

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET
HELD ON 24 SEPTEMBER 2024 AT 2.00 PM
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL,
WOODHATCH PLACE, 11 COCKSHOT HILL, REIGATE, SURREY ,RH2
8EF.**

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Cabinet at its next meeting.

*Tim Oliver (Chairman)
*Natalie Bramhall
*Clare Curran
*Matt Furniss
*David Lewis
*Mark Nuti
*Denise Turner-Stewart
*Sinead Mooney
*Marisa Heath
*Kevin Deanus

Deputy Cabinet Members:

*Maureen Attewell
*Paul Deach
*Steve Bax
*Jonathan Hulley

Members in attendance:

Bob Hughes, Chairman of the Resources and Performance Select Committee
Catherine Powell, Residents' Association and Independent Group Leader

**PART ONE
IN PUBLIC**

118/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

There were none.

119/24 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 23 JULY 2024 [Item 2]

These were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

120/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were none.

121/241 PROCEDURAL MATTERS [Item 4]

121/24 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS [Item 4a]

There were none.

122/24 PUBLIC QUESTIONS [Item 4b]

There were none.

123/24 PETITIONS [Item 4c]

There were none.

124/24 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED ON REPORTS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE [Item 4d]

There were none.

125/24 REPORTS FROM SELECT COMMITTEES, TASK GROUPS AND OTHER COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL [Item 5]

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning explained that the Select Committee had received a report in relation to home to school travel assistance. The Committee invited witnesses from the service to present their report on the progress made and the actions that they had taken to improve services for families, children and young people. The Committee had made some recommendations in relation to communications with families and travel allowances which had been well received by the service. A second report had been received from the Select Committee on the additional needs and disabilities parent and carer experience task group. There were a range of broad and quite far reaching recommendations made on the basis of the findings of that task group. These had only been received by the service last week and given that they are such broad recommendations and that there are so many repercussions in potential actions the service would take a little longer in responding to these. A written response to the recommendations would be sent to the Select Committee ahead of the next Cabinet with a finalised response being presented at the next Cabinet meeting. The Leader thanked the Task Group for their report.

RESOLVED:

That the Select Committee reports be noted and the recommendations considered.

126/24 LEADER / CABINET MEMBER/ STRATEGIC INVESTMENT BOARD DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST CABINET MEETING [Item 6]

There were three decisions for noting. The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities drew attention to the Farncombe Community Garden Hub which was a great example of Surrey County Council being able to fund and support a wonderful community garden project. This would be providing an all-weather facility which would be supporting our health and well-being agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the decisions taken since the last Cabinet meeting be noted.

127/24 CABINET MEMBER OF THE MONTH [Item 7]

An update was provided by the Cabinet Member for Environment. The following key points were made:

- The Cabinet Member stated that Surrey County Council had shown leadership on the environment. For the second consecutive year, Surrey had the highest number of green flag schools in England which now totalled 98 schools. The ECO schools programme is the largest education initiative of its kind in the world and 170 schools in Surrey worked towards achieving the green flag.
- The Council has a number of statutory duties towards adults and young people but had always found a way to deliver across the environment portfolio, often weaving it into the no one is left behind agenda, ensuring countryside access, social prescribing, reducing energy bills and enhancing nature. The Council now has 5 ecologists working for it and had created forums and community volunteering that has been absolutely fundamental to the environment portfolio.
- The Council had been successful in receiving £273,323.08 in the fourth round of grant funding for the tree planting programme. Consequently, the programme had now successfully achieved £1,234,694.77 of grant funding contributions since 2021.
- Since 2021 the council had received £14m of government funding to decarbonise council buildings and help residents who needed support. Surrey was one of the most successful local authorities in delivering Government funded fuel poverty schemes in the country. Surrey had also been the leading authority in delivering solar together, whereby residents are supported by the council to install solar power and reduce energy bills.
- The Nature recovery strategy was being developed and sets out a plan for the whole county on how we protect and enhance nature and wildlife and ensure we leave a beautiful county for the future. Work was also being undertaken around rights of way. A consultation was held earlier this year, which had more responses to any other consultation we've held as an authority. The Council would be working with resident groups and parish councils to improve our rights of way, empowering them more locally as well as seeking opportunities to connect them to the local walking and cycling infrastructure plans and our sustainable travel plans.

The Leader stated that the Council had signed a civic agreement with the University of Surrey, Royal Holloway University and the University of Creative Arts to progress the four key themes in the 2030 Community Vision. The Leader encouraged residents to recycle as much as they possibly can. Surrey had always been in the top 5 authorities for the best recycling rates but this was only at 55% and the government was pushing a target of 65% by 2035. The Deputy Cabinet Member to the Leader explained that a consultation had started on the future of the Basingstoke Canal Centre, everyone was encouraged to participate in this consultation to shape the future of the centre.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet Member of the Month report is noted.

128/24 2024/25 MONTH 4 (JULY) FINANCIAL REPORT [Item 8]

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources introduced the report which provided details of the Council's 2024/25 financial position, for revenue and capital budgets, as at 31st July 2024 (M4) and the expected outlook for the

remainder of the financial year. At M4, the Council was forecasting an overspend of £15.5m against the 2024/25 revenue budget. Directorates were working on developing mitigating actions to offset forecast overspends, to deliver services within available budgets. In order to ensure ongoing financial resilience, the Council holds a corporate contingency budget and over recent years has re-established an appropriate level of reserves. It was explained that one of the largest overspends £7.4m related to the Home to School Travel Assistance pressure. A Member and officer oversight group has been set up to review, monitor and target proposed mitigations.

With regards to capital, at M4, capital expenditure of £318.1m was forecast for 2024/25. This was £3.3m more than the re-phased budget. There were a number of reasons for the variances including additional infrastructure costs. There was a £0.8m variance under budget, caused by a further reprofile of the WAN / Wi-Fi refresh programme that had reprofiled spend into future years. The report also included a proposal to increase the maximum value of an individual capital project funded via the Your Fund Surrey Small Projects Fund from £50,000 to £100,000.

The Leader encouraged members to use their member allocations in supporting local community projects. The Council would be going out to consult the public on the budget for next year and welcomed residents views on where priorities should lie. There were a number of pots of money that the Council had received from central government that expire in March 2025, which include the Household Support Fund. The Council would be lobbying the Government heavily to keep those funds available longer term. There was also a national campaign from Local Government to seek a long term financial settlement rather than on an annual basis.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet notes the Council's forecast revenue budget and capital budget positions for the year.
2. That Cabinet approves the changes to the Your Fund Surrey small project fund allocation to increase the maximum value of a single capital project from £50,000 to £100,000.
3. That Cabinet approves the proposed amendments to the current delegated authority levels for Your Fund Surrey large project fund to include Director level, in consultation with Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities, for projects up to £100k.

Reasons for Decisions:

This report is to comply with the agreed policy of providing a monthly budget monitoring report to Cabinet for information and for approval of any necessary actions.

(The decisions on this item can be called in by the Resources and Performance Select Committee)

129/24 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC [Item 9]

RESOLVED: That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of

exempt information under the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

130/24 PROJECT LIBRA [Item 10]

A part 2 report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources around the discontinuation of two discretionary services. The Chairman of the Finance and Resources Select Committee presented a report from the Select Committee stating that a number of briefings had taken place with officers on the issue. The recommendations in the report were agreed by the Cabinet. A separate part 2 minute would be done for this item.

RESOLVED:

See Exempt Minute E-17-24

Reasons for Decisions:

See Exempt Minute E-17-24

(The decisions on this item can be called in by the Resources and Performance Select Committee)

131/24 PUBLICITY FOR PART 2 ITEMS [Item 11]

It was agreed that non-exempt information may be made available to the press and public, where appropriate.

Meeting closed at 2.50 pm

Chairman