

**MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL****TUESDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2025****QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED UNDER THE PROVISIONS  
OF STANDING ORDER 10.1****MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND  
ECONOMIC GROWTH****1. TIM HALL (LEATHERHEAD AND FETCHAM EAST) TO ASK:**

Could the Cabinet Member please explain the new criteria and categories for supporting schools by the NSL Parking Wardens?

Can he list which Schools fall into which category?

**RESPONSE:**

Every day during term time, many schools across the country experience issues with inconsiderate parking in the surrounding area. With a twice-daily influx of vehicles converging in locations where parking capacity is usually insufficient, it is inevitable that problems will persist.

There are 460 schools in Surrey, and we receive many complaints regarding parking, and requests for more enforcement.

Having a visible Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) outside of a school will generally have a positive impact on parking behaviours, however expectation levels for preventing parking issues need to be realistic.

Officers can and will ask parents to move on from double yellow lines when considered necessary, but there are limits on issuing Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) due to grace periods and loading/unloading activity.

Driveway blocking is also difficult to enforce as residents can park in front of their own drop kerb or give permission to someone else. The process for enforcing requires a resident to report the problem to the parking team as the event occurs. Officers are unable to simply ticket this type of parent parking on sight. CEOs can enforce where there are dropped kerbs that are part of an official crossing point.

Realistically, most enforcement can only be carried out on zig zag school keep clear markings.

In order to help ensure that our available enforcement resources are being directed to schools that not only had the most need, but also where an officer's presence

would have a positive impact, an assessment of all the schools around the county was completed last year.

NSL officers (our parking enforcement supplier) were tasked with assessing all the 460 schools in the county during both morning and afternoon school runs. They were instructed to report on the restrictions present, the amount and type of illegal parking witnessed, as well as noting the way parents were legally parking in the area to provide an overview of each site. A priority rating was given as follows:

- High priority – higher frequency of parking on zig zags - which is the most dangerous situation as it blocks sightlines at the busiest location at a school. These schools are visited once per week.
- Priority - schools that reported medium to high levels of other types of offences, i.e. parking on resident driveways, double and single yellow line parking. Visits are scheduled every three weeks.
- Low priority - where low levels of these offences being reported, schools are placed on a rotational list for enforcement once every half term.
- All schools that had minimal or no issues would be left off the enforcement list entirely.

The total number of schools countywide that are assessed as needing enforcement is as follows:

High Priority	70
Priority	72
Rotational	27
Under Review	3

Based on the number of enforcement officers available and other enforcement priorities, officers can be deployed to enforce about 18 to 20 schools per day.

We were able to discuss this project with Members at the Highways Autumn briefings held during October - November last year and share the initial assessment results, where completed. Having considered initial feedback from Members, we have now updated the enforcement priority assessments and will be sending out to Members in early February and will take further feedback as this policy is developed. At the next Highways Engagement session, councillors will be taken through the reports for their area.

It is worth highlighting that our existing Safety Outside Schools Policy and School Travel Plans have been in place for several years and aim to help reduce the risk of collisions and to make the road environment feel safer and encourage more people to consider walking or cycling to and from school.

Summary:

- Sending officers to locations where they have no powers to issue PCNs would have a very limited impact over time.
- We cannot solve the problems of school parking solely through enforcement.

- On the basis that when an officer is present the risk of accidents will be reduced, and we are therefore targeting those schools where parking on zig zags was the highest, this approach should have the greatest impact for improving safety.
- Our Safety Outside of Schools Policy runs alongside our enforcement activity and 'safety audits' of school run activity are carried out as needed with recommendations made and implemented where identified.

**NATALIE BRAMHALL, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY, WASTE AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**2. FIONA DAVIDSON (GUILDFORD SOUTH-EAST) TO ASK:**

In the light of the upcoming Local Government Reorganisation can the Cabinet Member advise if Surrey County Council has an up-to-date and documented strategy and policy on Community Asset Transfer, as set out in the Localism Act 2011?

If this does not already exist, can the Cabinet Member please:

- Advise if and when one is to be drafted and implemented?
- Or if not, why not?

Further, can the Cabinet Member:

- Provide a list of those Council assets that have been transferred under the Community Asset Transfer legislation during the lifetime of this current Council?
- Confirm whether there is a guide to assets that the Council considers could be transferred to local community groups and Parish Councils?

Does the Cabinet Member agree with me that - assuming SCC ceases to exist in its current form - leaving important and valued local community assets in the hands of local residents and voluntary groups who care about them would be a fitting legacy for this Council?

**RESPONSE:**

At present, Surrey County Council (SCC) does not have a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) scheme, and no assets have been transferred in the lifetime of this Council.

Any decision to direct officers to draft and implement a CAT policy would need to come via Cabinet. SCC's property portfolio is largely of an operational nature, for example fire stations, children's homes etc. Therefore, it carries few assets that could be considered for the sort of asset transfer a CAT scheme would envisage, for example Community Centres, which are almost entirely based within the District and Borough Councils.

For properties that are no longer required operationally or commercially by SCC, officers within Land and Property will review the property for disposal, including

marketing as necessary. Officers will then make a recommendation to Cabinet or the Cabinet Member, as appropriate. Officers are obligated under s123 rules to seek to obtain best value for sites to be disposed, but the ultimate decision will be for the Cabinet Member, or Cabinet to make.

**NATALIE BRAMHALL, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY, WASTE AND INFRASTRUCTURE / CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING**

**3. CHRIS TOWNSEND (ASHTEAD) TO ASK:**

In 2020, Surrey County Council (SCC) entered into arrangements with a number of voluntary, charitable and community organisations to provide universal open access youth work when Surrey stepped away from directly delivering this service. The arrangements included providing 5-year leases to SCC owned buildings based on a Service Level Agreement. A number of organisations are now concerned that they do not know what SCC is planning when the leases expire, which could be imminent.

Given the excellent work done by many of these groups and the important preventative nature of universal youth work can the Cabinet Member please provide Members with a list of SCC-owned buildings which have been classified as youth work centres?

Can the Cabinet Member further confirm:

- Which of these buildings are *currently* being used for youth work?
- Which organisation has a lease for each building?
- Based on SCC's records, when will each lease end?
- Which other organisation(s) are able to use these buildings – in addition to the lessee?
- What is the *current* contractual status of each of these buildings?

**RESPONSE:**

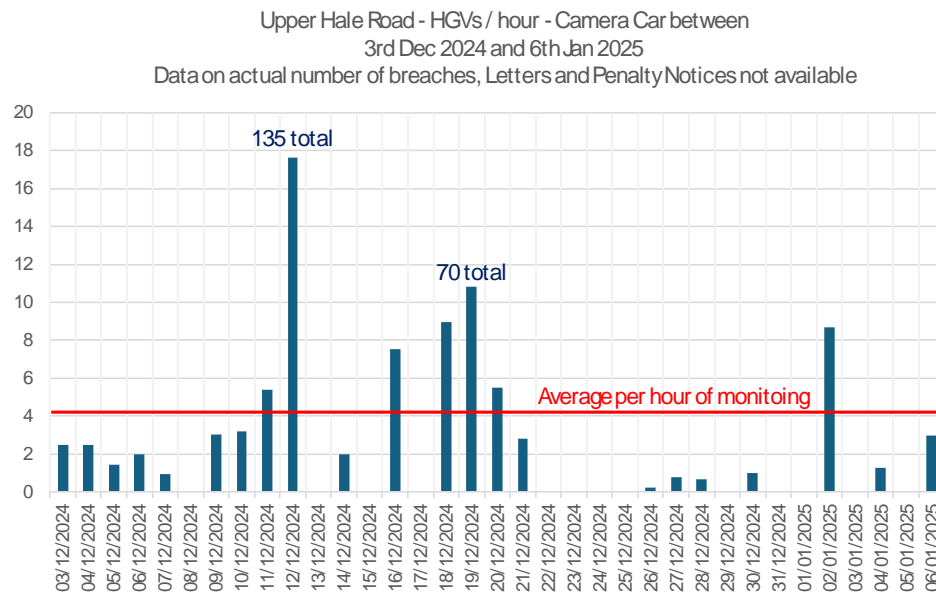
The Service are currently undertaking meetings with the Youth Centre providers and until these sessions have been concluded we are unable to share information with regards to the future management of these sites. We aim to have this process completed by the end of Q1 2025 and will advise as required.

**MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

**4. CATHERINE POWELL (FARNHAM NORTH) TO ASK:**

As the Cabinet Member is aware, the number of breaches of the ban on the Upper Hale Road (which is a cut through between the M3 and the A31) remains high with all the associated risks particularly for pedestrians in this densely populated area with extremely poor pavements.

The peak from the most recent set of data I have received was 135 HGVs recorded on a single school day (12 December 2024) during the monitoring period, this equates to 18 per hour the Upper Hale Road using the mobile camera, see graph below. I do not yet have data on how many were determined to be breaches, how many letters or Penalty notices were issued.



Please can the Cabinet Member advise:

- a) How many PCNs and warning letters for breaches of HGV bans have been issued since 15 September 2024 across Surrey?
- b) How many breaches a day would make the installation of a fixed camera a more cost-effective option than a mobile camera, particularly as the staffing costs for a mobile camera must be higher?
- c) Whether installing several camera posts at hot spots and moving a fixed camera around has been evaluated?
- d) Whether the existing CCTV cameras in the Town Centre could be used to support enforcement on the HGV ban on Castle Street before the Town Centre works start?

Please note that there is also a concern that with the Farnham Infrastructure Programme Town Centre works narrowing roads to widened pavements and creating additional two-way sections that continuing to breach the ban on Castle Street could just cause gridlock and therefore increasing the level of compliance has become an imperative.

- e) Whether or not given the number of recorded breaches continuing to be high, which are according to residents (many of whom have houses less than 5 m from the road) even worse at night, when the camera car does not visit and the risks to pedestrians are potentially higher as they are not as visible, the Cabinet Member will consider:

- Reinstating the ability for residents to report breaches via [HGV Watch - Surrey County Council](#), as currently the Upper Hale Road, Folly Hill, Castle Hill and Castle Street have been removed?
- Providing an option for residents to fund a fixed camera initially with any profits in the long term, once operating costs have been addressed, being donated to a local charity or once compliance has significantly improved there could be an option to move the camera to somewhere else, either in the Town or elsewhere?

**RESPONSE:**

- a) There have been 14 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) and 324 warning notices/letters issued since September across Surrey for HGV contraventions of weight restrictions. The 14 PCNs were all issued at the HGV restriction in Upper Hale and are typically for a 'second offence' after a warning letter has been sent.
- b) Traffic calming measures (road tables) and a 20mph speed limit were implemented on the Upper Hale Road late last year. We are also planning to improve the HGV restriction advance warning signs along the A287 through Hampshire this spring. The camera car will also be deployed to the area as frequently as possible over coming months. We have also recently contacted sat nav companies that provide specialist HGV navigation systems (Garmin & TomTom) to ensure that they have data concerning the HGV restriction in Upper Hale to apply to their navigation and routing software.

The combination of these factors should in time reduce the number of HGVs using the A3106/A287 and we will monitor this through the camera enforcement vehicle. If there has been no positive change in the number of HGVs then we could look at static cameras as an alternative, however as of now we have not calculated the set number of PCNs per day that would determine what would be the most cost effective solution. The aim is to improve compliance and reduce PCNs issued, which would in turn make a fixed camera solution more costly to operate as income reduces.

- c) This has not been fully evaluated yet for the reasons described above, however we will start preparing for this eventuality should it become necessary.
- d) For moving traffic enforcement, cameras have to be specifically type approved by the Vehicle Certification Agency under the Civil Enforcement of Road Traffic Contraventions: Certification of Approved Devices, 2022 and would also need to be compatible with our contractors back office software solutions.
- e) We are not reinstating the HGV Watch reporting scheme in Farnham at this time, as the initiative was successful in justifying the need for camera enforcement which is now taking place. HGV watch scheme officer

resources are currently prioritised for other new HGV watch sites around the county.

Contributions towards the cost of setting up traffic enforcement cameras would be considered, however the Council could only install cameras where they were justified (based on evidence/surveys to justify their use). If there was any surplus income generated in the operation of camera enforcement it must be used in accordance with the Traffic Management Act 2004 and S55 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, which generally stipulate it be spent on work associated with highways and transportation or environmental schemes.

**TIM OLIVER OBE, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**5. EBER KINGTON (EWELL COURT, AURIOL & CUDDINGTON) TO ASK:**

Your decision to respond to the Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution in support of his plans for unitary councils and, as an outcome, the abolition of SCC has been well publicised both inside and outside of the County Council.

Whilst engaging with Boroughs and Districts and determining geographical boundaries and the development of council structures are all key elements of the process, how the Council engages with SCC's current staff, keep them updated, respond to the inevitable questions and make any changes to our current recruitment and retention policies in the lead up to any dissolution of the Council will, for example, all need to be part of the People and Change Directorate thinking and action planning now.

I recently requested that the People, Performance and Development Committee (PPDC) on 18 February 2025 receive a short briefing item on these issues so that Members can understand what is already in place, what work is envisaged and enable us to support the People and Change Directorate in undertaking its work. But this was refused.

Enabling PPDC Members to understand, at an early stage, the range of issues that need addressing, but also to ask questions to clarify timescales, etc. is a key part of our role in the constructive scrutiny and review of staffing issues, and refusing the request when change is very much on the Council's agenda is a missed opportunity.

Will you please review, and change, your decision?

**RESPONSE:**

We cannot do anything meaningful on staffing issues arising from Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution until we know if the election has been delayed and until we have settled on the Mayoral footprint and the number of unitary councils in Surrey. This is an operational issue for the Head of Paid Service to manage, with advice from the Director of People and Change, and will require sensitive handling

as it relates to our current workforce. Plans are already in place to ensure our staff are kept informed once the position for Surrey is confirmed.

**MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

**6. JOANNE SEXTON (ASHFORD) TO ASK:**

On 17 January, the Surrey Live website reported that Surrey will be the first county in the country to 'get rid of manual inspections in favour of solely using video and AI technology to record potholes and schedule repairs. This comes as part of a nearly £300 million fund allocated to improve the condition of our county's roads and pavements by 2028'.

Elsewhere in the country, the Future of Roads Minister, Lilian Greenwood, marked National Pothole Day (15 January 2025), with a visit to the JCB Factory outside Derby where she operated JCB's 'pothole pro', a machine that can fix a pothole in 8 minutes at a cost of around £30. The 'pothole pro' is now used by 20 local authorities.

At the Council meeting on 6 February 2024, I asked the Cabinet Member whether Surrey would be making use of this groundbreaking technology, and he noted that:

*'There was a detailed report and he would check with the Highways Laboratory regarding whether it could be shared with Members. The JCB Pothole Pro was found to be more suited to wider surfacing repairs and that had not achieved better results than existing machinery, there were concerns around the compacting of the material and need for additional transportation to move it across Surrey'.*

The minutes of Council, 6 February 2024 can be accessed here: [\(Public Pack\)Minutes Document for Council, 06/02/2024 10:00](#)

In the light of the widespread take-up of this technology, and the evident enthusiasm of the minister, can the Cabinet Member confirm:

- a) Why a decision was taken not to use any of the £300 million fund to introduce this technology?
- b) Whether this decision will be revisited?

**RESPONSE:**

The significant investments that Surrey County Council is committing to resurfacing our roads and pavements is key to ensuring a resilient network which will mean less potholes forming in the first place and this is primarily where we are targeting our funding. This has resulted in 100 miles of roads and 30 miles of pavements being resurfaced between April and December 2024 alone.

While a certain level of potholes on the network is inevitable, our investments over recent years have reduced the number of reports we are receiving about potholes by 40% while the number of potholes repaired has increased by 10% due to changes to



our processes such as repairing multiple potholes in the road that are close together as one large resilient patch.

I am confident that our highways service reviews the processes and technology available for all types of highway operations to ensure that we are spending our funding in a way that provides best value for money and efficient and effective operations.

**CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING**

**7. ROBERT EVANS OBE (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK:**

The Government is introducing a new Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.

Has Surrey considered how this will impact the county and what changes to current practices will it necessitate?

**RESPONSE:**

The new Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, which is currently subject to debate in Parliament, contains wide-ranging proposals covering safeguarding and social care, local authorities' powers related to education, responsibilities of schools, teacher pay and conditions, and private sector regulation. The Government's policy summary is available for a comprehensive overview of the Bill:

[Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill - policy summary notes.](#)

Council officers undertook a thorough review of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill as soon as it was published. Key points of particular relevance that we noted are:

- Additional powers for local authorities over school admissions and more ability to intervene in failing schools through a greater set of flexible interventions beyond forced academisation.
- In some circumstances, a local authority will be able to direct a school to admit a child under different categories, such as 'previously looked after children'.
- New requirements on all state funded schools, including academies, to offer a national curriculum.
- All teachers in state schools need to be working towards qualified teacher status by September 2026.
- New powers to local authorities to open all types of schools and to manage admissions processes with our academies from 2026.
- Additional powers for a local authority to issue school attendance orders compelling parents to register their child at a named school if they are not considered to be receiving a suitable education. This will ensure schools can monitor the safety of the child and goes beyond the current checks and options to fine parents in relation to unauthorised absence that are currently in place.
- Additional powers for local authorities for school place planning in partnership with academies.

- A requirement for a local authority to keep a compulsory register of children who are not in school and there will be a single unique identifier for every child.
- Where a child is electively home educated, a local authority will be able to intervene if there are concerns about the education they are receiving. Also, a family would need local authority consent before withdrawing from school any child subject to a child protection plan to be home educated.
- Additional investment in family help services.
- An expectation that all local authorities will cooperate more closely with other local authorities and all other agencies working with children to strengthen multi-agency child protection arrangements.
- Financial oversight and proposed profit caps for non-local authority registered children's residential home providers to prevent profiteering in the social care sector.
- Further requirements on support for children who are in kinship care, including extending the Virtual School role.
- Creation of regional care co-operatives to improve commissioning of care placements.
- Regulating the use of agency workers in children's social care.
- Free breakfast clubs and limits to costs of school uniforms.

The Council is well placed to meet the requirements of the Bill, and to take advantages of the new powers and opportunities it provides us to strengthen safeguarding and the education of children. Many of the measures will make it easier for us to deliver the improvements for children and families we have already been making.

For instance, we have long lobbied Government for the requirement to register all children who are home educated as we recognise that this will enable all children not in school to be better safeguarded. We already maintain a list of some children who are home educated when notified by a school, however this requirement would ensure no child is missed. We welcome the extra powers to oversee the quality of home education and intervene where appropriate. We have also already been prioritising school attendance and supporting schools with their enhanced duties.

We will be able to have more transparency and opportunities to place in academies and we will be more able to ensure that there are the right number of school places through new powers to work together with academies for planning for future school places.

The Bill will provide consistency to the quality of teaching and to the curriculum and we are aware that we will need to support education settings through these changes.

The proposed control of private care providers profiteering on vulnerable children is welcome as the costs of residential placements for this authority are significant and has placed a great strain on the directorate's budget. Any moderation of these costs would be positive and may have an added benefit of improving the sufficiency of residential places in the county, enabling more children to stay close to home. Some however have identified the risk that this financial oversight may affect market stability and the loss of settings. The commissioning team does already work closely

with private providers of residential care settings across Surrey to drive up standards and availability of places and will continue to do so.

The Bill will enhance transparency and accountability for children who are in kinship care. This is already an area that the corporate parenting teams have been working to develop and will continue to follow the work that is being done in the Government's pilot areas to introduce a new model of practice. Our Virtual School has extended its role already to all children with a social worker, and is well-placed to support those in kinship care.

The Council is already working in regional arrangements, and the introduction of regional care co-operatives to improve the commissioning of care placements will build on our current practice. Equally we welcome the strengthened requirement for partners to work with social care on child protection, as this will improve multi-agency information sharing and practice.

The implications of some elements of the Bill for the Council and our residents are not yet clear, for instance the extra investment in family help services and free breakfast clubs. Until the Bill passes into law, the relevant teams in the directorate will continue to plan for these changes and will be working closely with schools and education settings and other partners. We know that we will need to work closely with other local authorities to implement these changes and to support this we will need to develop our information sharing protocols.

The directorate will continue to engage closely with the Department for Education as the Bill makes its way through Parliament and will be involved in the discussions about this Council's readiness for implementation of all the proposed changes.

## **MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

### **8. CATHERINE BAART (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK:**

When planning applications are received for unconventional methods of oil or mineral extraction, such as was used at Horse Hill and is proposed for Brockham, how do planning officers ensure all the implications of these unconventional methods of extraction are fully understood in order to recommend a planning decision?

#### **RESPONSE:**

There are reserves of oil and gas in the southern parts of Surrey which have been exploited by conventional means for many decades. The activities at Horse Hill, now ceased, and those proposed at Brockham, a long-standing oil production site, are considered to be conventional. There is currently a national moratorium on unconventional extraction, also known as fracking.

The focus of the planning system is on whether a proposal is an acceptable use of the land in question. The issuing of any permit to drill, health and safety issues or emissions themselves are subject to the approval of the other regulators including

the Environment Agency, the Health and Safety Executive and the North Sea Transition Authority.

**MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

**9. JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:**

In Surrey we have hydrogen buses and electric buses. Please provide a comparison of the greenhouse gas emissions for each type of fuel, considering the complete supply chain for the hydrogen and electricity currently being used. Is there a view on whether both types of bus will continue to be purchased in future?

**RESPONSE:**

In Surrey, there is a need for both hydrogen and electric zero emission buses.

As an example, in the East of Surrey, hydrogen power is the preferred option for local bus operator Metrobus who have an expanding fleet of hydrogen buses and a hydrogen fueling facility at their depot. Their routes have a daily range of up to 330 miles for each bus. This is achievable with a hydrogen fuel cell bus, but not with an equivalent battery electric bus, which would require in-service charging. That is both impractical and more costly, noting that the purchase cost of a hydrogen bus is only marginally more than a battery electric bus.

The hydrogen buses project with Metrobus comprises 54 buses. In addition, Stagecoach is operating 9 battery electric buses in Surrey, and there are another 29 battery electric buses on order across several Surrey bus operators, with more to follow. We have also introduced electric minibuses in partnership with the Community Transport sector, alongside those delivering our excellent Surrey Connect Digital Demand Responsive Transport service.

Working with our bus operators we will continue to invest together in zero emission electric and hydrogen buses to deliver the right solution. The decision on the fuel type and fuel sourcing for zero emission buses is driven by the operational and commercial requirements of individual bus operators. It is not specified by this Council.

The Council does not hold sufficient information to carry out a comparative greenhouse gas analysis of the fuel supplied to Metrobus who operate hydrogen fuel cell buses. However, we note that the UK's Hydrogen Strategy recognises that low carbon hydrogen could play an important complementary and enabling role alongside clean electricity, including for use in long-distance and heavy-duty transport.

**MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

**10. ASHLEY TILLING (WALTON SOUTH & OATLANDS) TO ASK:**

The revised capital programme, [Annex C - Capital Programme 202526 - 202930.pdf](#), shows that there is £0.6 million allocated for school road safety schemes.

The £3 million allocated to Road Safety Outside Schools (RSOS) over the last three years has been spent but many important school safety schemes remain to be funded. Given the increase in costs, how will £0.6 million be sufficient to pay for the essential safety projects currently awaiting funds?

**RESPONSE:**

Over the last three years we have invested £3 million to improve road safety outside schools. This investment has been targeted where there were concerns over the safety of children travelling to and from school, and where anti-social driving, parking, congestion and air quality have been most acute. The improvements have been supported by the promotion of School Travel Plans and road safety training at the same schools, including our award-winning Feetfirst pedestrian training and our Bikeability cycling training. This joined-up approach has been delivered in partnership with schools, securing positive road safety outcomes and enhanced local communities.

Looking forward, I am pleased to advise that the proposed capital programme, as set out in Annex C to the Budget - item 5, shows an additional investment of a further £2 million, in addition to the remaining £0.5 million from the original programme, across the financial term to deliver even more road safety outside school improvements in the coming years. This will be augmented by other funding, for example, from developers and from Community Infrastructure Levies. This further investment will start in 2025/26 alongside the completion of schemes from the initial programme where construction is planned to take place during the school holidays, thus minimising disruption.

I would add that all Members can nominate road safety outside school schemes in their own division using funding from the Local Highway Schemes budget, should they wish to do so.

**MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

**11. LANCE SPENCER (GOLDSWORTH EAST AND HORSELL VILLAGE) TO ASK:**

In several areas across Surrey, the combination of major highway activities coincides with significant disruptions to nearby rail infrastructure. To what extent does the Council coordinate with Network Rail to ensure the implementation of major highways projects does not coincide with significant, planned disruption on the rail

network? Are there ways in which this communication could be improved to reduce instances of severe traffic congestion?

**RESPONSE:**

As part of fulfilling our 'Network Management Duty' under the Traffic Management Act 2004 Surrey Officers liaise with both Network Rail and the Train Operating Companies (TOCs) across Surrey, endeavouring to best coordinate major highway schemes around known rail service suspensions. However, it is recognised that this engagement has not always sufficiently identified clashes and locally rail replacement bus services have encountered difficulties with works planned on their routes on the highway network, and more strategically there have been some instances of major schemes conflicting with rail service suspensions.

Surrey officers have also encouraged National Highways colleagues delivering the M25 J10 major scheme to specifically ensure direct coordination with Network Rail and TOCs, over and above existing National Highways engagement processes with the TOCs.

To improve the situation, Surrey officers are now proactively receiving programmes from the majority of TOCs and are in discussions with remaining companies to establish in what format their programmes can be most helpfully presented.

Our engagement with Network Rail also continues. They are invited to our quarterly works coordination meetings and recent discussions have been held on how their information already shared with internal stakeholders can be best presented to a wider operational stakeholder group.

**MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

**12. GEORGE POTTER (GUILDFORD EAST) TO ASK:**

How much revenue and capital has been spent on active travel schemes across Surrey since the adoption of Local Transport Plan (LTP4) in July 2022, and what percentage does this amount to of the respective revenue and capital budgets for highways and transport overall?

**RESPONSE:**

Since the adoption of the Local Transport Plan (LTP4) in July 2022, this authority has delivered £662,119 of revenue and £3,871,654 of capital improvements from grant funds that have been provided to the county by Active Travel England (ATE). The total capital and revenue ATE grant allocations from 2022 to date are £14,808,337 and plans are in place to deliver further improvements with the remaining balance. This ATE grant delivery represents approximately 1% of the total Highways and Transport budget.

However, this is not the only investment the county has made in this crucial area and priority. Significant additional funding has been allocated to the countywide

“Integrated Transport Schemes” programme, road safety programmes and training, speed management, and general highway maintenance works, all of which contribute to the overarching objectives. The majority of activities undertaken by the service, to some extent, support the active travel goals outlined in the Local Transport Plan.

**CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING**

**13. LIZ TOWNSEND (CRANLEIGH & EWHURST) TO ASK:**

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning mentioned in the Cabinet meeting on 28 January that Task and Finish Groups had already started looking into the SEND panel process. Parents have contacted me since this meeting querying amongst other things, the feedback from these groups. The cabinet member said that feedback had already been captured from parents and young people and that “they don’t want to be in the decisions or the meetings”.

Please could the Cabinet Member expand on this statement and explain the following:

- a) Which groups were involved and the number of group members?
- b) What decisions and meetings the feedback was referring to?
- c) When was this feedback gathered?
- d) How was this feedback gathered – verbal/written/other?
- e) What was the overall feedback from these groups on the current panel process?

**RESPONSE:**

- a) There is a task and finish group with members of the ATLAS (Accept, Teach, Listen, Access, Support) group. These are our youth participation representatives. Members of this group have experience of navigating education with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). The meeting with this group was via Zoom (this was their preferred way of working). The group has met once on this so far with further meetings to follow. The group has 28 members, 4 chose to participate in this initial meeting. Slides and the request for feedback from the meeting have been shared with the whole group, not limited to the members who attended.

The sessions with families have also taken place once so far, and there were two groups as part of this (one during the day and one in the evening). The sessions were arranged by Family Voice Surrey, and each group had 12 members (24 in total) booked into each session. The sessions were on Zoom at the request of Family Voice Surrey. A total of 9 families attended the meetings. Slides and the request for feedback from the meeting have been shared with the whole group, not limited to the members who attended.

- b) The groups are established to review:

- The initial application for assessment
  - the information gathered at the request to assess stage
  - how we can ensure that young people and their families voices are clear in the request for assessment process
  - the decision made to undertake assessment or not and how young people and families can be better supported to understand this decision
  - The specific role of young people and families in the decision-making process
- Request to issue an EHCP process
  - how we can ensure that young people and their families voices are clear in the request to issue process
  - the decision made to issue an EHCP or not, and how young people and families can be better supported to understand this decision
  - Where there is an agreement to issue an EHCP, the involvement of young people and their families in the development of the final EHCP
  - The specific role of young people and families in the decision-making process

The feedback from these meetings will continue to be used to shape proposals for change as part of the end-to-end review.

- c) This feedback was gathered from the ATLAS group meeting on 13 January 2025 and subsequent feedback.

The Family Voice Surrey Groups were on 8 January 2025 and subsequent feedback.

The next meetings are due to take place in the week commencing 10 February 2025.

- d) The feedback was taken in the meeting from views shared by participants (verbal and via a menti-meter to enable anonymous participation) and followed up with a Microsoft form to allow comments from those who could not attend but wanted to contribute, or for members who had additional comments to add after the meeting.
- e) Young people specifically fed back that they need to be spoken to directly about the decision being made, but that this should be via a trusted adult. The group were clear they did not want to attend a professional meeting made up of unfamiliar adults.

Parents and carers were asked “How can we ensure parents and carers are able to participate and express their view from the start [of the process].” They told us they wanted greater parental oversight of the paperwork submitted to the panel. They told us parents should be able to provide a statement to the panel. Parents wanted someone who was an expert and/or someone who knows their child to present the case at panel.



Parents wanted to know who was in attendance, rather than wanting to be there themselves. They want to be clear about who is making the decisions and how they are qualified to do so.

There was also a concern about what information is being taken into account when making a decision. Great emphasis seems to be placed on the forms and reports. Parents and carers would like to check the information and provide their own account to make sure decision-makers are fully informed.

The groups fed back that decisions and the reasons for them are not always fed back clearly. There was uncertainty about how the decisions relate to the law.

The overall feedback is that families and young people do not understand the meetings that take place, and who knows the specifics of their, or their child's needs. There was a request to be more involved in the wider decision making beyond the panel meeting including the development of a plan and the decision regarding the setting allocated. There was also a focus on the communication of a decision after it had been taken, at whichever decision point that was, and how this was shared; and that there was the opportunity to discuss the outcome, particularly where there is uncertainty.

Feedback to date has supported the findings from the wider End-to-End review, which seeks to develop a more consistent and transparent approach to this work. Part of this is ensuring clarity of roles in the process, so for young people and families, how and where they participate, who else is involved and why they are part of the process. What is also clear from the feedback is that there is a widespread misunderstanding of the role of the panel meetings in the decision-making process. Panel meetings are multi-agency discussions which support decision making. Decisions are taken by a specified Council officer under the scheme of delegation. The other function of panels is to enable the Council to fulfil the expectation of regular moderation of decisions as set out in the SEND Code of Practice to ensure that decisions taken about children and young people are consistent, sound, impartial, equitable and evidence based.

## **MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

### **14. ROBERT EVANS OBE (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK: (2<sup>nd</sup> Question)**

In the autumn budget £1.6 billion was allocated to local councils to maintain highways.

How much of this does Surrey anticipate receiving and what impact does the council think this will have on the number of potholes and the state of the county's roads?

**RESPONSE:**

Surrey County Council was allocated £32.434 million from the £1.6 billion allocated to local councils to maintain highways and other highway assets including bridges, drainage and traffic signals.

More than £300 million has been allocated to repairing and improving Surrey's roads and pavements over the period 2023 - 2028 with further funding allocated for the maintenance of other highway assets. The increased investment over this period has been well above the grant provided by government grants and this year alone, has enabled 100 miles of roads and 30 miles of pavements to be resurfaced from April to December 2024. This sustained investment is making our highway network more resilient and is reducing the number of potholes that develop.

The funding announced in the Autumn statement is approximately £3 million more than the funding assumed in the budget for 2025/26. Further announcements are awaited before the overall position can be understood.

**MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH****15. CATHERINE BAART (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK:  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Question)**

What Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and sanctions are available in relation to bus stop repairs? What can be done to improve repair response times?

**RESPONSE:**

Across Surrey there are around 6,000 bus stops. These range from relatively straightforward bus stops comprising a bus stop pole and flag, through to more comprehensive passenger provision of a bus stop pole, flag, bus shelter, timetable case and electronic real time passenger information (RTPI) display.

This Council is responsible for all bus stop poles in Surrey, except at the 500 bus stops owned, managed and maintained by London Buses. Day-to-day maintenance of County Council bus stops is carried out by a small team of inspectors, and if a bus stop pole is damaged and requires replacement this will be sourced through our approved contractors.

The 550 roadside RTPI displays are maintained by the County Council's contractor in line with the contract Service Level Agreement.

There are over 1,000 passenger shelters across Surrey. Some 300 of these are owned and maintained by the County Council. The remainder have been installed by borough or district councils, either through historical commercial advertising arrangements or directly by the relevant borough or district council. In addition, parish and town councils have also installed bus shelters.

The County Council is responsible for the commercial bus shelter agreement across Guildford borough and is a joint party in the Reigate and Banstead commercial bus shelter agreement. However, the County Council has no contractual involvement in any of the other eight commercial bus shelter agreements across Surrey, noting that there is no such agreement in Waverley.

Repairs to bus shelters where the County Council has an interest are managed positively, with a view to repairs being completed as quickly as possible. However, where bus shelter infrastructure has been installed by a third party, such as a borough or parish council, we can only use influence to encourage repairs to be undertaken promptly. The organisation responsible for the bus shelter should be monitoring and managing the repairs.

The County Council now requires any third-party installing bus stop or shelter infrastructure on the highway to agree to a licence arrangement, and this licence sets out responsibility for maintenance of the asset.

**DENISE TURNER-STEWART, DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITIES**

**16. ASHLEY TILLING (WALTON SOUTH & OATLANDS) TO ASK:  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Question)**

The budget shows an allocation of £10 million for Your Fund Surrey (YFS) capital projects in 2025/26.

The Your Fund Surrey Small Community Projects Fund and the Your Councillor Community Fund (YCCF) have provided valuable support to many community groups, including schools, churches, sports clubs and charities. How much will each Member receive to fund YFS and YCCF projects in 2025/26?

**RESPONSE:**

Your Fund Surrey (YFS) has a total budget of £43 million, £34.9 million of this is provided for YFS Large Community Projects with £15 million left to allocate. Members provide their support and comment to all Large Fund applications. £8.1 million of the YFS budget was also provided in the form of the YFS Small Community Projects Fund to ensure every community gained advantage from YFS via each Member's £100,000 allocation. This fund is open for applications until the end of March 2025.

Your Councillor Community Fund, which provides £5,000 of revenue to each Member each year to support their communities projects has been running for many years, providing several £million pounds worth of benefit for local projects, and is due to continue for 2025/26.

**CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND LIFELONG LEARNING**

**17. LANCE SPENCER (GOLDSWORTH EAST AND HORSELL VILLAGE) TO ASK:  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Question)**

I have been advised that CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) are effectively 'closed' to all but the most urgent of cases (suicides). How is the Council working with health partners to improve this critical service?

**RESPONSE:**

In Surrey, our Children and Young People (CYP) emotional, wellbeing and mental health needs are supported by Mindworks, a partnership of services across an NHS HealthTrust and Voluntary and Community Sector (VCSE). The full details of support are available here: [Mindworks](#). This offer is designed to, where possible, meet children's emotional wellbeing and mental health needs as early as possible.

The service is jointly commissioned by Surrey County Council and the Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Board, who work together to hold the provider to account and oversee changes to delivery and associated impacts, where possible, aligning changes to wider improvements and opportunities in the local NHS and County Council programmes of work.

Mindworks have received 20,047 referrals to date (in 24/25) and are currently at **+28% commissioned capacity**. Some CYP are waiting too long to receive support, however, all referred CYP are prioritised, ensuring those most at risk, in crisis or with clear safeguarding needs are quickly seen. The most significant pressure remains in services that support CYP waiting for Autism or ADHD diagnoses.

The numbers of referrals and then associated waiting times reflect that the service is not 'closed' but is finding the level of demand challenging to meet within available resources. Actions the provider and commissioners are taking focus on further developing a needs-led approach, building support within neighbourhoods and communities that is consistent, equitable and based on low, medium and high levels of need, reducing flow into the Mindworks partnership, continuing to build on the strengths and needs based approach to neurodiversity, with diagnostic and post diagnostic support to more complex CYP, and developing a Surrey wide approach to risk support and reshaping the crisis support model and workforce.

**NATALIE BRAMHALL, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY, WASTE AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**18. CATHERINE BAART (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK:  
(3<sup>rd</sup> Question)**

For each Surrey County Council office, please explain what processes are in place to minimise non-recyclable waste and food waste, including donating food to food

banks and community fridges. Is non-recyclable waste and food waste measured in the council's offices in order to manage it down?

**RESPONSE:**

Surrey County Council have developed a waste management plan in conjunction with Macro, the Council's Facilities Management partner, and which adheres to the ISO14001:2015 Environmental Management System and emphasises compliance and continuous improvement. The management plan encompasses all office sites managed as part of the soft Facilities management contract. The plan outlines the waste hierarchy and ensures that zero waste is sent to landfill. Additionally, the Council provides recycling training for staff to foster a cultural shift towards sustainability with plans for onsite composting.

As part of the ongoing improvements, the Council has conducted routine waste sampling and audits to monitor recycling trends monthly.

In terms of food waste, the only offering the Council provides is at Woodhatch Place (due to demand) and where the perishable items for sale in the vending area are closely monitored to avoid food waste and inform daily orders. When the demand has been lower than expected, the food is taken to a local community fridge sponsored by Borough Cllr Paul Chandler. A new service through 'Oven Fresh' now utilises the kitchen facilities at Woodhatch Place and produces hot and cold food on demand with zero waste.

Workplace and Facilities alongside Macro are currently analysing the Food Waste Legislation and where necessary food waste provisions will be implemented.

**DAVID LEWIS (COBHAM), CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES**

**19. LANCE SPENCER (GOLDSWORTH EAST AND HORSELL VILLAGE) TO ASK:  
(3<sup>rd</sup> Question)**

The Council's new borrowing requirement for the financial year 2026/27 is proposed to be £928 million in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This is to fund ongoing capital projects and pipeline projects and convert short-term debt. The working assumption is that interest rates will fall, but what measures is the Council taking to mitigate against the risk of potentially higher costs if rates either do go up or do not fall as far as anticipated?

**RESPONSE:**

The management of the Council's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks are set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy (in Annex F of the budget papers - item 5). This strategy has been considered during January 2025 by the Audit and Governance Committee, the Resources and Performance Select Committee and Cabinet, in advance of being presented for approval by the Council as part of the Final Budget papers.

The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are central to the Council's prudent financial management and managing the cost of the Council's borrowing is at the heart of the Treasury Management Strategy.

The interest payable budget is set based on a number of assumptions, including prevailing interest rates for the financial year. Interest rates are still expected by experts in the market to reduce over the next 12-18 months, albeit at a slower rate than previously forecast. Between the Draft and Final Budgets the forecast for interest rates changed, due primarily to the October Budget announced by Government. As a result, the budget for interest payable was increased between these two iterations to reflect the forecast increased costs.

The following measures act to mitigate against those assumptions being incorrect:

- The Council continues to utilise its internal temporary cash balances to reduce borrowing requirements, reduce risk and keep interest costs low. This is known as internal borrowing.
- The Council's main objective when borrowing money is to strike an appropriate balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds are required. Therefore, the Council holds a mixture of long and short term borrowing. Long term borrowing is at fixed interest rates and therefore provides cost certainty as it is not exposed to interest rate volatility. Nearly 50% of the Council's borrowing is currently held as long-term fixed interest borrowing.
- The strategy of utilising internal / short-term borrowing is monitored regularly against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years, through regular 'cost of carry' and breakeven analysis.
- The Council works proactively with our Treasury Management advisor, Arlingclose, to ensure that our approach represents the best balance between minimising cost and managing the risk of interest rate changes. Regular meetings with Arlingclose coincide with the Bank of England Monetary Policy Committee meetings and the borrowing strategy is under constant review throughout the year.
- The Council currently holds an interest rate risk reserve to mitigate against interest rate changes in excess of those assumed in the budget.

If interest rates were to go against the majority of forecasts and actually rise, then this would represent an ongoing cost pressure in the budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy that would need to be mitigated in 2025/26 and then revised in the base budget for future years. This would likely necessitate a further review of planned capital expenditure, to ensure the ongoing affordability of the capital programme.

**DAVID LEWIS (COBHAM), CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES / DENISE TURNER-STEWART, DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITIES**

**20. LANCE SPENCER (GOLDSWORTH EAST AND HORSELL VILLAGE) TO ASK:  
(4<sup>th</sup> Question)**

By the end of 2025/26, how much capital will have been spent by the Your Fund Surrey (YFS) project in total, and what will be the ongoing Minimum Revenue Provision and Interest payable per year from 2026/27 against the capital spent on YFS projects?

**RESPONSE:**

Based on current approvals, Your Fund Surrey (YFS) will have spent £27.2 million across the small and large fund by the end of 2025/26. This is based on current confirmed allocations and will likely increase between now and March 2026, depending on further approvals being made. An allocation of £10 million has been included in the budget for 2025/26. The total funding provided through the YFS scheme since its inception will have been £43 million.

The ongoing revenue costs associated with the spend approved to date equates to £1.796 million in 2026/27 made up of Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) of £640,000 and interest payable of £1.156 million.

The MRP charge will gradually increase over the next 25 years, peaking at £1.63 million in 2048.

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