

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET
HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 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.

Cabinet Members

(* *present*)

*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:

Cllr Trefor Hogg, Chairman of the Adults and Health Select Committee

Cllr Jeremy Webster, Vice Chairman of the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture Select Committee

Cllr Steven McCormick, Vice Chairman of the Resources and Performance Select Committee

**PART ONE
IN PUBLIC**

178/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

There were no apologies.

179/24 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 26 NOVEMBER 2024 [Item 2]

These were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

180/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were none.

181/24 PROCEDURAL MATTERS [Item 4]

The Leader read out a statement in relation to the death of Sara Sharif in Woking.

The Leader stated that at times, members, staff and residents are faced with the toughest of circumstances and the most difficult news to digest. A moment was taken to recognise the horrendous details that had emerged regarding the unspeakably sad death of Sarah Sharif in Woking. Whilst some sense of justice could be taken that the evil perpetrators had been convicted and sentenced, the details that came out of the trial would never be forgotten. Now the trial had concluded, the local child safeguarding practice review would proceed. Partners including the police, health, social care and education, amongst others, under an independent author, would review the practice of all agencies involved with the family and identify any learning. The safety, well-being and care of children and young people was of the utmost importance to the Council. The Council would play a full and active role in the review to truly understand the wider circumstances around Sara's life and tragic death. The Council would always strive to improve how things are done and would do everything in its power to ensure the children are kept safe in the county. Any and every lesson that is learned through the local child safeguarding practice review would be acted upon.

182/24 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS [Item 4a]

There were none.

183/24 PUBLIC QUESTIONS [Item 4b]

There was one public question. A response from the Cabinet was published in the supplementary agenda. The questioner asked a supplementary question which was why would there routinely be a need to have additional evidence at appeals if the local authority had fulfilled their statutory duty to provide an effective assessment and process which fully identified the needs and outcomes of the children. The Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning stated that the decisions being made by the Council were entirely lawful. Any tribunal decisions which overturned a Council decision did not mean that the original decision taken by the Council was unlawful. The Leader stated that the percentage of appeals that are won in whole or in part in the Council reflect the same percentage nationally which showed the system was not working for families, children and Councils.

184/24 PETITIONS [Item 4c]

There were none.

185/24 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED ON REPORTS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE [Item 4d]

There were none.

186/24 REPORTS FROM SELECT COMMITTEES, TASK GROUPS AND OTHER COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL [Item 5]

The Chairman of the Adults and Health Select Committee, Trefor Hogg introduced the budget recommendations from the Adults and Health Select Committee explaining that there was extraordinary pressures on the Adults Wellbeing and Health Partnerships budget which showed the net expenditure budget requirement rising by £18.5m to £524.5m in 2025-26. It was essential that the rollout of Technology Enabled Care across Surrey was encouraged to ensure better outcomes for residents. There was a recognition that changes to National Insurance and the national living wage would impact the care market and in turn impact the Council. How the Council works with the NHS needed to be factored so there is one team approach. Overall, the Select Committee felt that very strong Risk Management processes with strong independent monitoring and reporting was required to keep strict control of the risks with a focus on effective early action to correct problems.

The Leader stated that the expectation was that the increase in national insurance and the national living wage for Council employees would be reimbursed by the government but this may not extend to providers. The Government had announced £680m of additional funding into the adult social care in the budget but Surrey would get no greater than £10m of this. The majority of this would be wiped out by increased costs from providers. The Leader announced that the Government had published a white paper in relation to English devolution which sets out the government's direction of travel, which will be the first major reform of the structure of local government since 1974. The Government had requested submissions from all two tier authorities on what they believe devolution would look like. The Leader also touched upon public service reform and the council's relationship with the NHS moving forward.

The Vice Chairman of the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee, Jeremy Webster introduced the budget report in the absence of the Select Committee Chairman. In addition to a macro level review of the children, families, lifelong learning and cultural budget, the Select Committee chose to explore early help preventive spending and the impact of proposed funding changes on the voluntary, charity and social enterprise infrastructure organisations

as its deep dive topics. The Vice-Chairman spoke on the deep dive recommendations before turning to the recommendations on the overall CFLLC budget. The committee was convinced that the value of early help improves outcomes for children and also reduces statutory demand in the long term. The Committee recommended that this spend was protected from statutory pressures. The Select Committee wanted to undertake a deep dive on voluntary sector funding but scrutiny was inhibited when a briefing on these changes promised in October was not made available to the Committee. The Committee recognised the constraints on the Councils budget and urged the Cabinet to consider any and all opportunities to extend the budget envelope proposed for the Directorate to provide further discretionary funding being ring fenced for early years funding. The Leader thanked the Vice Chairman for his update stating that the councils primary priority is to discharge its statutory functions and secondly was around investment in prevention and early intervention. He noted that there would be some additional information within the Local Government Settlement around additional funding for children's preventative services. The Leader stated that the Council had no intention to reduce frontline staff.

The Vice Chairman of the Resources and Performance Select Committee, Steven McCormick introduced the budget report and recommendations from his Select Committee stating that the Committee had conducted a meticulous and comprehensive scrutiny of the Council's budget to ensure financial sustainability and efficiency. The Select Committee challenged officers on the deliverability of efficiencies, particularly those planned for 2024/25 and had been assured of a more rigorous governance framework to hold directorates accountable for these planned efficiencies. The Select Committee also scrutinised the Council's capital expenditure, noting the conscious effort to reduce capital financing costs in the revenue budget. Risk management had also been a focal point of the Select Committees scrutiny. The Select Committee also identified significant risks, including potential funding reform, the need to deliver efficiencies, and external economic factors such as inflation and interest rates. To mitigate these risks, the Council had established robust measures, including maintaining healthy reserves and a £20 million contingency fund, to ensure financial stability. The Committee had also scrutinised the transformation programme to ensure it will deliver long-term efficiencies.

The Leader explained that the Government had announced that from 2026 onwards there would be multi year settlements. A funding review consultation on this had been launched. Funding had been set aside for adult social care but would be distributed via a funding formula which accounts for areas of high levels of deprivation. The Leader explained that this new formula would mean that the Council would not receive any funding even though there was deprivation in the county. There was also an expectation that the Council should optimise the Council Tax it raises locally which would mean that the Council would be

expected to raise Council Tax to the maximum level every year. The Leader stated that he believed that the criteria for distributing funding needed to be widened or the Council would face very challenging times ahead. The Select Committees were thanked for all their input and work into to the draft budget which was welcomed.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Scrutiny of the 2025/26 Draft Budget And Medium-Term Financial Strategy To 2029/30 report be noted.

187/24 LEADER / DEPUTY LEADER / CABINET MEMBER/ STRATEGIC INVESTMENT BOARD DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST CABINET MEETING [Item 6]

There were seven decisions for noting.

RESOLVED:

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

188/24 CABINET MEMBER OF THE MONTH [Item 7]

A Cabinet Member of the Month update was provided by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth. The following key points were made:

- The Horizon Road and pavement programmes were 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 had 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 1st April and 30th November.
- A comprehensive environmental maintenance plan had 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.
- So far this year, nearly 12m bus journeys had been made. 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. The Cabinet Member announced a new funding

award of £12m for 2025/26 that will be invested in better bus services delivering the aspirations set out in our BSIP.

- The Safer Travel Team had 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.
- In its first year of delivery, the Surrey 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.
- The Leader commented that the team had been doing a good job in proactively dealing with potholes.

RESOLVED:

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

189/24 SURREY SCHOOLS AND EARLY YEARS FUNDING 2025-26 [Item 8]

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning explained that the report sets out the recommended funding formula principles for Surrey's mainstream schools and the early years providers for 2025/2026. The funding of all Surrey schools (including academies) and the funded entitlement to early years nursery provision are provided from the council's allocation of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). Each local authority is required to consult on and maintain local formula arrangements to allocate DSG to mainstream schools and early years providers. The Safety Valve agreement includes a 1% block transfer from the schools' block of the DSG to the High Needs block in each year of the five-year term of the agreement. Although schools do not have formal right of approval over the request, the Council is required to consult schools and to share the outcome with the Secretary of State. Each local authority is required to consult on and maintain those local formula arrangements to allocate the DSG to our local schools. The Council consults through the schools forum, which is a statutory body which is consulted every year on how the grant should be allocated to each school. It was explained that the report did not address pupil premium or sixth form funding as this was covered by central government.

The Leader explained that the Council was yet to receive Capital funding promised by the government to enable us to build more school facilities. This was an integral part of the safety valve agreement. The Council would continue to push for this funding.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet notes and supports the application to the Secretary of State to transfer 1.0% (which was equivalent to £8.4m in 2024/25) from the schools' block DSG to the High Needs block DSG, as set out in the safety valve agreement with the Department for Education (DFE).
2. That the Schools Forum's formula recommendations for schools as set out in Annex 3, is approved by Cabinet; and the decisions in Annex 4 implemented, subject to any changes required to comply with the DfE provisional schools funding settlement announced on 28 November 2024³. The proposals agreed by the Schools Forum for additional funding for mainstream schools with disproportionately high incidence of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are agreed.
3. That the introduction of additional funding for primary schools with temporary falls in rolls is supported by Cabinet as agreed by the Schools Forum.
4. That the principles of the early years funding formula, supported by the Schools Forum, is approved by Cabinet.
5. That authority is delegated to the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning in consultation with the Executive Director of Children, Families and Lifelong Learning and the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning to approve amendments to the funding rates in the schools formula and early years funding formula, as appropriate, following receipt of the DSG settlement and DfE pupil data in December 2024. This is to ensure that total allocations to schools under this formula remain affordable within the council's DSG settlement and to meet the DfE deadline of mid-January for submission of proposed school budgets to the DfE and the expected deadline for confirmation of early years funding rates, currently expected to be 28 February 2025.

Reasons for Decisions:

To comply with DfE regulations requiring formal council approval of the local funding formula for Surrey's primary and secondary schools and to allow budgets for schools to be submitted to the DfE by the deadline of 22 January 2025 and funding rates for early years providers to be set by the required deadlines.

(The decisions on this item can be called-in by the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning & Culture Select Committee)

190/24 CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRESS ASSESSMENT 2023/4 [Item 9]

The Cabinet Member for Environment introduced the report which sets out the key findings of the third annual climate change programme progress assessment since Surrey County Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan 2021-2025 (the Delivery Plan) was published in 2021. The Cabinet Member explained that lots of positive change had been made in supporting residents and businesses to reduce their carbon emissions in line with the net zero 2050 target. It was explained that the team had gone above and beyond to help the Council deliver against the net-zero targets as set out in the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan and should be commended for the work undertaken. There was a recognition that inflation would impact work to combat climate change. The Leader requested that the Cabinet Member for Environment write to the Leaders of District and Boroughs explaining the work that had been done to support the Delivery Plan and how they could support this work. The Cabinet Member explained that the Greener Future Partnerships had been set up with District and Boroughs to tackle climate change but there had been some struggles.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet continues to deliver against the net-zero targets as set out in the Greener Futures Climate Change Delivery Plan 2021-2025– noting the key recommended areas of focus.
2. That Cabinet approves bringing forward the development of the next 5-year Greener Future Climate Change Delivery Plan (2026-31), for Cabinet consideration in 2025.

Reasons for Decisions:

The Delivery Plan commits to undertaking an annual assessment of progress on the plan for Cabinet. Whilst it has not changed, the progress report identifies where the council and its partners need to focus attention to address the most challenging areas and ensure the Delivery Plan is as impactful and cost effective as possible and within the resources available. The Delivery Plan is also an opportunity to identify those areas where Surrey County Council and its partners need to lobby Government. The current Delivery Plan runs up to 2025/6 which triggers a substantial review of the programme and preparation of a new Delivery Plan, setting out the actions to be delivered over the next 5 years on the council's net-zero journey.

(The decisions on this item can be called-in by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee)

191/24 ANNUAL PROCUREMENT FORWARD PLAN FY2025/26 [Item 10]

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources introduced the report explaining that the revised Procurement and Contract Standing Orders agreed by the Council in May 2019 (and further revised in March 2023) required the preparation of an Annual Procurement Forward Plan (APFP). The APFP had been developed for 2025/26 and Cabinet was being asked to approve the plan to allow implementation of the identified procurement activity. It was explained that Annex 2 indicated upcoming projects for 2026/2027 pipeline and were for information purposes only. Under the new Procurement Legislation (Procurement Act 2023), which comes into effect on the 24 of February 2025, the Council will be required to publish a Mandatory Pipeline Notice by 26 May each year, covering a minimum of 18-month overview of planned procurements over £2M. The Leader explained that Cabinet Members had been provided with a list of procurement projects in advance of the meeting and had an opportunity to go through each in detail with officers.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet gives Approval to Procure for the projects listed in Annex 1 – “Annual Procurement Forward Plan for FY2025 26” in accordance with the Council’s Procurement and Contract Standing Orders.
2. That Cabinet agrees that where the first ranked tender for any projects listed in Annex 1 is within the +5% budgetary tolerance level, the relevant Executive Director, Director, or Head of Service (as appropriate) is authorised to award such contracts.
3. That Cabinet agrees the procurement activity that will be returned to Cabinet prior to going out to market (Annex 1, column R).
4. That Cabinet notes appropriate projects will be presented to Cabinet or the Strategic Investment Board for approval of the business case.
5. That Cabinet notes projects identified in Annex 2 “Annual Procurement Forward Plan for FY 2026/27 Pipeline” are for information only.

Reasons for Decisions:

- To comply with the Procurement and Contract Standing Orders agreed by Council in May 2019 and further revised in March 2023.
- To provide Cabinet with strategic oversight of planned procurement projects for FY2025/26.

- To ensure Cabinet oversight is focussed on the most significant procurements.
- To avoid the need to submit multiple individual requests for Approval to Procure as well as individual contract award approvals for work taking place in FY2025/26.
- To inform Cabinet of projects identified for FY2026/27.

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

192/24 SURREY ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP AND JOINT WASTE SOLUTIONS [Item 11]

The Cabinet Member for Property, Waste and Infrastructure introduced the report explaining that the part 1 report sets out Surrey County Council's plans for the future of some administrative and project management services currently provided on behalf of Surrey County Council by the Joint Waste Solutions team. The published report required one clarification in paragraph 12b of the report, with reference to the re-procurement of the waste collection service. This paragraph should refer should state that the four authorities are working together to consider options for the delivery of waste collection services after the expiry of the Amey contract in 2027. A number of functions were transferred to Joint Waste Solutions including project management, communications and website hosting. The current arrangement was no longer felt suitable to meet the strategic needs of Surrey County Council in reducing its exposure to policy changes, namely the extended producer responsibility scheme and the emissions trading scheme. The Council supported the concept of closer partnership working with District and Boroughs and believed this could be better secured by the Council managing activities.

The Leader stated that there had been a number of discussions about this with District and Boroughs. A number of efficiencies could be delivered by bringing the service in-house which would not negatively impact service delivery.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet agrees the principle of SCC bringing back the Functions and associated funding to SCC and to delegate authority to the Executive Director for Environment, Property & Growth in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Resources and the Director of Law and Governance to take such actions and decisions as are necessary to facilitate the manner and mechanisms through which this decision can be most suitably implemented.

Reasons for Decisions:

- Surrey County Council ('SCC') transferred several of its activities ("Functions"), to encourage better recycling, to the JWS team in 2018 through an Inter Authority Agreement. As part of the process, six full time employees of SCC staff were TUPE transferred to SHBC to undertake the Functions for JWS.
- JWS is the partnership organisation which manages a joint waste collection contract with Amey on behalf of Surrey Heath, Elmbridge, Mole Valley and Woking Councils. Surrey Heath Borough Council ("SHBC") hosts JWS and provides line management and back-office functions (e.g. HR).
- The Functions transferred include activities to encourage better recycling by Surrey residents: communications and website hosting; data gathering and interpretation; project administration and governance; processing of some payments; and encouragement of food waste collections.
- The wider Surrey Environment Partnership ("SEP") forum includes all eleven District and Boroughs ('D&Bs') as the Waste Collection Authorities ("WCA") for Surrey, and the group comes together with SCC at a number of meetings over the year. These meetings are part of the Functions and will be organised by SCC going forward if this recommendation is approved.
- The current arrangement is no longer felt suitable to meet the strategic needs of SCC in reducing its exposure to policy changes. Policy measures will have a disproportionate impact on SCC as the Waste Disposal Authority ("WDA"). To mitigate these, SCC needs to: engage with the public (communications, recycling behaviour); have access to data; and to have financial control on project expenditure.
- SCC clearly supports the concept of partnership with the D&Bs and would like to see a closer and more effective relationship with all 11 Councils. However, SCC feels that as long as the Functions and SEP administration remains subsumed within JWS (and hosted by Surrey Heath BC) then the wider strategic needs of the SCC will not be met.
- The recommendation to SCC members is to relocate the Functions back into SCC, noting that this could involve the transfer of affected staff under TUPE transfers and some reorganisation of the service. Officers believe this would allow

JWS to focus on its needs, and for SCC to mitigate its exposure to potentially very costly waste policy changes.

(The decisions on this item can be called-in by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee)

193/24 2024/25 MONTH 7 (OCTOBER) FINANCIAL REPORT [Item 12]

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources. At the end of Month 7 the Council was forecasting an overspend of £17.7m against the 2024/25 revenue budget. This was a £0.9m improvement on the M6 position. All Directorates were continuing to work on developing mitigating actions to offset forecast overspends. The Cabinet Member gave an update on the areas where there had been a forecast overspend. In addition to the forecast overspend position, emerging risks and opportunities were monitored throughout the year. Directorates have additionally identified net risks of £11.1m, consisting of quantified risks of £11.9m, offset by opportunities of £0.8m. This is an increase in net risks of £0.6m from M6. In order to ensure ongoing financial resilience, the Council held a corporate contingency budget and over recent years had re-established an appropriate level of reserves. If the contingency budget was not required in full, then any balance would be transferred to reserves to further improve financial resilience and provide funding for future investment. At Month 7, capital expenditure of £332m was forecast for 2024/25. This was £10.9m more than the re-phased budget. The overall financial picture was still challenging but the Cabinet Member was confident that expenditure was under control.

The Leader thanked staff for all their hard work and support over the year. The Leader wished everyone a peaceful Christmas and New year.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet notes the Council's forecast revenue budget and capital budget positions for the year.

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)

194/24 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC [Item 13]

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.

195/24 ANNUAL PROCUREMENT FORWARD PLAN FY2025/26 [Item 14]

A part 2 report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources who provided a brief update on the commercially sensitive procurement projects within the annex.

RESOLVED:

See Minute 190/24

Reasons for Decisions:

See Minute 190/24

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

196/24 SURREY ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP AND JOINT WASTE SOLUTIONS [Item 15]

A part 2 report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Property, Waste and Infrastructure who explained that the part 2 report recommends withdrawal of the administration and project management functions carried out by Joint Waste Solutions. These functions would be brought back in house to Surrey County Council. Further details were given around the contract and impacts of the changes.

RESOLVED:

See Minute 191/24.

Reasons for Decisions:

See Minute 191/24.

(The decisions on this item can be called-in by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee)

197/24 PUBLICITY FOR PART 2 ITEMS [Item 16]

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

Meeting closed at 3.21 pm

Chairman