducing congestion.
- Noted that it was an opportunity to engage with the NHS and join up transport with hospitals, which had a large workforce and number of journeys.
- Noted that East Surrey Hospital was on the edge of Tandridge's DDRT zone yet journeys to the hospital were unable to be made in that way, yet the hospital had built a new car park without planning permission.

The motion was put to the vote and was carried.

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** that:

This Council notes:

- Surrey County Council spends around £80 million per year on travel assistance and transport, across three key directorates (Children, Families and Lifelong Learning; Adult Social Care; and Environment, Transport and Infrastructure), the majority of which (£55 million) is for Home to School Transport Assistance (H2STA).
- To deliver on the Surrey Climate Strategy transport targets there is a need to increase overall bus use, both fixed bus routes as well as Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT). Surrey County Council is already extending its rollout of DDRT with an aspiration for a Surrey-wide service.
- At the same time the NHS procures non-emergency transport services and also there are workplace transport providers plus community and voluntary sector transport provision.

This Council further notes:

- Surrey County Council has a Freedom to Travel (F2T) transformation programme. Phase 1 is to improve Home to School Transport Assistance up until 2025. Phase 2 will then explore the benefits of pooling of transport provision across Surrey County Council directorates.

- Bringing forward Phase 2 and extending it to include the NHS and borough and district councils would increase bus use, helping deliver on our Local Transport Plan and improving the viability of fixed bus routes and DDRT.

This Council resolves to request that Cabinet:

- a. Brings forward and extends Phase 2 of the Freedom to Travel transformation programme across Surrey County Council in collaboration with other partners.
- b. Works with Surrey Heartlands and NHS Frimley to explore pooling the funding of non-emergency patient transport for the NHS across Surrey.
- c. Works with all district and boroughs to pool community transport provision (including taxi vouchers) to deliver DDRT across Surrey.
- d. Works with key workplaces (e.g. hospitals and large businesses) to strengthen incentives for travel to work by public transport.

Item 10 (iii)

Following a vote, under Standing Order 12.3 the Council agreed to debate this motion.

Under Standing Order 12.1 Matt Furniss moved:

This Council notes:

- Surrey County Council has been leading in its strong commitment to promoting skills development and education for all residents of Surrey to support the Surrey Local Economy. This meets this Council's strategic priority of Growing a Sustainable Economy So Everyone Can Benefit and its guiding mission to make sure No One is Left Behind through providing skills training to enable residents of all ages access the jobs they want.
- Last year, this Council launched the Surrey Skills Plan: The Skills Plan sets out a vision for a dynamic, demand-led skills system that meets the needs of businesses and individuals in Surrey.
- In 2023, SCC has delivered on a number of key priorities of the plan including:
 - Establishing the Surrey Careers Hub to work with 95 schools and colleges across the county to improve their performance against the Gatsby benchmarks and help them deliver world-class careers advice, information and guidance. This single service covering all of Surrey was formally launched. The Careers Hub will work with all the county's secondary schools, special schools and colleges with the aim of ensuring every young person can find their best next step.
 - Establishing an annual skills and careers festival (the Festival of Skills), which hosted 80 exhibitors and over 1300 students and teachers to showcase a wide range of career pathways and opportunities.

- Enabled more businesses, both large and small, to inform skills provision planning through the delivery of Skills Bootcamps – short training courses to upskill and reskill Surrey’s adults.
 - Worked in collaboration to successfully win a number of significant funding bids, including £6m for the Local Skills Improvement Fund, £1.8m for Skills Bootcamps and over £6m for Individual Placement Support in Primary Care (funding to support those with both mental and physical disabilities move into the workforce).
- In addition, this Council has made significant investments in skills training and education programs, including the Surrey Adult Learning service, which provides a wide range of free and subsidised courses to help residents develop the skills they need to succeed in the workplace and with the Level 2 Devolution Deal now agreed by the Government this Council can look to enhance the offering to Businesses and residents on vocational skills through SAL.
 - Surrey is a strategically important economic powerhouse which contains a productive and highly skilled workforce. We have a large, highly productive economy which contributes £48bn in GVA and with a high employment rate.
 - Lastly, a partnership team, led by Royal Holloway, University of London (RHUL), and involving Pinewood Studios, disguise, BT, Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership, University of Surrey, Abertay University and National Film and Television School, alongside the County Council, has been announced as the winner of the ‘Convergent Screen Technologies and performance in Realtime (CoSTAR)’ national lab.
 - The successful bid will create hundreds of new jobs and add tens of millions of pounds to Surrey’s economy. The £51m funding application was submitted in February 2022 by StoryFutures at RHUL on behalf of the wider bid team. The application focused on establishing a CoSTAR national lab at Pinewood Studios, alongside associated facilities and programmes to drive innovation and creativity in the UK’s screen and performance industries.
 - Surrey County Council’s proposed contribution includes a capital commitment of £3m to fund the establishment of a CoSTAR satellite studio and incubator space on the RHUL campus in Surrey. It’s hoped these facilities will provide a sizeable boost to Surrey-based creative industry businesses, with over 200 expected to benefit.
 - The Surrey-based Satellite Studio Facility is also projected to create 350 jobs over six years, and make a net contribution of c£35m gross value added to Surrey’s economy. Both facilities aim to open in early 2026.

This Council resolves to:

- I. Express its strong support for Surrey County Council's work on promoting skills to support residents and the local economy in Surrey.

- II. Commend the Council for its development and implementation of the Surrey Skills Plan.
- III. Welcome the new Single Surrey-wide Careers Hub to provide career pathway advice for Surrey residents.
- IV. Encourage the Council to continue its efforts to promote skills development and education for all Surrey residents.

Matt Furniss made the following points:

- Highlighted that Surrey was a strategically important economic powerhouse with a productive and highly skilled workforce and economy contributing £48 billion of Gross Value Added, and a high employment rate.
- Welcomed the Government's decision to integrate LEPs functions into county councils, enabling them to provide leadership on priorities that support local sustainable growth.
- Noted that the Council was in a stronger position compared to others, having over the last few years invested in economy and growth functions.
- Noted that the Council was pressing the LEPs to complete the transfer of the functions before 1 April 2024, an update report to go to February's Cabinet.
- Noted that whilst 54% of residents in Surrey were educated to a degree level or higher, some areas were affected by a high cost of living and barriers to education and employment.
- Noted that since the pandemic economic inactivity had increased and the numbers of people Not in Education, Employment or Training was higher compared to neighbouring counties.
- Noted that last year the Council set out its vision of the skills agenda at the Surrey Skills Summit, the Surrey Skills Plan set out the aim of developing an agile system of skills delivery and the Council's role was that of strategic system leadership work with the borough and district councils, and partners.
- Noted the successful county-wide Careers Hub providing high quality advice, the annual Festival of Skills to showcase the range of career pathways, businesses informing skills provision via Skills Bootcamps, training courses to upskill and reskill adults, and bids won such as £6 million for the Local Skills Improvement Fund.
- Noted that the Council had been partnering with education institutions led by Royal Holloway, University of London (RHUL) and other organisations, £51 million had been won for the CoSTAR satellite studio and incubator space based at RHUL; 350 jobs were expected over the next six years and an additional £35 million to Surrey's economy.

The motion was formally seconded by Clare Curran, who reserved the right to speak.

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

- Noted that the motion was a misuse of the Council's time, the Council as an entity had not and could not do anything, the Cabinet Member was tabling a party-political self-congratulatory motion on behalf of the Cabinet. Such information could have been provided via the Cabinet Member Briefing.

- Disagreed that the motion was party-political, it set out an important function of the Council as the education authority, responsible for growing the skills base.
- Noted that the motion sought to improve careers guidance given to young people, giving people opportunities was vital and the film-making industry was a huge industry.
- Noted that the motion provided an opportunity to harness an untapped pool of labour which was people with disabilities, helping businesses and the Council to recruit those people who were willing and able to work.
- Called on the Cabinet Member to work with businesses to understand opportunities and needs of people with disabilities so they could be employed.
- Praised the collaborative work between the Council and RHUL, Surrey was becoming a hub for the creative arts and harnessing local talent was vital.
- Welcomed the CoSTAR satellite studio and incubator space, RHUL having created an incubator hub back in the 2000s for IT companies and as a cofounder of such a company noted gratitude to RHUL for their support.
- Stressed that skills development was a large enabler for change in priority areas, providing opportunities to the disadvantaged.
- Noted that it was not just young people that needed help to develop their skills, vital too was supporting adults that missed out earlier in life.
- Following the integration of the LEPs, welcomed that the Council would have control of adult learning.
- Noted the work underway by the Council with the NHS and Department for Work and Pensions: retrofit programme tackling climate change and creating skills, the NHS anchor scheme to tackle unemployment and provide skills for caring professions, Individual Placement and Support in Primary Care Initiative (IPSPC) helping adults with disabilities into employment.
- Noted that delivering the right skills for the right job was more than an economic good, it delivered across all areas of sustainable development.
- Noted that the resolutions alluded to the Cabinet Member to take those forward rather than the Council.
- Highlighted the appalling employment figures for those with learning disabilities and autism, had spoken to a group who were highly functioning whose goal was simply to have an opportunity to be a taxpayer.
- Stressed the importance of upskilling and reskilling those with learning disabilities and autism - matching their skills to jobs - employers needed to understand the individual and county-wide benefits of their employment; which helped to address physical and mental health issues, leaving no one behind.
- Asked the Cabinet Member for assurance on the Council's stance around upskilling and that while much could be delivered online, there would be services delivered in person particularly by Surrey Adult Learning catering for the west of Surrey; levelling up needed to happen county-wide.
- Noted disappointment in the negative comments, the motion sought to celebrate the positive work underway and recognise the work of officers and partnerships such as with RHUL.
- Noted that young people reported skills and opportunities as key issues.
- Noted that Council meetings were used by Conservative Party Members to pat themselves on the back, in this case simply for replicating the functions of the LEPs and reinventing the Connexions career advice service.
- Welcomed the Festival of Skills, yet its location was not the most accessible for students from deprived schools.

- Resented the criticism of the motion's proposer on an important subject to young and vulnerable residents, by taking the control of skills and learning from the LEPs the Council would be directly accountable on the delivery.

Clare Curran, the seconder of the motion, made the following comments:

- Disagreed that the motion was self-congratulatory, it highlighted the achievements and progress made by the Council and the difference it would make to Surrey residents.
- Noted that residents were concerned about the opportunity for young people and others in acquiring new skills and finding good jobs.
- Referred to the report by a Task Group of the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee which made twenty recommendations focusing on ensuring that courses for adult education and training were relevant to businesses and learners, and were accessible.
- Noted that it was important for young people that the Surrey Careers Hub now county-wide, offers meaningful career information and opportunities.
- Noted that it was vital for the Council to know that its skills work was joined up with all the other work underway across the county, such as the work on community cohesion and towns; recognising the benefits of employment.

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

- Noted disappointment that opposition Members chose to be personal in their comments.
- Noted the need to highlight the work on skills and local economy underway in Surrey and to praise officers for their hard work.
- Stressed that high quality careers advice for students and parents was crucial, at last year's first Festival of Skills students reported that they thought university was the safe option over a paid vocational course.
- Supported the levelling up of adult learning, and noted the focus on vocational skills and upskilling to get people back into the workforce.

The motion was put to the vote and was carried.

Therefore, it was **RESOLVED** that:

This Council notes:

- Surrey County Council has been leading in its strong commitment to promoting skills development and education for all residents of Surrey to support the Surrey Local Economy. This meets this Council's strategic priority of Growing a Sustainable Economy So Everyone Can Benefit and its guiding mission to make sure No One is Left Behind through providing skills training to enable residents of all ages access the jobs they want.
- Last year, this Council launched the Surrey Skills Plan: The Skills Plan sets out a vision for a dynamic, demand-led skills system that meets the needs of businesses and individuals in Surrey.

- In 2023, SCC has delivered on a number of key priorities of the plan including:
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 - Enabled more businesses, both large and small, to inform skills provision planning through the delivery of Skills Bootcamps – short training courses to upskill and reskill Surrey's adults.
 - Worked in collaboration to successfully win a number of significant funding bids, including £6m for the Local Skills Improvement Fund, £1.8m for Skills Bootcamps and over £6m for Individual Placement Support in Primary Care (funding to support those with both mental and physical disabilities move into the workforce).
- In addition, this Council has made significant investments in skills training and education programs, including the Surrey Adult Learning service, which provides a wide range of free and subsidised courses to help residents develop the skills they need to succeed in the workplace and with the Level 2 Devolution Deal now agreed by the Government this Council can look to enhance the offering to Businesses and residents on vocational skills through SAL.
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- Surrey County Council's proposed contribution includes a capital commitment of £3m to fund the establishment of a CoSTAR satellite studio and incubator space on the RHUL campus in Surrey. It's hoped these facilities will provide a sizeable boost to Surrey-based creative industry businesses, with over 200 expected to benefit.
- The Surrey-based Satellite Studio Facility is also projected to create 350 jobs over six years, and make a net contribution of c£35m gross value added to Surrey's economy. Both facilities aim to open in early 2026.

This Council resolves to:

- I. Express its strong support for Surrey County Council's work on promoting skills to support residents and the local economy in Surrey.
- II. Commend the Council for its development and implementation of the Surrey Skills Plan.
- III. Welcome the new Single Surrey-wide Careers Hub to provide career pathway advice for Surrey residents.
- IV. Encourage the Council to continue its efforts to promote skills development and education for all Surrey residents.

83/23 SELECT COMMITTEE FEEDBACK ON A REFERRED MOTION: 'VISION ZERO' [Item 11]

The Chair of the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee introduced the report providing a summary of the motion referred from the Council meeting on 21 March 2023 to the Select Committee and highlighted the timeline of the Select Committee's activity prior to its December meeting. The Select Committee formally considered the referred motion on 4 December 2023 alongside the draft Surrey RoadSafe Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy 2024 to 2035 and 20 mph Speed Limit Policy.

The motion's proposer was pleased that his motion led to the Council drafting its first vision zero strategy and the refresh of its 20 mph Speed Limit Policy. He reiterated that road collision statistics and road collision deaths in Surrey had not changed over the last ten years, despite reducing elsewhere. In 2021, 24 people were killed on Surrey roads and 647 people were seriously injured. Those figures were unacceptable and the motion sought to reduce those figures eventually halving those going forward, stopping people dying on Surrey's roads.

The motion's seconder welcomed that the motion had been progressed but was disappointed that it had been weakened in the process. The interim target now was to halve collisions, not fatalities or life changing injuries by 2035; compared to the original proposed response in July which set an interim target for a 50% reduction in fatalities and life changing injuries by 2030. He agreed with the request for clarity concerning the level of funding and the process for local engagement and consultation as a result of the motion. He asked for a map to be produced highlighting where speed surveys and other evidence shows the likely roads below the 20 mph threshold for action, and to implement that at pace.

RESOLVED:

That Council:

1. Noted that all of the points contained within the Original Motion on Road Safety and Vision Zero tabled on 21 March 2023 have been addressed.
2. Noted that both proposer and Committee are broadly supportive of the revised strategy but that concerns remain specifically in relation to funding to meet the demand to implement more 20mph speed limits which is likely to be high, and over the process for local engagement and consultation which could prove lengthier than the existing approach and risks making 20mph more rather than less difficult to achieve.
3. Noted that the Select Committee has made recommendations to Cabinet on these issues (as set out at paragraph 10) and invited officers to report back to the Select Committee at its April public session.

84/23 APPROVAL OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR ABSENCES [Item 12]

The Chair introduced the report noting the request for the Council to approve the absences of County Councillors Nick Darby and Fiona White.

RESOLVED:

That Nick Darby and Fiona White may continue to be absent from meetings until 31 March 2024 by reason of ill health. The Council looks forward to welcoming them back in due course.

85/23 SURREY PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023/2024 [Item 13]

The Leader introduced the report noting that this year the Council was unable to reach an agreed solution with the Trade Unions, their members were balloted but they did not achieve the necessary threshold. Therefore, the pay settlement became effective from 1 April 2023 and pay had been backdated.

RESOLVED:

That Council agreed the Pay Policy Statement for 2023/2024.

86/23 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION [Item 14]

The Chair introduced the report noting the proposed changes to Part 3 – Responsibility for Functions and Scheme of Delegation, Section 3 Part 3A (Specific Delegations to Officers).

RESOLVED:

1. Approved the amendments to Part 3, Section 3, Part 3A of the Constitution as set out in this report.

87/23 REPORT OF THE CABINET [Item 15]

The Leader presented the report of the Cabinet meetings held on 31 October 2023 and 28 November 2023.

Recommendations on Policy Framework Documents:

28 November 2023:

- A. Coordinated Admissions Scheme for September 2025

RESOLVED:

That Council approved the coordinated admissions scheme for 2025 in accordance with the requirements of the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Coordination of Admission Arrangements) (England) Regulations and the School Admissions Code.

Reports for Information/Discussion:

31 October 2023:

- B. Surrey Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience Strategy
- C. Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Integration
- D. Convergent Screen Technologies and Performance in Realtime (CoSTAR): Driving Innovation and Creativity in the UK's Screen and Performance Industries - Capital Funding Approval

28 November 2023:

- E. 2024/25 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2028/29
- F. Climate Change Progress Assessment 2022/23
- G. Quarterly Report on Decisions Taken Under Special Urgency Arrangements: 3 October 2023 - 4 December 2023

RESOLVED:

1. Noted that there had been two urgent decisions since the last Cabinet report to Council.
2. Adopted the report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 31 October 2023 and 28 November 2023.

88/23 MINUTES OF CABINET MEETINGS [Item 16]

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

The Chair wished all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

[Meeting ended at: 1.33 pm]

Chair

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Leader's Statement – County Council, 12 December 2023

Mr Chairman, Members, welcome to the final Council meeting of 2023, at the end of what has been another relentlessly busy year, full of challenge and opportunity.

As Christmas approaches rapidly, it's important that we reflect on the year just gone, while re-setting and re-energising ahead of the new year.

While it has been a slightly less turbulent year politically - with a steadying of the economic outlook and some progress being made on national objectives – here in Surrey we have maintained our upward momentum and progress as a Council.

While I will touch on those strategic developments – and challenges – shortly, first I must note the more human stories that were celebrated last week at the annual Stars in Surrey Awards in Guildford.

This event, which is becoming a staple feature of Surrey's calendar, is something I always look forward to because it is a real reminder of the incredibly important work we do as a Council and the inspiring people and partnerships we have in our county.

I won't repeat every testimony and anecdote that were celebrated on the evening, but there are a couple of very moving stories and award winners that I wanted to mention.

Firstly, the inspirational Alix Lewer and the Include Choir, who not only won two awards but also performed on stage to open the evening.

Alix brings together people who have 'understanding and speaking difficulties' with the wider community, to reduce isolation and develop shared understanding.

She coordinates over 50 volunteers, with over 100 people taking part in weekly rehearsals and meetings in Epsom and Redhill.

It was evident how much Alix means to the people she works with, breaking down barriers, bringing joy and a sense of purpose to so many lives, it was an honour to witness first hand.

I also want to pay tribute to the winner of the Unsung Hero Award, Gordon Dodd, until recently a member of the targeted engagement team, working with a wide range of young people across various community projects in Surrey.

It was clear from the video testimonies on the night that Gordon was a universally popular man, making a difference to countless young people who needed support, always going above and beyond to help others.

Sadly, Gordon is no longer with us, but it felt fitting that his proud family were present on the night to receive the award on his behalf and hear the impact of the wonderful work he did for many years.

The Stars in Surrey event itself was magnificent – showing off one of Surrey’s brilliant cultural venues at GLive in Guildford, supported fully by generous sponsors, and delivered in-house by our outstanding Internal Communications team, with particular mention to Elliot Small and Emma O’Donnell for their hard work and dedication.

Those human stories - people working at the frontline, often with our most vulnerable residents and making a real difference to the lives of many - are the most important outcome in what we deliver as a Council.

But behind that we need the leadership and strategic vision to enable that work to be the most effective it can be and reach as many people as possible.

We have to stay true to our values as an organisation and keep focused on our shared priorities and our ambition that no one in Surrey is left behind.

As I've said, our progress and improvement as an organisation in these areas has continued this year in earnest.

As Stars in Surrey helped exemplify, our local communities and the voluntary sector across Surrey are so important in enhancing peoples lives and their wellbeing.

Helping to deliver thriving communities, connecting them, and empowering them, has been one of our key priorities for many years, and I feel like this last year has seen much of that groundwork come to fruition.

2023 has been the year that Your Fund Surrey has really taken off, with record numbers of community projects approved, and record numbers delivered.

Everything, from community centres, sports clubs, outdoor spaces, playgrounds and gardens, to men's sheds, patrol boats, theatres, community shops and swimming pools.

Over fifteen and a half million pounds across 125 projects so far.

Your Fund Surrey is delivering exactly what we set out to deliver – real assets designed by, and for, local communities to widen participation and reduce inequality, helping to empower thriving communities all across Surrey.

I couldn't be more proud, and I'm excited to see more projects delivered next year.

Mr Chairman, this has also been a year for real progress in our ambition to strengthen Surrey's local economy and opportunities.

In August, the government announced that Upper Tier authorities, like Surrey, would be handed the powers of the Local Enterprise Partnerships – recognising our influence and ability to help guide the economic growth of our areas.

And just last month, the Chancellor announced a County Deal will be pursued for 'the leafiest and most charming county in the country' – something we've lobbied for some time.

More powers devolved from Westminster to local areas in this way is further recognition of strong local leadership, and faith in local government and communities to deliver what is best in our areas.

I'm pleased that our District and Borough colleagues joined me in welcoming this development, and I look forward to working with all local partners to get the best outcome for our residents.

Here in Surrey, we're wasting no time at all in pushing forward with an ambitious agenda for growing a sustainable economy.

Our Surrey Careers Hub went live in September, meaning for the first time there is co-ordinated support across the whole of the county for our schools and colleges - more than 90 educational establishments are already signed up.

More than 1,300 young people connected with 80 businesses and training providers at the first ever Festival of Skills at Sandown Park racecourse in November.

The Surrey Cyber Security cluster - the first nationally recognised group of its type – continues to grow, and now has 350 members, putting Surrey on the map as a world leader in this emerging sector.

We have signed up as active partners in the CoStar national lab initiative at Royal Holloway, working with Pinewood, BT, and the University of Surrey to create £51 million state-of-the-art facilities to support the county's creative industries.

A satellite studio at Royal Holloway as part of this project, will support more than 200 creative industry businesses, creating 350 jobs and contributing £35 million a year to Surrey's economy.

We have supported a bid for government investment from the University of Surrey and Royal Holloway to develop a Centre for Doctoral Training in the use of AI in digital media. This will turn Surrey into a leading region for this emerging technology.

And Mr Chairman, we have helped secure investment to develop the infrastructure for the games industry across the whole of the county, enhancing the reputation of Guildford - and Surrey as a whole - as 'the Hollywood of Gaming'.

Our commitment and ambition is unwavering - to make Surrey the most dynamic and successful county it possibly can be, with job opportunities for all, a highly skilled population, and a prosperous local economy.

We have also made further strides in our work to tackle the climate emergency and get Surrey to net-zero.

A huge expansion in our on-demand bus service in the summer has seen more people able to get around Surrey without using their cars.

More electric and hydrogen buses are operating in the county.

We've offered young people half price bus journeys.

More cycle paths and connecting routes have been built.

Thousands of young people are taking part in safer active travel training through schools.

Europe's biggest on-street electric vehicle charging point contract was signed by this Council in March.

Hundreds of thousands of trees have been planted.

There is now better access and facilities across Surrey's countryside.

We've delivered more grants for sustainable farming.

More and more solar panels have been installed across the county.

We are decarbonising our own fleet of vehicles, and our buildings.

Mr Chairman, we are delivering on our commitment to reduce emissions across the county, to deliver a greener future for Surrey.

We are also making progress in reducing health inequalities across Surrey, in close partnership with our colleagues in the health service across Surrey's two Integrated Care Systems.

Surrey's Health and Wellbeing Board tracks that progress, and the Integrated Care Partnership is doing a great job pushing it forward.

We know that there are health inequalities in Surrey, where not everyone shares the same advantages.

Our updated Joint Strategic Needs Assessment shines a spotlight on these inequalities so that we can help everyone reach their full potential and set a level playing field.

It is this detailed understanding that allows us to act early and put interventions in place to really improve people's lives.

It demonstrates why it is so important to work together in partnership, with many different things all impacting people's health and wellbeing, such as housing, employment, social care, planning, transport, as well as acute and community health services.

Our partnerships are strong, and some really good, targeted work is underway in neighbourhoods across Surrey.

We'll continue with that work, improve where we can, learning and adapting so that we can reduce those inequalities and help ensure no one is left behind.

Mr Chairman, as I've said countless times before in this chamber, we are a Council that is never complacent.

We want to continually test ourselves, to ensure we are doing the very best we can for Surrey's residents.

We take our responsibility seriously.

This year, we have welcomed further independent external inspections across various services, all of which have noted improvements and that we're heading in the right direction.

In September, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, particularly noted improvements in our Surrey Fire & Rescue Service culture, a key area of focus for our Chief Fire Officer Dan Quin.

While there is still more work to be done in that, and other areas, the action plan and next stage of the Community Risk Management Plan development is in place, laying the foundations to push on further.

I'm confident that the service will keep improving and will continue working to keep Surrey safe.

More recently, Ofsted and the CQC have carried out a detailed Local Area SEND inspection across services coordinated by the Surrey Additional Needs and Disabilities Partnership, which is led by Surrey County Council and Surrey Heartlands and Frimley Integrated Care Boards.

We are all well aware of the challenges faced in this area.

Just yesterday we held a special Cabinet Meeting to interrogate this issue in more detail, ensuring that all partners and, most importantly, the voices of families across Surrey, were heard so we can continue working together constructively.

The challenges around Additional Needs & Disabilities provision are not unique to Surrey, although we feel some more acutely than other areas, with extremely high – and rising – levels of demand, complexity, and cost.

We also know that there have been failures, that some parents rightly feel frustrated and let down by a system that does not always work as it should.

Indeed Members, these issues have been aired in this chamber many times and we have never backed away from the work needed to improve.

We will always stand up and do whatever is in our power to improve the experiences of parents and carers and improve the outcomes for children in Surrey.

The inspection report recognised this work, noting that services for children and young people in Surrey with additional needs and disabilities **are** making progress.

The Partnership has been given the middle rating of three possible outcomes by inspectors, which notes 'inconsistencies' in experiences and outcomes, and makes several clear recommendations for improvement.

Mr Chairman, it should be noted that this report places Surrey above many of its peer authorities in delivering for young people with additional needs.

Yes, experiences are inconsistent, and we all want that progress to be faster.

But the good practice highlighted, and the clear plans and actions being taken, demonstrate that we are gripping this issue in Surrey in the right way.

We know that more effort and more work is required – we will never stand still, never rest, never be complacent – but inspectors clearly see the people of this Council, and our partnership, stepping up and demonstrating that determination to improve the lives of our residents.

Our ambition that no one is left behind is driving this work.

We should be proud of our progress, and I know that we will stay true to that motivation as we go further on that journey in the new year.

Mr Chairman, as I've outlined, this Council continues to move forward, innovate, and improve – that is inbuilt into our mindset.

It is the Surrey Way.

But what is also abundantly clear are the huge challenges that face us every single day.

Those challenges are seeing some other local authorities run out of road and getting into real difficulty, impacting residents' lives in a significant way.

We are strong here in Surrey, we have sound leadership, a motivated workforce, and a track record of innovation and transformation to meet challenge head on.

But we are not complacent.

Things are not easy, and our work is only going to get more difficult.

We will set a balanced budget this year, but the years ahead show more and more pressure.

We have to – and we will – build on the innovative thinking, the ambition, the energy that has led our successful transformation programmes up to this point and look to the future with a renewed sense of purpose.

We will be reinvigorated in our ambition to deliver better, more effective services for our residents, even within a more restricted budget envelope.

And those residents – our customers so to speak – are at the heart of everything we do.

Mr Chairman, that is my ambition, and this Council's ambition, for the new year ahead.

Our transformation and improvement plans will drive forward more radical change, will deliver faster improvement, will embed good practice throughout the organisation and will build on the culture that runs throughout this organisation as a can-do authority.

We will continue to acknowledge areas where we are falling short of the standards, we set ourselves.

We will continue to listen to our residents and respect their feedback.

We will continue to work hard with partners to deliver quality services.

We will continue to drive the necessary change until we get this right.

We will continue in our ambition that no one is left behind.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and look forward to the new year ahead with determination and purpose.

Thank you.

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