

**Name:** Matthew Furniss, Cabinet Member **Portfolio:** Highways, Transport and Economic Growth

**Highways:** As the grass-cutting season draws to a close, most areas have either completed or are nearing completion of their final cuts for the year. Weed control has been completed across the entire County, although excessive weed growth remains a concern in certain areas - operational crews are manually removing weeds in key locations, such as town centres. Additionally, contractors have been commissioned to resume grass cutting in late February/March 2025, depending on growing conditions, and herbicide treatment of the highways will take place around March/April 2025. A comprehensive **environmental maintenance plan** has been developed, which includes additional flailing works, as well as the introduction of our new "**Roadside Rangers**", who will focus specifically on improving the visual quality of the County's highways. Initially, two Roadside Ranger teams were established, but due to the success of this initiative, it has been increased to eight crews as of 25th November 2024.

The **road marking refreshment** programme has made substantial progress, with up to five road marking crews active on the network. Recent large-scale works include the refreshment of M25 Junction 6, with plans in place for Junction 8. Despite the onset of the wetter season, we are on track to fully utilise the £1.9 million budget allocated for this programme.

Our Horizon Road and pavement programmes are on track with over half of the planned programme completed by the end of September, equating to **92 miles of roads and 29 miles of pavements**. In addition, 24 miles of roads have been resurfaced through our patching programmes and in response to several diesel spills. In addition to our resurfacing programmes, we have also completed **39,987 pothole repairs** between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup> November.

Four **Streetworks taskforce** meetings have been held since July 2024 as part of our **Congestion Management** work, with good representation and engagement from key utility sectors. The meetings will continue on a quarterly basis, the next one planned for January 2025. A successful media campaign is being delivered to highlight the work of the Taskforce which has included coverage in [local newspapers](#), [BBC Surrey](#), That's TV South East and a [social media video](#)

**Transport:** Last year in Surrey we saw positive growth in bus use, with over 26m journeys made, significantly up on the 24m the year before. So far this year, nearly 12m journeys have been made and we will be reporting our full year numbers to the government next May. Underpinning patronage growth is our close partnership working with bus operators, which has seen joint investment in more zero emissions buses, coupled with Council investment for better local bus services and more DDRT, alongside the application of our BSIP funding from Government to support service enhancements. I am therefore pleased with the **new funding award of £12m for 2025/26** that will be invested in better bus services delivering the aspirations set out in our BSIP.

Our work to accelerate the introduction of zero emission minibuses in the community transport sector continues to be successful, with partners investing alongside us. Charging infrastructure is vital, so I am encouraged that Woking Bustler has recently invested in developing a disused car park to provide 14 EV chargers to support their EV fleet, seven of which are funded by the County Council.

In partnership with Active Surrey, we are upcycling bicycles from our Community Recycling Centers. They are refurbished by inmates at Ford Open prison and provided free of charge to members of the community who do not have access to a bicycle. Children without bikes are now able to take part in **Bikeability cycle training**, and they are provided with an upcycle bike to keep once they have completed their training, helping their onward active travel journey.

The **Safer Travel Team** has won Team of the Year at the national Modeshift Sustainable Travel Awards for the development and roll out of the **Feetfirst Child Pedestrian Training programme**. In the current academic year, we are expecting to train more than 6,000 year three pupils at over 120 schools across the county; nearly half the target cohort. The training course provides pupils with road safety skills to better enable them to safely walk to and from school with their parents and carers and prepare them for independent travel. To ensure no one is

left behind, fees for children in receipt of free school meals have been removed for both Feet First and Bikeability training.

As part of the £3million **Road Safety Outside Schools** programme we have just completed the implementation of a new signalised crossing and footway improvements on Weybourne Road, Farnham. This will support children walking to and from Farnham Heath End Secondary School and William Cobbett Junior and Infant Schools. A new School Street will be implemented on the nearby Bullers Road after Christmas.

A road safety scheme has been implemented in West Street, Reigate, consisting of two new zebra crossings, and wider cycle lanes segregated from motor traffic using bolt down kerbs and posts (called “wandorcas”). The narrower traffic lanes have contributed to lower traffic speeds making it safer and quieter for road users and residents.

**Economic Growth:** To support our local businesses, we established **Business Surrey** in April 2024 – our dedicated service for Surrey businesses, which continues to grow its reach. By the end of October, Business Surrey received 15,490 unique website users (39,742 total website views) and 747 enquiry forms had been completed (achieving a conversion rate of 4.8%, more than double the industry standard of 2%). The Surrey Growth Hub team is also well established and building momentum – this service delivers targeted business support and advice to high-growth SMEs across Surrey. Up to the end of October 2024, our Growth Hub has provided support to 886 businesses, with 757 of those receiving light touch interventions (up to 1 hour), 127 medium intensity support (1 to 12 hours), and 2 high intensity support (exceeding 12 hours).

Sitting alongside these services is the **Surrey Careers Hub**, which is part of our employment, skills, and workforce delivery programme. The Careers Hub was established in September 2023, to support Surrey schools and colleges with their provision of careers education. In its first year of delivery, the Careers Hub increased performance across all Gatsby Benchmarks and reached its target of 90% of schools achieving at least 3 of these nationally recognised Benchmarks. We continue to place a strong focus on ensuring Surrey’s employers can recruit a local workforce, and so we delivered our second **Surrey Festival of Skills** on 15<sup>th</sup> October. Over 2,000 students and teachers attended (from 40 schools and colleges) and engaged with more than 80 exhibitors on the day, consisting of both employers and further and higher education opportunities.

The recent Autumn Statement has indicated a need for us to further embed our role in frontline delivery. Alongside the continued successes of the Careers and Growth Hubs, we will undertake a new role in the delivery of the **Connect to Work programme**. We will be supporting up to 900 residents annually into work, focusing on groups such as ex-offenders, homeless people, veterans, care leavers and people with disabilities. We will also take on accountability for the roll-out of **Made Smarter Adoption** to the South-East region, offering businesses with a manufacturing process support with adoption of digital technologies. These programmes rely on strong employer and partner connections aligned to community integration and detailed planning and preparation to ensure that we deliver successfully and at pace.

Whilst delivery becomes the primary area of focus, we continue to be driven by an evidence-led strategic approach as we refresh Surrey’s evidence base and refresh our economic strategy. As we look to the future we will use these pieces of work to produce a **Growth and Innovation Fund Award Framework** which will underpin future funding decisions and provide us with the tool we need to prepare future funding bids. We are proud to say that the Framework has been comprehensively informed by business as well as contributions from other stakeholders and partners represented through the One Surrey Growth Board and Surrey Business Leaders Forum and we look forward to bringing it to Cabinet for endorsement in February before its formal launch in March.

The **Spatial Planning** team have been collaborating with teams inside and outside of the County Council. They assisted Public Health colleagues in the organisation of the **2024 Health and Planning Development Day** on the 12<sup>th</sup> November attended by District and Borough Planners and public health leads. The public and private sector joined the **Surrey Developers Forum Conference** co-hosted by SCC with the assistance of the team, with contributions from senior Members including Cllr Tim Oliver. Both of these events were highly successful and were great opportunities to debate the upcoming changes to the **National Planning Policy Framework**. Alongside making **representations to MHCLG** in the revised NPPF on behalf of SCC officers

actively engaged with the Surrey Heads of Planning group to gauge the response of the Local Planning Authorities.

**Planning Development** has achieved 100% of minerals and waste applications determined on time and this will be publicly reported as a key performance indicator. The teams continue to meet the demands of an ambitious capital programme of SCC projects, ensuring that no one is left behind. In the context of the recent Supreme Court ruling the team are actively involved in the Horse Hill site ensuring that planning compliance is achieved.

**Transport Development Planning** continues to respond to consultations on large strategic developments in Surrey which are at different stages in the planning process, from Pre-application, through to the consideration of Reserved Matters. The Technical team is working intensively with National Highways and all the other agencies in delivering the M25 Junction 10 scheme and the Ash Road Bridge scheme which creates a bypass for the heavily congested level crossing on the A323 is set to open over the Christmas period following intensive work to complete the project. The teams are providing their normal services to the 12 LPAs and developers on top of these additional demands.

**Placemaking:** Projects are at different stages of development. **Cranleigh High Street** - we are hosting engagement events in Cranleigh in the first week of December, to help refine the final designs for the High Street improvements that are planned for 2025. **Horley** - additional engagement is planned to take place at the Horley Christmas fair on the 7th Dec to show the plans for the High Street improvements. Horley Wayfinding work is underway and signage manufacturing is ready for production. **Ashford Town Centre** – the feasibility design stage is progressing, a concept model was recently shared with SCC and Spelthorne BC partners. **Croydon Road, Caterham** is well underway with construction due to be complete by April 2025. **Tongham** - the gateways have been road safety and a designer is preparing remedial works. At the roundabout and pocket park detail design is underway and works are being scheduled with the contractor. **Shalford** - the team are working with GBC to gain permission to use the Common Land as part of the project, as well as the Highways team to integrate the Placemaking and 20mph scheme where possible. They are considering developing the second option for detailed design instead which will not require use of the Common Land – which would allow them to potentially start construction on site early summer. There is currently no date for the agreement for use of the Common Land.

Wider group work to progress additional funding opportunities has included recent **Strategic CIL approvals** to Elmbridge BC for: Expansion of Walton Leigh School on a satellite site at Hurst Road, Molesey (£1m); Weybridge High Street – bus stop accessibility and pavement improvements (£62.5k) and; Walton-on-Thames Local Street Improvements (LSI) (EL6) (£300k). Epsom & Ewell BC has approved £1.25m Strategic CIL for Ewell Village Enhancements project. We have worked with colleagues across the Council to develop an EOI to the Heritage Lottery Fund's **Nature Towns & Cities** programme to build community capacity and support for place-based partnerships for Nature Recovery in the west of Surrey.

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