

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

TUESDAY 10 DECEMBER 2013

**QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED UNDER THE PROVISIONS
OF STANDING ORDER 10.1**

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS AND ENVIRONMENT

(1) MR GRAHAM ELLWOOD (GUILDFORD EAST) TO ASK:

During recent bouts of unusually heavy rainfall, many drains have inevitably become overloaded leading to localised flooding exacerbated by the heavy seasonal falling of leaves.

When fielding residents' complaints (an example of which was sent to you), I have had to apologise for the abrupt responses they have received from Highways telling them that, effectively, nothing can be done because of the rota system unless the issue is considered an emergency. This, I am informed, is only when a residents property (not just land) is affected.

In appreciating the restraints imposed upon us all by limited budgets and the knock on effect to manpower and equipment, I would like to feel we could strive to be a little more flexible when, as happened to one of my elderly residents, their garage was being flooded.

Could we not, therefore, have a little more leeway in future as to what is classed as an emergency and thus is dealt with speedily please?

Reply:

The service operates an Immediate Response Service which aims to keep users of the highway safe from serious injury or fatality. This is the most appropriate method when surface water is running from the highway on to private land and there is a risk of internal flooding to a property. The call handler will determine the priority and arrange for a team to attend the location, going to the most serious risk first. This could mean a road traffic accident will take precedence, although in general, flooding to a property internally receives high priority.

In the main, prioritisation works well but during extreme weather conditions when there is a high demand, response times may be affected. For example during the recent storm on 28 October 2013, the service received 601 calls compared to a normal monthly volume of about 500. When drains are overloaded during extremely heavy rainfall, it may be that a tanker is sent to extract as much surface water as possible, but on occasions, the volume of water exceeds the capacity of the tanker. Where the drain is blocked we would attempt to free the blockage to remove the flooding risk.

Disruption to the scheduled drain cleaning reduces efficiency so to avoid causing delays in non-emergency situations, the response for blocked drains would be to programme a jetting vehicle to attend the location at the earliest available time.

CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES

(2) MR ROBERT EVANS (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK:

Would the Leadership now accept that the case for reducing the fire service provision in Spelthorne is not proven on response times, the capacity of the London Fire Service to respond or on any value for money analysis?

Reply:

The consultation on the proposal to make changes to the fire and rescue cover in the Spelthorne area closed on the 4 November 2013 - the Select Committee will scrutinise the feedback and the Service's response on the 15 January 2014 and the Cabinet will receive the final paper for decision on the 4 February 2014.

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service provides a top quartile performance, bottom quartile cost service to all residents and communities in Surrey. The Surrey Fire and Rescue Authority Public Safety Plan provides a framework to deliver transformational change based on an effective, efficient and equitable provision of fire and rescue cover response wherever you are in Surrey.

The provision of fire and rescue cover across Surrey has been validated using external, independent consultants utilising 10 years of historical incident data to examine geographical and temporal demands and incident locations. Surrey Fire and Rescue Service performance against the agreed response standard is consistently very good. This is evidence to the fact that by analysing historical trends to set performance outputs, we can intelligently inform future deployment configurations. Current incident attendance performance is matching and regularly exceeding our predicted performance which provides the assurance that our planning assumptions, using Surrey fire and rescue resources only, were correct. We are also supported when and where necessary by fire engines from other authority areas under formal agreements. The Service will continue to deliver the overall value it can add when considering service provision through its collaborative work with key partners across the Council and in other organisations in order to create strong, safe and prosperous communities. Surrey Fire and Rescue Service will always seek to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised. Our 10 year framework, the Public Safety Plan, is one example of how we will ensure that we deliver value for money for the communities of Surrey having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS AND ENVIRONMENT

(3) MR STEPHEN COOKSEY (DORKING SOUTH AND THE HOLMWOODS) TO ASK:

Has the County Council carried out a condition survey of its pavements and footways, and if so what percentage of Surrey's pavements were assessed as being in a poor condition? What percentage of Surrey's pavements and footways assessed as poor were resurfaced or repaved since 31 March 2013 to date?

Reply:

The County Council is currently progressing the fourth and final year of its initial Footway Network Survey (FNS) with 78% of the network finished. The remainder should be substantially complete by June next year.

The FNS records each footway section in one of the following four categories; as new; aesthetically impaired; functionally impaired or structurally impaired. Functional and structural impairment are considered for maintenance and can therefore be considered in poor condition. Current information indicates that approximately 23% of the footway network is in this category.

The countywide footway programme for 2013/14 includes 3.4 kms of reconstruction and 21.5 kms of slurry seal. Reconstruction treatment is generally used where the footway condition is very poor and slurry may be used elsewhere to enhance an otherwise sound construction and prevent further deterioration. Current analysis indicates approximately 44% of the reconstruction programme addressed footways in a poor condition.

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS AND ENVIRONMENT

(4) MRS HELENA WINDSOR (GODSTONE) TO ASK:

In the light of the persistent failure to repair damaged and unlit bollards on major A roads, could the Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment advise if Skanska is fulfilling the terms of its contract with Surrey County Council.

Reply:

Due to restricted budget, the maintenance and replacement of illuminated signs and bollards is undertaken on a strict priority basis with safety at its core. Consequently, whereas all street lighting faults will be immediately repaired within guaranteed response times, repairs to signs and bollards will only be completed if they meet our prioritisation policy, with each scheme reviewed on a case by case basis. Monthly performance reviews, therefore demonstrate that Skanska continue to meet all their required contract timescales. However, we fully appreciate that the funded level of service is not able to meet user

expectations, with some repairs not completed, due to budget constraints, until the following financial year.

There are also of course specific issues which can cause delay. For example, in a recent case on the A22 in Godstone, works were prioritised and the bollard replaced. However, a secondary unforeseen power fault occurred, which subsequently delayed overall repair timescales. It is regrettable but inevitable that repairs undertaken on an aging asset will from time to time reoccur but these are minimised wherever possible

However, Surrey Highways continue to keep service and performance levels for signs and bollards under review. In 2013 an intensive performance and quality review was completed, resulting in improvements to the ordering process and business reporting. Further improvements are now planned to improve the online fault reporting system to enable enhanced feedback to residents after they have reported a fault.

Signs and bollards will also be considered as part of the councils wider highway asset strategy review. This strategy will be developed over the next 12 - 24 months and will enable Members to determine the level of priority and service they wish to allocate to this specific area, when compared to other competing asset pressures such as carriageway resurfacing, drainage and footpath replacement.

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS AND ENVIRONMENT

(5) MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:

Please provide Surrey County Council's policy and procedure for the assessment of potential sites and selection of the most appropriate sites, where major new developments are proposed on the Green Belt.

Reply:

The County Council works with Boroughs and Districts to assist them in the identification of sites through their Local Plan site allocation process to meet identified needs, with a particular focus on infrastructure and service impact from the County Council's perspective.

In respect of the County Councils' Mineral Plan 2011 and Waste Plan 2008, there are sites already allocated in the Green Belt for mineral extraction or waste management. The County Council as Mineral and Waste Planning Authority will assess any planning applications relating to these sites against the policies in these plans, against relevant government policy and guidance and with regard to any other material consideration. In doing so, it will take account of the views of the relevant Borough or District, other consultees and local residents. It should be noted that Green Belt policy alone does not presume against mineral working as it is a temporary use and the land can be restored and revert to its former condition.

CABINET MEMBER FOR ASSETS AND REGENERATION PROGRAMMES

(6) MRS CAROL COLEMAN (ASHFORD) TO ASK:

Bearing in mind that one in six people have a hearing loss, and that approx 160,000 people in Surrey have a moderate or severe hearing loss, will Surrey County Council install working loop systems, and the appropriate signage to let people know that one is fitted and where it is, in all of their buildings where these members of the public interact with us? For example, in Surrey's Libraries, and wellbeing centres, and provide training for the staff in those buildings that would need to interact with those members of the public?

Reply:

In our main Corporate Buildings we have hearing loops in all of our receptions and in dedicated meeting rooms. Outside of the dedicated meeting rooms, we have signage informing visitors and staff of this facility.

The hearing loops are maintained on a regular basis. We work in close relationship with members of several organisations to test the loops and take advice from various associations on the situation of the loops.

In several of our buildings we also supply a portable hearing loop for use in one-to-one meetings. On the Surrey County Council web page under 'Contact Us' there are published numbers, a minicom number, and SMS (mobile texting) number. Please find the link. <http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/contact-us>

In the wider buildings portfolio, we have installed hearing loops in the main public building access sites such as main libraries. At library sites in particular, there has been great partnership working and training of staff on the loop system so aiding its use. At Adult Learning sites we also have converter units available for use. These provide assistance whilst not the same as a hearing loop provision.

CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE

(7) MRS FIONA WHITE (GUILDFORD WEST) TO ASK:

In the light of the recent report by HMRC that they have identified that of the employers in the social care sector they have investigated, 48% of 183 employers have paid workers below the minimum wage, has he checked with HMRC to ensure that no companies who have contracts with Surrey County Council are on that list? If not, will he do so immediately and make sure that all the Council's contracts for the provision of care are monitored to ensure that they are not flouting the rules including making illegal reductions for uniforms, not paying for travel between jobs, time spent in training or any other deductions?

Reply:

The recent HMRC report referred to in the question also included the following statement:

On 1 October 2013 the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills introduced new rules for publicly naming and shaming employers who fail to comply with National Minimum Wage (NMW) legislation. The revised scheme will remove previous restrictions so that any employer who breaks minimum wage law can be named. The new criteria for naming will apply to enquiries that HMRC begin on or after 1 October 2013. Therefore none of the employers included in this review will fall to be considered for naming under the new criteria

*NMW enforcement - social care sector evaluation 2013
HMRC Report dated November 2013*

Given this we are unable to obtain names of employers investigated by HMRC.

However, we can assure you that Surrey County Council do not condone or encourage payments below the National Minimum Wage. We try in earnest to ensure all providers of social care services comply with appropriate legislation and do not make payments below the National Minimum Wage contrary to that legislation. We take all practical steps to ensure that providers comply with relevant legislation and endeavour to monitor performance of services rendered at all times insofar as is reasonably possible.

CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**(8) MRS STELLA LALLEMENT (EPSOM WEST) TO ASK:**

What has Surrey County Council been doing to ensure the safeguarding of children under 5 years old who spend most of their time with their carers at home, i.e. children under 5 years old who neither attend a school nor a nursery and who are rarely (if ever) taken to their local GP by their carers for health checks or any other reason? How does SCC ensure the safeguarding of those children who have no contact with the universal services which could identify them as children in need?

Reply:

Families receive a Health Visitor visit following a new birth. Advice is given as appropriate including often signposting to local support.

The majority of families do not need to come into contact with the Local Authorities and access universal services as when they need to do so.

Surrey County Council has established a network of Children's Centres across the county to provide a range of services for all families with a child(ren) under

five. The Children's Centres work in partnership with Health Visitors to provide support and advice to parents and to identify those families in greatest need. Health Visitors make contact with all parents with a new born child and would signpost the parent to their local Children's Centre or make a referral if they felt that they would benefit from services but are not likely to make contact themselves. Children's Centres employ Outreach Workers who can visit families at home. As this is a universal service, families frequently take up the services and support offered. Where staff in the Children's Centre are concerned about the development of the child or more importantly, where there are concerns that the child might be at risk, the Centre would contact Children's Services to raise their concern.

Should a family not wish to engage with any universal services, it is their right not to do so. A lack of engagement with services does not automatically suggest that the under fives are Children in Need. Groups of people from different cultures may well have different support networks. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility thus children who may be at risk and are within strong communities would hopefully be identified and families supported.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

(9) MRS HAZEL WATSON (DORKING HILLS) TO ASK:

At the Cabinet meeting on 26 November 2013, the Leader of the Council admitted that the five year commitment to hold the Ride London cycle event which involves significant road closures affecting many Surrey residents and businesses was a "verbal agreement" between himself and the Mayor of London. In view of this:

- a) Does the Leader of the Council agree with me that this verbal agreement was not in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 as amended, or the County Council's Constitution and Standing Orders, and that it is undemocratic and not lawful because it did not allow councillors or members of the public to scrutinise or challenge it before the decision and it does not adequately protect the County Council's interests?
- b) Will the Leader of the Council confirm that such verbal agreements will never be entered into again by a Leader of the Council?

Reply:

Mrs Watson does not seem to understand that a verbal agreement is just that. She has already been told by Mrs Clack that this item is going to Cabinet on 17 December 2013, the papers for which were published yesterday. I would like to refer Mrs Watson to these papers and now consider the matter closed.

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS AND ENVIRONMENT

(10) MR IAN BEARDSMORE (SUNBURY COMMON AND ASHFORD COMMON) TO ASK:

If the proposed incinerator at Charlton goes through, can the Cabinet Member clarify two points:

Firstly, approximately 6% of bottom ash is non ferrous metals, recent incinerators recycle this. Will Surrey do this, as paragraph 25 of the Cabinet report on the 30 October 2013 is unclear?

Secondly, it is claimed enough electricity will be sold to the grid to power 8000 homes, who will get this money?

Reply:

The gasification plant will be fuelled using a prepared refuse derived fuel. Metals will therefore be separated from the waste during the production of the refuse derived fuel and prior to the waste being gasified. These metals will be sent for recycling.

Electricity income is received by SITA but is used to reduce the council's contract payments to SITA based on an agreed financial model.

CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS AND LEARNING

(11) MR TIM HALL (LEATHERHEAD AND FETCHAM EAST) TO ASK:

May I commend the Cabinet Member, as well as the County's teachers and Head teachers for all their hard work following the recent announcement that nine out of ten Surrey pupils attend a state secondary school rated 'outstanding' or 'good'. Would the Cabinet Member also update the Chamber on progress in planning for the 16,000 extra places needed by 2018?

Reply:

Firstly, I would like to thank Mr Hall for his comments regarding the excellent results achieved by the local authority's secondary schools, in which 90.2% of pupils are attending schools which are judged to be 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, and in which 67.2% of students gained 5 A*-C grades including English and Maths in July's GCSE examinations. I will pass on his comments on behalf of the Council to the Chair of our Secondary Phase Council and I am sure they will be much appreciated.

With regard to planning for new school place provision, the County Council has experienced a 666% increase in pupil place requirements since 2011 and a twofold increase this past year, when provision when 2882 new places were made available.

Our multi service delivery team, comprising Schools and Learning, Property, Planning, Procurement, and Transport, Planning and Development have risen to this challenge and it is an indication of their professionalism that the County Council has been able to deliver the places to meet our statutory obligations, on time and within projected budgets.

The model and plans for delivery of the whole school place programme to 2018 are in place and are the subject of continuous review and improvement. Recent workshops and a peer challenge have identified a number changes to ensure our processes remain efficient and effective, and that we have the correct level of skills and resource to drive value and quality of service for the community and ratepayers of Surrey.

CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES

(12) DR ZULLY GRANT-DUFF (REIGATE) TO ASK:

Following the Government's recent announcement of a £40m investment in specialist local support services, and giving women the 'right to ask' if their partner has a violent past, can the Cabinet Member tell the Chamber what this County Council does to help prevent life-shattering domestic abuse?

Reply:

The County Council makes a significant contribution to the prevention of domestic abuse and the care and support of survivors. A great deal of the Council's work on domestic abuse is done in partnership with others (the Police, district and borough councils, Health, voluntary organisations and the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner) with the intention of getting whole county responses, making the best use of a range of skills, knowledge and experience, as well as making efficient use of our resources. I will now briefly describe some of the actions that the County Council is taking.

Surrey County Councils' Community Safety Team, part of the Customers and Communities Directorate, has led on the development and creation of a new multi-agency, five year, domestic abuse strategy for the County. The Strategy was signed off by the multi-agency Community Safety Board for Surrey at its September 2013 meeting. The Community Safety Team is now leading on the development of an annual action plan that will deliver the aims of the Strategy and provide the focus for all multi-agency activity on Domestic Abuse. A key part of this work will be to build strong links with other multi agency Boards (Safeguarding, Health & Wellbeing) to ensure we are all working together on a single but comprehensive action plan to deliver and improve services to those affected or at risk of domestic abuse.

The Council provides over half the funding to the Outreach Providers, a consortia of voluntary organisations who provider support and assistance to the

victims and survivors of domestic abuse in the County. This service has over the past three years provided services to over 3,500 people a year.

The Council provides financial support to the refuge services in Surrey who provide secure housing support to those people fleeing domestic abuse.

The Council contributes to the multi-agency training programme which offers both generalist and specialist training to staff in the Council and its partner agencies to equip staff with the skills and knowledge they require. The training offer is currently being renewed and a foundation e-learning package will be introduced.

As an employer the Council has a policy to support and assist those of its employees are affected by domestic abuse and where it can take action against those employees who are perpetrators of this crime.

Surrey County Council has won a national award for the work its libraries are doing to support vulnerable people. The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) has recognised the library service for an initiative to help people affected by domestic abuse. The free scheme gives access to computers in a safe place so abusers cannot monitor or track them. Information about local and national services is also available and workshops are held to build the confidence of people who have experienced abuse.

Working with its partners, the County Council contributes to campaigns and publicity that aim to raise awareness of domestic abuse, its effects and impact and information on support and advice services. The website 'Surrey Against Domestic Abuse' which contains a wide range of information was created and hosted by the County Council.

Finally, but by no means least, is the support that is provided by the Council as part of its day to day work. For example, the work undertaken by social workers working with families and individuals, the role of the Youth Support Service providing advice and informal education to young people in our communities and the guidance and signposting offered by our Contact Centre. These examples are the tip of an iceberg. However, I am sure the Chamber can be assured that the County Council makes and will continue to make a significant contribution to the prevention of domestic abuse, the care and support of survivors and in working with our partners we aim to reduce the incidents and the harm to our communities caused by domestic abuse in Surrey.

CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES

(13) MS BARBARA THOMSON (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK:

How much does each CRB check cost this Council, what can be done to help volunteers meet these costs, and does the Cabinet Member feel these represent good value for money?

Reply:

- CRB checks are now called DBS checks. The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) merged to form the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).
- The Disclosure and Barring Service charge £26.00 for a standard check and £44.00 for an enhanced check. **There is no DBS charge for volunteers.**
- The council acts as an "umbrella body" for the DBS and arranges for the completion, checking and submission of DBS enquiries through an online system, built for the council, that reduces the DBS response time from six weeks to an average of five days.
- The council charges £9.00+VAT admin fee per check for this service for external bodies in addition to the DBS checking fees described above. The £9.00 charge is not levied for Surrey County Council employees or Surrey County Council volunteers.
- Surrey County Council volunteers therefore are not charged by the DBS, nor are they charged by Surrey County Council.
- The council conducts just over a 1,000 checks per year for external bodies.
- The council conducts approximately 6,000 checks each year for Surrey County Council employees and volunteers working with the council.

CABINET MEMBER FOR ASSETS AND REGENERATION PROGRAMMES

**(14) MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:
(2nd question)**

Please can you confirm how long the Surrey County Council owned Longmead Adult Education Centre on Holland Close, Redhill, and the former Youth and Community Centre on Noke Drive, Redhill have been vacant and the plans and expected timing for Surrey County Council's future use of these buildings?

Reply:

I can advise that Longmead Adult Education Centre was transferred to Surrey County Council in 1945 from what was then the Reigate Corporation. The building has been vacant for approximately five years to facilitate a joint development opportunity in partnership with Reigate and Banstead Borough Council. Unfortunately, that scheme is now not progressing due to a third party commercial operator withdrawing. Surrey County Council will be working up proposals for the site during 2014.

The Youth and Community Centre at Noke Drive was acquired by Surrey County Council in 1961 and was closed a number of years ago. The building is in a dilapidated state and all efforts to let the building have failed due to the high costs to bring it back into a usable condition. Cabinet are due to consider redevelopment opportunities, including a business case, during 2014.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

**(15) MR STEPHEN COOKSEY (DORKING SOUTH AND THE HOLMWOODS) TO ASK:
(2nd question)**

In September, Mole Valley members were informed that the Leader of the Council had unilaterally forbidden any member of the Highways officers' team from participating in any meeting of local Highways Forums thereby removing one of the most significant elements that made Forums operate so successfully.

I believe that residents are due an explanation of this action and its consequences and therefore would like to ask:

1. Under what constitutional authority was the Leader of the Council acting in imposing this ban?
2. Was the Chairman of the Local Committee or any other Mole Valley County Councillor consulted before the decision was taken and, if they were, what was their response?
3. Have any officers been formally invited to attend any Highways Forum meeting in Mole Valley since the ban was imposed and if so under what circumstances were the invitations issued?

Reply:

It is my belief that Mr Cooksey's question stems from a misunderstanding. I think that Mr Cooksey is referring to the content of an email from me, addressed to James Painter, Jane Last and John Lawlor, and copied to Yvonne Rees, Helyn Clack, Nick Skellett, Sally Marks, Michael Sydney and John Furey, dated 24 May 2013.

This email was sent following a unilateral decision by the Conservative Group of Tandridge District Council not to allow their District Members to serve on the local committee, but to hold individual meetings by ward/division, to address local highway issues. I was concerned that this would not be a good use of officer time, would lead to additional costs, and is not a value for money process. I am surprised that Mr Cooksey is unaware that the Local Committee Vice-Chairman has the role of liaison with the Area Manager as this is seen as best value for money.

CABINET MEMBER FOR SCHOOLS AND LEARNING

(16) MRS STELLA LALLEMENT (EPSOM WEST) TO ASK: (2nd question)

What is Surrey County Council doing to ensure the safeguarding of children in non maintained schools?

Reply:

Surrey Children are educated through a range of provisions in and out of County determined by assessed need.

The "state" now provides education through a varied school system including Academies, Maintained school etc.

Additionally many parents choose to privately educate their children. This may be in day schools or boarding - these establishments are generally not state funded.

For those children with assessed and statemented SEN they will be educated in establishments appropriate to level and type of need. Once more there are state and independent special schools, though here places at either type of school are usually funded by the local authority.

Non maintained schools are special schools independent of local authorities but with a long standing recognition as designated specialists by the Department for Education. For the purposes of this question they are like independent schools.

The Local Authority has an important role to play in safeguarding children who attend all schools within Surrey. Independent schools have a statutory duty to appoint a Designated Senior Person for Child Protection who is required to undertake formal training by either the local authority or other external provider. This person, often referred to in Surrey as the Child Protection Liaison Officer (CPLO) is trained in identifying risk indicators of significant harm and how to make referrals to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Children's Services or other agencies. They are also given contact details of the lead officer for safeguarding children in the local authority who is able to offer advice and guidance.

Surrey County Council has a Group which deals exclusively with children who attend Non Maintained Special Schools in Surrey and who are placed by the Local Authority in "out of county" schools. The Group responds to adverse Ofsted inspections and reports regarding safeguarding or education concerns. The Group is chaired by Mr Julian Gordon-Walker, Head of Safeguarding, has multi agency representation, and has clear lines of reporting and robust procedures in place. Schools who come to notice receive monitoring visits to examine safeguarding policies and procedures and inspection of residential provisions.

The Group intend to inspect all 87 Non Maintained Special Schools used by Surrey County Council over a three year cycle and have so far carried out 18 in this year, with 12 more identified over the next two terms.

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS AND ENVIRONMENT

**(17) MS BARBARA THOMSON (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK:
(2nd question)**

Having had several metal road signs stolen in my division, can the Cabinet Member advise the Chamber on the use of plastic signage?

Reply:

In 2010 Surrey Highways undertook a full technical review of its signage design policy as a result of higher rate of thefts due to the increased in scrap value in the secondary market place,

As a result of this review, all metal signs were removed from Surrey County Council design specifications and are thus no longer used in either sign replacements or new traffic schemes. All signs, since December 2010, are thus composed of a recycled BCP (plastic/aluminium) Composite Panels, the BCP Panel provide the same lifespan as the older metal signage but have no scrap value.

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS AND ENVIRONMENT

**(18) MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:
(3rd question)**

Will Surrey County Council follow Kent County Council's example and organise training events for parish councils in areas where there applications for unconventional gas and oil exploration and extraction, so that they are able to make informed responses to consultations?

Reply:

Officers have clarified the position with their counterparts at Kent County Council who confirm that no training events on unconventional oil and gas exploration and extraction have been organised for Parish Councils by the Authority. However, Kent County Council has recently carried out training for Members of the Planning Committee on unconventional hydrocarbons. Similar training will be organised for members of the Surrey Planning and Regulatory Committee at an appropriate time. Parish Councils and the public can access training information, if requested. Surrey has anticipated public interest and provided information on unconventional hydrocarbons on our web site, but the Authority is not required to do so as part of the planning process.

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS AND ENVIRONMENT

(19) MRS STELLA LALLEMENT (EPSOM WEST) TO ASK: (3rd question)

The time it takes for parking review proposals to be discussed, go through consultation, approved and implemented is a major concern for many Surrey residents. Will the Cabinet Member agree to review procedures to massively cut the delays involved?

Reply:

The Surrey parking team deals with regular parking reviews in ten of the Surrey district and boroughs. These can sometimes be quite large involving many stakeholders and complex issues but the process of having a single parking review enables more to be done for less. Each review involves changing the traffic orders that define the parking restrictions and this needs to be done correctly in accordance with the law to ensure enforcement can be carried out confidently. The parking team also respond to around 7000 enquiries each year from the public and councillors, as well as approximately 500 disabled bay applications.

Parking reviews follow a process that is defined by the road traffic regulation act. This means that for each review a series of steps must be followed. These are:

- initial assessment and discussion with Members
- committee approval
- preparation of legal documents
- statutory consultation
- review of objections with Members
- detailed design and works ordering
- implement Traffic Regulation Order/signs and lines

The team aims to carry out reviews expediently. However, the number of sites in the review combined with difficult locations where additional consultation is needed can often mean the process takes longer than some Members may desire. Parking can be a contentious subject and it is essential that any changes are properly considered and not rushed through in haste to satisfy what can be minority local vocal concern.

The parking team will continue to work with local committees to achieve the right balance between speed, cost and flexibility for reviews, and I will review the situation in the New Year.

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS AND ENVIRONMENT

(20) MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK: (4th question)

This spring, Surrey County Council passed a motion to defend the Green Belt. How many developments on the Green Belt has Surrey County Council sought planning permission for since that motion was passed (19 March 2013) and how many of these have been awarded and declined planning permission?

Reply:

The attached list gives all the planning applications since 19 March 2013 related to Surrey County Council sites in the Green Belt, indicating which ones have been approved or pending a decision together with the reasons for the applications and a brief assessment in terms of green belt policy. In total, fifteen applications have been made of which eight have been permitted and seven yet to be determined. Most of the developments relate to our role in supporting existing schools located in the green belt to provide appropriate and accessible school facilities and to cater for additional school places.

Two new primary schools are being proposed in the green belt - both yet to be determined:

- a new 420 place primary school in Redhill.
- a new 630 place primary school in Esher. This involves the demolition of an existing and smaller school.

The issue in both these cases will be whether there are very special circumstances to warrant making an exception to Green Belt Policy. Those circumstances will largely relate to the need for school places and lack of alternative sites within the urban area.

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS AND ENVIRONMENT

(21) MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK: (5th question)

Please confirm why the waste contract variation was made at an Extraordinary Cabinet meeting on 30 October 2013 rather than brought to the Environment and Transport Select Committee and then to either the Cabinet Meeting one week earlier on 22 October 2013 or in November, when the stated aim of making the decision at the time was 'to confirm the mechanism for varying the contract in an open and transparent way' (minutes of meeting of 30 October 2013 meeting, as included as item 114/3 of this council meeting)?

Reply:

The report to Cabinet clearly set out why the matter had to be dealt with when it was.

Cabinet's decision in July 2013 was predicated on a final decision following swiftly, using powers delegated at that time. The extended planning timetable resulted in some changes which the Leader decided should be reported to a Cabinet meeting as an update, before the variation was contractually completed. This was clearly more transparent than taking a decision using the delegated powers available. However, because of the time that had elapsed, there was a very narrow window available in which to secure the costs and terms previously agreed with subcontractors M+W, and to demonstrate progress consistent with the assurance the Council has given to DEFRA.

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, HIGHWAYS AND ENVIRONMENT

**(22) MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:
(6th question)**

The minutes of the Extraordinary Cabinet meeting on 30 October 2013 state that 'Option 1... would contribute to the Council's ambitious recycling target.'

Is it possible to confirm why the decision to build an anaerobic digestion plant is only currently considered to be made alongside building of a gasification plant (before the ecopark they had never been proposed together) and whether an Option to build an ecopark without the gasification plant has not been considered.

Reply:

The Council requires facilities for processing both food waste and residual waste. Co-locating these facilities on the same site has several advantages compared with separate stand-alone facilities. These advantages include the sharing of infrastructure such as site roads, weighbridges and grid connections and reduced transport impacts for example where district and boroughs are delivering food and residual waste on the same vehicle.

Building a single processing facility on the site, either a gasification plant or an anaerobic digestion plant was not considered as an option.

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