

County Council Meeting – 4 February 2025

### **REPORT OF THE CABINET**

The Cabinet met on 17 December 2024, 8 January and 28 January 2025.

In accordance with the Constitution, Members can ask questions of the appropriate Cabinet Member, seek clarification or make a statement on any of these issues without giving notice.

The minutes containing the individual decisions for the meetings above have been included within the original agenda at Item 13. If any Member wishes to raise a question or make a statement on any of the matters in the minutes, notice must be given to Democratic Services by 12 noon on the last working day before the County Council meeting (Monday 3 February 2025).

For members of the public all non-confidential reports are available on the web site ([www.surreycc.gov.uk](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk)) or on request from Democratic Services.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS ON POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS**

##### **A. 2025/26 FINAL BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO 2029/30 (Item 5 on this agenda)**

*It was AGREED:*

**That Cabinet makes the following recommendations to Council on 4 February 2025.**

Cabinet recommends that County Council:

1. Approves the net revenue budget requirement be set at £1,264.1 million (net cost of services after service specific government grants) for 2025/26 (Annex B), subject to confirmation of the Final Local Government Financial Settlement.
2. Approves the total Council Tax Funding Requirement be set at £972.3 million for 2025/26. This is based on a council tax increase of 4.99%, made up of an increase in the level of core council tax of 2.99% and an increase of 2% in the precept proposed by Central Government to cover the growing cost of Adult Social Care (Annex E).
3. Notes that for the purpose of section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council formally determines that the increase in core council tax is not such as to trigger a referendum (i.e. not greater than 3%).
4. Sets the Surrey County Council precept for Band D Council Tax at £1,846.35, which represents a 4.99% uplift, a rise of £1.69 a week from the 2024/25 precept of £1,758.60. This includes £286.61 for the Adult Social Care precept, which has increased by £35.17. A full list of bands is as follows:

Valuation band	Core precept	ASC precept	Overall precept
A	£1,039.83	£191.07	£1,230.90
B	£1,213.13	£222.92	£1,436.05
C	£1,386.44	£254.76	£1,641.20
D	£1,559.74	£286.61	£1,846.35
E	£1,906.35	£350.30	£2,256.65
F	£2,252.96	£413.99	£2,666.95
G	£2,599.57	£477.68	£3,077.25
H	£3,119.48	£573.22	£3,692.70

5. Notes that underlying General Fund reserve balances are projected to increase to £50.5 million as of 1 April 2025, based on the current year forecast.
6. Approves the Total Schools Budget of £738.7 million to meet the Council's statutory requirement on schools funding (as set out in Section 9 of the 2025/26 Final Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2029/30).
7. Approves the overall indicative Budget Envelopes for Directorates and individual services for the 2025/26 budget (Annex B) and that the Corporate Leadership Team be required to meet the revenue budget for the delivery of Council services.
8. That the Corporate Leadership Team be required to deliver the revenue saving plans as set out in Annex A.
9. Delegate powers to the Leader and Deputy Chief Executive & Director of Resources (Section 151 Officer) to finalise budget proposals and recommendations to County Council, updated to take into account new information in the Final Local Government Finance Settlement;'
10. Approves the total £1,398.8 million proposed five-year Capital Programme (comprising £1,016.8 million of budget and £382.0 million pipeline), including the £406.3 million annual Capital Budget for 2025/26 (Annex C).
11. Approves the Capital and Investment Strategy (Annex F - Sections 1 to 3), which provides an overview of how risks associated with capital expenditure, financing and treasury will be managed as well as how they contribute towards the delivery of services.
12. Approve the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators (Annex F – Section 4) which set a framework for the Council's treasury function to manage risks, source borrowing and invest surplus cash, as considered by the Audit & Governance Committee on 22 January 2025.
13. Approves the policy for making a prudent level of revenue provision for the repayment of debt - the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy (Annex G).
14. Approves and reviews the re-set of the Earmarked Reserves, as set out in Annex D.
15. Notes that the investment in Transformation required to deliver improved outcomes and financial benefits is built into the proposed Medium-Term Financial Strategy (as set out in section 3 of 2025/26 Final Budget Report and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2029/30).

### Reasons for decisions:

Council will meet on 4 February 2025 to agree a budget and to set the Council Tax Precept for 2025/26. Cabinet is required to recommend a budget to Council for consideration at this meeting. The budget directs available resources to support the

achievement of the Council's ambitions and priorities in the 2030 Vision and the Refreshed Organisation Strategy.

The budget will also support the delivery of the continuing transformational changes that are required to ensure that the Council can improve priority outcomes for residents, while managing growing demand for services and ensuring future financial sustainability.

## **B. ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR SURREY'S COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS FOR SEPTEMBER 2026 AND SURREY'S RELEVANT AREA (as set out in the Cabinet report from 28 January 2025)**

*It was AGREED:*

**That Cabinet makes the following recommendations to Council on 4 February 2025.**

Cabinet recommends to the County Council:

### **Recommendation 1**

That the Published Admission Number (PAN) for Year 3 at Reigate Priory is reduced from 150 to 120 for 2026 admission, as set out in Appendix 1 of Annex 1.

#### **Reasons for Recommendation**

- It is supported by the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school
- It is supported by Surrey's Education Place Planning team
- There will still be sufficient places for local children if the PAN is decreased
- It will help the school maintain financial viability as they will be able to operate with just four classes
- It will have no impact on children who are currently on roll at the school
- The decision is not related to the future provision of places in Reigate

### **Recommendation 2**

That a Published Admission Number (PAN) is not introduced for admission to Year 3 at Audley Primary School for 2026 admission.

#### **Reasons for Recommendation**

- There are spaces at other schools in the area which negates the need to introduce a Year 3 PAN at Audley Primary School
- Although a small number, the introduction of a Year 3 PAN of 2 at Audley Primary School could have a detrimental impact on other schools in the area
- It will have no impact on children who are currently on roll at the school

### **Recommendation 3**

That the Published Admissions Number (PAN) for Reception at Earlswood Infant School is reduced from 120 to 90 for 2026 admission, as set out in Appendix 1 of Annex 1.

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

- It is supported by the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school, having been requested by them
- It is supported by Surrey's Education Place Planning team
- There will still be sufficient places for local children if the PAN is decreased
- It will help the school maintain financial viability as they will be able to operate with just three classes
- It will have no impact on children who are currently on roll at the school

### **Recommendation 4**

That the Published Admission Numbers (PANs) for September 2026 for all other community and voluntary controlled schools (excluding Year 3 at Reigate Priory and Reception at Earlswood Infant School, which are covered by Recommendations 1 and 3) are determined as they are set out in Appendix 1 of Annex 1.

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

- Most other PANs remain as they were determined for 2025 which enables parents to have some historical benchmark by which to make informed decisions about their school preferences for 2026 admission
- The PANs provide for the sufficiency of places at community and voluntary controlled schools
- The Education Place Planning team supports the PANs
- Each community and voluntary controlled school were given the opportunity to comment on the proposed PAN if they wished

### **Recommendation 5**

That all other aspects of Surrey's admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for September 2026, for which no change has been consulted on, are agreed as set out in Annex 1 and its appendices.

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

- The local authority has a duty to determine the admission arrangements for 2026 for all community and voluntary controlled schools by 28 February 2025
- The admission arrangements are working well
- The arrangements enable the majority of pupils to attend a local school and in doing so reduce travel and support Surrey's sustainability policies
- The arrangements are compliant with the School Admissions Code
- Section 20 of Annex 1 has been amended to remove reference to an offer of a place being withdrawn 'even if the child has already started at the school'. This is because registered pupils may only be removed from roll in the limited circumstances set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, as amended.
- Section 21 of Annex 1 has been updated to include the following wording in relation to travel assistance, which ensures it reflects the recent changes to Surrey's travel assistance policy:

'To be considered for travel assistance to a school that is not your nearest, you will normally be required to demonstrate that you have applied for and been refused a place at any nearer schools....'

## Recommendation 6

That Surrey's Relevant Area is agreed as set out in Annex 4.

### Reasons for Recommendation

- The local authority is required by law to define the Relevant Area, within which admission authorities must consult with other schools on their admission arrangements
- The Relevant Area must be consulted upon and agreed every two years even if no changes are proposed
- Setting a Relevant Area ensures that any schools who might be affected by changes to the admission arrangements for other local schools will be made aware of those changes
- No change has been made to Surrey's Relevant Area since it was last determined in February 2023

## REPORTS FOR INFORMATION / DISCUSSION

### At its meeting on 17 December 2024 Cabinet considered:

#### C. SURREY SCHOOLS AND EARLY YEARS FUNDING 2025-26

This report set out the recommended funding formula principles for Surrey mainstream schools and early years providers in 2025/26 and asks for Cabinet to approve the recommendations in the report.

#### It was **AGREED**:

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 2024<sup>3</sup>. 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.

**D. CLIMATE CHANGE PROGRESS ASSESSMENT 2023/4**

This report set 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.

**It was AGREED:**

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.

**E. ANNUAL PROCUREMENT FORWARD PLAN FY2025/26**

Cabinet was asked to approve the annual procurement forward plan (APFP) for 2025/26.

**It was AGREED:**

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.

**At its Extraordinary meeting on 8 January 2025 Cabinet considered:**

**F. RESPONSE TO THE ENGLISH DEVOLUTION WHITE PAPER**

This report outlines the opportunities arising from the English Devolution White Paper published on 16 December 2024, and the requirements on Surrey County Council set out in a letter sent to the Leader of the Council from the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution on the same day.

**The Cabinet:**

1. Agreed that the Leader should respond to the Government as outlined in the letter set out in Annex 2, as amended below:

“A postponement of the county elections will also allow time to give consideration in any business case to how we can best manage the unique, significant financial risk of the level of debt currently held across the Surrey local government footprint. Any proposals for local government reorganisation will need to adequately consider how to ensure the sustainable operation of any new authority/ies ~~in the absence of exceptional financial support from Government or a level of write off~~ **and we will request the government to write off those debts.**”

## **Reasons for decisions:**

The English Devolution White Paper presents an important opportunity for Surrey County Council to bring more expansive and flexible devolved powers and funding into the county for the benefit of residents. As such it is recommended that Cabinet agrees to respond to the Minister's letter (Annex 1) requesting the postponement of the 2025 County Council elections to allow the Surrey County Council Leader time to work with district and borough Leaders to develop a proposal for local government reform that will unlock the benefits of further devolution for Surrey.

The function of deciding whether and how to respond to the Minister's letter of 16 December 2024 is an executive function as set out in the Constitution under Responsibility for Executive Functions (Part 3), the Cabinet has the power to provide formal response to any Government White Paper "...likely to lead to policy changes or have impact upon service not otherwise delegated to officers" (Scheme of Delegation 8.2 (L)).

## **At its meeting on 28 January 2025 Cabinet considered:**

### **G. REFERRAL OF COUNTY COUNCIL MOTION**

At the County Council meeting on 10 December 2024, Councillor Liz Townsend moved a motion under Standing Order 11. The motion was seconded by Councillor Paul Follows. Under Standing Order 12.3, Councillor Clare Curran, the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning moved a proposal that the motion be referred to the Cabinet for more detailed consideration. The proposal to refer the motion was put to the vote and received support. It was agreed for the motion to be considered at the 28 January 2025 Cabinet meeting. The motion was proposed and seconded at the meeting and set out the following resolution:

#### **This Council resolves to call on the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning to commit to:**

- I. Provide the opportunity for parent/carers of children with additional needs to be involved in the panel decision process with a clearly defined role.
- II. Provide the opportunity for the child or young person with additional needs to be involved in the panel decision process with a clearly defined role.
- III. Ensure the relevant case officer is automatically invited to attend panel decision meetings.

Point I. of the motion was put to the vote with 10 Members voting against and 0 Members voting For.

Point II. of the motion was put to the vote with 10 Members voting against and 0 Members voting For.

Point III. of the motion was put to the vote and was carried.

Therefore, it was RESOLVED that:



## **The Cabinet agreed to:**

- III. Ensure the relevant case officer is automatically invited to attend panel decision meetings.

## **H. COMMUNITY RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (CRMP) 2025-2030**

Cabinet was asked to approve the CRMP for 2025-2030 which will replace the current strategic plan known as the Making Surrey Safer Plan (MSSP) (2020-2024). All Fire and Rescue Authorities are required (under the Fire and Rescue National Framework 2018) to produce a CRMP of a minimum three-year duration.

### **It was AGREED:**

1. That Cabinet approves the CRMP for 2025-2030, ensuring that SFRS can begin implementing the service-wide strategy from April 2025 in a staged approach.

### **Reasons for decisions:**

- SFRS has consulted both its staff and the public on the seven CRMP proposals, details of which were shared with them via a thorough communications and engagement campaign.
- The plans set out how the service will prevent, protect and respond to emergencies during 2025-2030, aligning resources to the right locations, ensuring vital equipment is appropriate and effective, and supporting the wider health and wellbeing agenda.
- The feedback gained during this consultation has shown that there is a majority positive 'approval rating' for the six proposals requiring an agreement/disagreement level, ranging between 62% to 76%. The analysis report (**annex 3**) was created by Surrey County Council's (SCC) Research Intelligence Unit (RIU) following the consultation period.
- An audit of SFRS's CRP (**annex 2**) has been conducted by Nottingham Trent University (NTU) to ensure accuracy and robustness. NTU are leaders in public research who led on the National Fire Chiefs Council's (NFCC) National Risk Methodologies, reviewed the data and evidence used to develop the CRMP's strategic aims and proposals. They confirmed that "...Surrey FRS has undertaken a robust process to develop the CRMP for Surrey".

## **I. EVERYDAY LIVING OPPORTUNITIES**

Cabinet was asked to approve the commissioning and procurement strategy for supporting everyday living for adults and young people in transition with eligible needs, through a Light Touch Regime procurement process.

### **It was AGREED:**

1. That Cabinet approves the commissioning strategy for supporting everyday living for adults and young people in transition with eligible needs, through a Light Touch

Regime procurement process under The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or the Procurement Act 2023, as appropriate.

2. That Cabinet approves that the ELO tender be commenced in quarter 4 of financial year 2024/25.
3. That Cabinet approves delegated authority to the Executive Director, Adults, Wellbeing and Health Partnerships in consultation with the Cabinet Member of Adult Social Care. for awarding the contract/s.
4. That Cabinet notes the outcome of the formal consultation on the AHWP Travel Policy and to approve and agree to publish the AWHP Travel Policy as an integral document that supports the aims and desired outcomes of the Everyday Living Opportunities Tender.

#### **Reasons for Decisions:**

Most community services are currently commissioned via individual spot contracts, which offer a limited overview of equity, quality or price. With population growth, an ageing population, greater numbers living with disability, and financial constraints, more cost-effective approaches to procuring high quality support for people with eligible needs must be established.

The Travel Policy is an important enabler for this work, playing a central role in facilitating increased independent travel and supporting people who draw on services (and their families) to understand eligibility criteria and independently consider their travel options when accessing support with everyday living. The policy is an important tool for communicating with Surrey's residents.

#### **J. TECHNOLOGY ENABLED CARE AND HOMES (TECH)**

Cabinet approval was sought for the future delivery of the TECH strategic approach and long-term delivery plans.

#### **It was AGREED:**

1. That Cabinet notes progress made to date to review current pilot technologies.
2. That Cabinet notes benchmarking and profiling of our service, including our need to improve outcomes tracking and benefits realisation approaches.
3. That Cabinet agrees our strategic ambition for developing technology enabled care and homes (TECH).
4. That Cabinet approves our commissioning and procurement approach
5. That Cabinet approves our priority areas and phasing of technology roll out to support staff with culture growth and technology adoption.
6. That Cabinet agrees the financial investment required for first 2 years of delivery.
7. That Cabinet notes the intention to return to Cabinet in 2026 to set out 5 to 10-year strategic delivery plan and strategy.

#### **Reasons for Decisions:**

Whilst benefits have already been achieved through our current TECH offer in Surrey, there is considerable opportunity for greater growth and benefits realisation. This paper

sets out a more ambitious delivery model with clear commissioning and procurement approaches that maximise opportunity and reduce risk to the Council.

Our recent review of the current offer has highlighted some key focus areas. We must improve our internal processes and enable easier identification of TECH solutions. We must also improve our systems and outcomes tracking if we are to be able to demonstrate TECH benefits more quickly and clearly.

Our strategic ambition is to embed TECH as a core part of social care delivery. By demonstrating outcomes more clearly, we will be better placed to identify future investment from partners to grow our offer and align with other TECH, AI and digital programmes. We will also develop a strong self-funder and front door offer for residents.

With no new funding we must target our core delivery of TECH to the areas of highest need and greatest impact. Prioritisation will therefore be based upon corporate transformation, demand management and high-cost areas.

Prioritisation is also key to ensuring staff can be supported to embed the culture growth required to see TECH succeed. Members shared that they felt TECH would fail if it was to be used everywhere, with all staff from the start. A recent review demonstrated staff knowledge and confidence was generally low across the organisation and varied considerably from team to team across Surrey. Positively, the majority of staff spoken to so far seem excited about TECH and want to engage so we must use this interest to progress.

The Contract Management Advisory Service (CMAS) were asked to support the TECH team to assess the options for the provision of TECH in Surrey. Commissioning, operations, IT&D, finance and the TECH team were involved in the process. Three options, detailed later in this paper, were explored with one preferred and recommended to help further our ambition.

Given the above we intend to outsource a core commissioned service for a minimum of two years. This will allow us to gather more robust data and evidence to develop a better offer for TECH with greater evidence of staff learning and engagement. The recommendation for a longer-term strategy is based upon national comparators and benefits realisation timeframes.

#### **K. QUARTERLY REPORT ON DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER SPECIAL URGENCY ARRANGEMENTS: 3 December 2024 – 31 January 2025**

The Cabinet is required under the Constitution to report to Council on a quarterly basis the details of decisions taken by the Cabinet and Cabinet Members under the special urgency arrangements set out in Standing Order 57 of the Constitution. This occurs where a decision is required on a matter that is not contained within the Leader's Forward Plan (Notice of Decisions), nor available 5 clear days before the meeting. Where a decision on such matters could not reasonably be delayed, the agreement of the Chairman of the appropriate Select Committee, or in his/her absence the Chairman of the Council, must be sought to enable the decision to be made.

***The Cabinet RECOMMENDS that the County Council notes that there has been ONE urgent decision since the last Cabinet report to Council.***

1. Response To The English Devolution White Paper: Extraordinary Cabinet, 8 January 2025

**Tim Oliver OBE, Leader of the Council  
31 January 2025**