

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

TUESDAY 19 MAY 2015

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

MS DENISE LE GAL, CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS SERVICES

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

The Surrey County Council apprenticeship scheme has helped many young people into employment, and is to be applauded.

But what is Surrey County Council doing to help the many disabled people in the county into employment. Disabled people would rather earn money and pay tax, then have to claim benefits, but do need support to find employment and to stay in work. If Access to Work is to be cut by the Government, it will be more difficult for those disabled people to work.

The Surrey Disability Register is a valuable tool for Surrey's disabled people, how many people are on the register, and are there any plans for changes to it or the way it is administered?

Reply:

I am pleased to inform you that the County Council has been taking very positive and active steps towards this.

One of the four priorities in the Fairness and Respect Strategy is to "reflect the population we serve, in particular disabled and younger people." The Council has set two aspirational targets for disabled and younger people. A series of leadership workshops across the Council has produced a set of actions each service has committed to take, to ensure we become a "disability friendly" employer. This plan was approved by the People, Performance & Development Committee in March 2014.

We also have a community engagement programme, working in partnership with the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People and Sight for Surrey. We have identified and delivered various activities, including:

- Employment promotional presentations in the eight Surrey Community Hubs to try and attract local people with a disability to consider applying for Surrey's jobs
- Working with partners on the procurement of Talentlink (our recruitment system) to make sure the system is as accessible as possible
- Delivered a workshop on becoming a disability friendly organisation at the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People's AGM and

- Carried out a comprehensive Access Audit/building tour of County Hall to help inform improvements to access for building users with a disability. This audit will set common access standards for all of our main buildings.

In relation to Access to Work, the County Council will continue its practice of supporting and developing staff with the help they need to do their jobs. Where required, this involves directly funding adjustments, many of which are not accommodated via Access To Work. For example, we have pre-purchased licenses for support software, like JAWS and Dragon, to help visually impaired staff. This is so that we are able to be responsive and flexible to requests. We are currently developing detailed, practical guidance to assist colleagues in applying to Access To Work, to be presented at a workshop facilitated by the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People.

In relation to apprenticeships, the County Council's existing apprenticeship scheme is open to all and we currently have some young people with disabilities in our scheme. We have also piloted a traineeship scheme which we hope to roll out further. A traineeship scheme gives access to those who do not have the qualifications to pursue an apprenticeship. We also help with work experience and training in employability skills. The traineeship, together with the mix of work experience and training, brings the young person up to the level where they can work towards an apprenticeship qualification. We were successful with 3 out of 5 young people with disabilities moving them from a traineeship to an apprenticeship with our pilot and hope to replicate this further for those young people with disabilities who cannot currently access apprenticeships.

Overall, the Council has made some promising progress, however we are aware that we still have a lot of challenges and meaningful and sustained progress will take time to be realised.

MS DENISE LE GAL, CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS SERVICES

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

On 6 May 2014, Full Council adopted my motion that Surrey move towards being a Fair Trade county. Could the Council please update Members on what progress has been made towards achieving this goal?

Reply:

I am pleased to take this opportunity to advise Members of the progress that has been made so far, and our plans to further develop our commitment to Fair Trade.

The Fairtrade towns already gaining, or have gained, an accreditation in the county of Surrey are Addlestone, Dorking, Godalming, Guildford, Haslemere,

Leatherhead, Lingfield and Dormansland, Rushmoor, Tatsfield and Woking. This is a fantastic achievement in which all my colleagues should be proud.

We have further developed our approach to procurement, in response to the Public Services (Social Values) Act 2012, and now ensure that we are giving consideration to Fair Trade products when awarding new contracts. This further supports the Council's commitment to the overall wellbeing of our County, and in using our procurement processes to support the delivery of our Corporate Strategy.

We are beginning to plan how we can further work with District and Boroughs, Surrey Businesses, Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) and Community and Resident groups in order to continue our move towards being a Fair Trade county. Our plans include how we can use existing networks and media channels with the public to highlight the Council's commitments and publicise Fair Trade events to the residents of Surrey.

MR MIKE GOODMAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

**(3) MR ROBERT EVANS (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK:
2nd question**

Could the Council say how and why Friday 8 May was chosen as the most suitable day for announcing the proposed changes to local bus services in the County?

Reply:

On Monday 11 May 2015, Surrey County Council launched a public consultation on proposed changes to local bus services. The proposed changes and consultation were announced to Members and stakeholders on Friday 8 May to give a few days' notice ahead of the public launch.

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