

CABINET – 4 FEBRUARY 2014

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Public Questions**Question (1) from Mr Michael Connolly to ask:**

With regard to the new lamp posts in Surrey Villages, especially Parsonage Lane, Westcott RH4 3NL:

- i). Why do you consider all lamp posts in Surrey (towns and villages) should be urban in style?
- ii). Why were we not consulted about the style?
- iii). Why would different lamp posts (i.e. suitable for a village) cost any more? This is a village - not Sutton or Kingston or Surbiton!
- iv). Was there an environmental impact report? For instance, why were LED lights not used (90% cheaper to run)?
- v). Why do the lights pollute the houses and the streets (more power wasted)?
- vi). Why were they replaced (they seemed to work)?
- vii). After filling Dorking with unnecessary traffic lights, are you planning to urbanise all of rural Surrey?

Reply:

- i). The style of lanterns was chosen to reflect the type of road and its use. Principally there is a lantern used for residential roads and one for traffic routes and these were selected to ensure the correct levels of lighting were achieved within each type of road. This is no different to the lights which were previously being used to replace faulty or damaged lights although it is fair to say that prior to the replacement programme, lights were often replaced on an individual basis which resulted in a variety of styles of lantern, bracket and even light colour along many of the county's roads.

There were exceptions to this, namely in conservation areas and town centres. Within these areas, if the lights being replaced were already of a "special" design, they were (or will be) replaced with a similar design – discussions have taken place with officers within the relevant district or borough council's planning, heritage, or conservation department to agree what styles would be installed.

Given that nearly 90,000 lights will have been replaced by the end of the programme it would have been impractical to have a wider variety of styles and would also have seen a significantly increased cost to the council to install a wider variety.

- ii). Discussion and consultation took place covering a number of factors within a number of groups prior to the award of the PFI contract which included councillors (individually, in select committees and sub-committees), planning and conservation officers and representatives from the Campaign for Rural England among others.

It would not have been practical to consult all residents prior to awarding a new contract of this size.

- iii). I am not clear on the correspondent's definition of lights that would be suitable for a village. I can however advise that the special design columns used in conservation areas are considerably more expensive (ranging from £450 to over £1000 per column)

compared the standard equipment installed in the majority of roads. The details of these additional costs are published on the council's website since the replacement programme started and in some cases, residents groups, parish councils and other interested parties have contributed to the cost of installing special design columns instead of the standard replacements. This option remains open to replace lights, however the council cannot bear the cost of installing additional special design lights out of its maintenance budgets.

- iv). The impact to the environment was considered and was included in the business case for replacing the lights. At the time of contract award, LED technology in street lighting was not fully proven and was in many cases not cost effective with the initial cost of the units being higher than the savings it would have generated. The council did however adopt another energy saving technology through the installation of a Central Management System. This, amongst other things, allows us to control the on/off times remotely and dim the lights in the very late evening and early morning. By dimming the new lights by 25-50% between 23.00 and 05.30 each day, the council expects to save in the region of £12m in lower energy bills and approximately 60,000 tonnes of CO2.
- v). The new lights actually reduce "light spill" compared to many of the previous lights. This is because, rather than being housed in an open glass/plastic cover, the lamp is recessed into the luminaire with a series of angled mirrors redirecting this light back downwards to the road and footpath it is intending to light. On occasion some residents do experience a unwanted light into their property – should this be the case, the residents can make a request through the council's contact centre to have a shield fitted and provided it doesn't reduce the light to the footpath or road, will be fitted free of charge.
- vi). Although individual lights worked, the volume of lights requiring replacement or expensive repairs was increasing year on year. Added to this, a significant majority of the council's street lighting columns were over 40 years old (their expected life), some being in excess of 60 years old; the result being an increased risk of structural failure. By entering into the PFI credit, the county council received support from the Department of Transport in the form of £74m funding to carry out the replacements. It also enabled the council to freeze the budget for street lighting, preventing the continuing increase.

Full details of the rationale for the new Street Lighting Service and contract can be found on the Council's website.
- vii). Traffic signals for road junctions and pedestrian crossing facilities are needed in Dorking for pedestrian safety and to enable traffic to flow around the town. We monitor the functionality and reliability of these signals regularly to ensure they operate to maximum efficiency. Any new proposed signals in more rural areas of Surrey will only be commissioned where a specific need is identified, usually by locally elected representatives.

Mr John Furey
Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment
4 February 2014

Question (2) from Mr Tim Jones to ask:

Following Kay Hammonds statement at the Communities Select Committee meeting in January, where she said that "she had listened to the concerns of the Spelthorne residents, about the NEED for two appliances stationed in Spelthorne and that Option 5 was a result of her listening to those concerns," will she (and the Senior Management of Surrey Fire and Rescue Service) state, categorically, that they GUARANTEE, that they WILL provide a RELIABLE, COMPETENT, On-call crew 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year, albeit with the understanding that this is unlikely to be achieved 100% of the time, but they will GUARANTEE that if the availability drops below 90% (the stated success rate of Cranleigh's first appliance), they will recognise that Option 5 is NOT a feasible option and WILL reinstate 2 full time, wholetime appliances?

Reply:

On a daily basis Surrey Fire and Rescue Service seeks to ensure that it delivers the right balance of services to people and communities across Surrey. This includes community fire prevention work, community fire protection advice to businesses with enforcement where necessary and responding to incidents, some of which are emergencies. Today's Fire and Rescue Service does much more work to prevent fires and other emergencies from arising through a variety of initiatives and important work with other partners and agencies whilst at the same time ensuring that it has the right people with the right skills and the right equipment to respond to incidents wherever and whenever they arise. In support of that the Fire and Rescue Service already has an agreed competency based framework and assurance regime for all uniformed staff (full-time and On-call) which is well established and effective.

The establishment of the On-call unit at the new fire station will require the community and other stakeholders to work closely and diligently with the Fire and Rescue Service to achieve the right people who are consistently capable of delivering the variety of community emergency prevention work which is central to the community risk reduction activity of today's Fire and Rescue Service, as well as responding to incidents. By recruiting the right people and employing them on a part-time basis using the new On-Call contracts – ostensibly an orthodox part-time job with time-slots that must be fulfilled - the Service seeks, so far as is reasonably practicable, to achieve a reliable service 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year. There will of course always be factors that mean that fire appliances are not available 100% of the time due to operational commitments, training commitments or vehicle maintenance schedules, for example. Nevertheless, by attracting people from the local community who are willing to play their part in delivering a wide range of fire and rescue services in Spelthorne and Surrey we will maximise the availability of the On-call appliance which will have a initial target for operational availability of 90% - the Service decides on a constant basis how to continue to achieve its target attendance standard in all areas of the County which can be achieved by a variety of means e.g. moving fire engines and crews to different locations informed by operational intelligence

Should an On-call unit not be secured in the way described we have made it clear that the alternative option is to locate one whole-time fire engine at one location, which was the original proposal.

**Mrs Helyn Clack
Cabinet Member for Community Services
4 February 2014**

Question (3) from Mr Jeremy Spencer to ask:

Would the fire authority please advise what the annual spend on fire crews based in Spelthorne would be if option 5 is approved (ie one wholetime fire appliance and one on-call fire appliance) and advise how that compares with the total annual fire budget for 2013/14. This can then be compared with the number of rate payers in Spelthorne compared with the rest of Surrey to determine how heavily Spelthorne will be subsidising fire cover for the rest of Surrey?

Reply:

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service provide a county wide response to the communities of Surrey. If 10 fire appliances are required for a fire in or outside of Spelthorne, costs are not apportioned and money does not move either way. We have 35 frontline fire appliances, 2 of which are located in Spelthorne. Under Option 5, 2 fire appliances will continue to be located in Spelthorne and will continue to meet the agreed attendance standard all things being equal, whilst securing £880,000 as a part contribution to the revenue savings target allocated to fire and rescue under the Medium Term Financial Plan.

This is being taken as part of a rationalisation of fire and emergency cover to achieve the agreed attendance standard and providing a balanced level of county wide service provision within a given total budget. Therefore the network of fire stations is being configured to provide the requisite assurance of achieving the response standard, acknowledging that incident numbers and types have reduced by a significant degree, that the risk profile still exists and that the prevention and protection work will remain a high priority to support the management of that risk. This will be supported by appropriate response resources in neighbouring boroughs and districts and will provide a suitable and sufficient presence to assure local, sub-regional, regional and national responsibilities when the Service is looked at as a whole.

The majority of the "annual spend" in Spelthorne comprises revenue costs (staff wages). To staff one whole-time 24/7 fire engine at one fire station costs £1.05million per annum. The current costs for Spelthorne with Sunbury and Staines fire stations amount to £2.1million per annum. By contrast the cost per annum of staffing one 24/7 On-call fire appliance is in the order of £170,000. Therefore the total "annual spend" under option 5 will be £1,220,000 per annum on staff in Spelthorne. The total annual budget for Surrey Fire and Rescue Service for the year 2013/14 was set at £45,752,000.

**Mrs Helyn Clack
Cabinet Member for Community Services
4 February 2014**