

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****TUESDAY 9 FEBRUARY 2016****QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED UNDER THE PROVISIONS  
OF STANDING ORDER 10.1****MR JOHN FUREY, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND  
FLOODING****(1) MR KEITH WITHAM (WORPLESDON) TO ASK:**

One of my local residents expressed concern to me because he was refused flood insurance due to Environment Agency zoning in his postcode locality. His house has never been flooded but some remedial measures were been carried out in his road which appear to have sorted the problems that previously existed. However he was refused flood risk cover by his home insurer, based on the flooding data on the Environment Agency website for his postcode.

Would the Cabinet Member please:

1. Update the Council on the Government and British Insurance Industry agreement to ensure that every householder in Surrey has access to flooding insurance;
2. Set out what Surrey County Council, as the Lead Flood Authority for Surrey, with all our partners, is doing to ensure that our residents, and particularly those affected by flooding in the past, are given full information on this subject;
3. Also ask the Environment Agency (EA) specifically to review the information that it puts into the public domain?

**Reply:**

1. Central Government views flood insurance as a national issue and as such is taking steps to address the problem. It is therefore due to launch the Flood Re scheme in April 2016. This scheme will enable insurance companies to pass on the flood risk element of house insurance policies to Flood Re, which will essentially act as an insurance policy for insurance companies against flood damage claims made by their customers. Flood Re will charge a premium to insurance companies but in return will cover the cost of all flood claims in full. The additional cost of this premium will be spread across the industry and will therefore significantly reduce the cost of home insurance policies for people who live in areas at a high risk of flooding. Further information on Flood Re can be found [online](#).

The County Council also recognises this as a significant issue and as a result is working closely with the National Flood Forum (NFF) to support residents. The NFF is a charitable organisation and has expertise in helping people who live in areas at high risk of flooding to obtain reasonably priced home insurance policies. This includes a charter and protocol for the provision of 'flood friendly insurance', and a list of insurance companies who specialise in providing this kind of cover. Through this close partnership the County Council will work / be working with the NFF to inform and educate residents as to how they can obtain reasonable home insurance policies.

2. Surrey County Council, as the Lead Local Flood Authority(LLFA), in partnership with the EA, District / Boroughs and utilities are engaging and working with communities throughout Surrey. Community resilience groups, including flood action groups and flood forums, have been created to increase awareness of local flooding issues and land ownership responsibilities. Information regarding flood insurance is communicated to these local community groups.
3. The Environment Agency does not plan to re-run the national scale model to update the mapping, nor to produce another national scale surface water flood map in England. Any further improvements in surface water flood mapping should be undertaken by LLFAs. The EA's Risk from Flooding Map (Rivers and Sea) modelling is currently the best available information. If new information or studies are provided then they are reviewed to ensure the best available information is used to update the Risk of Flooding Map.

**MR JOHN FUREY, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND FLOODING**

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

How many requests has Surrey Council received in respect of damage to vehicles due to pot-holes?

How much has this cost the Council?

How many requests for compensation have been rejected by Surrey County Council?

**Reply:**

Since 1 January 2013 we have had 5838 carriageway pothole claims involving vehicle damage.

The total paid by the council is £375,854.70 in respect of these claims.

1302 out of the 5838 requests for compensation during this period have been paid, i.e. 22% of claims made.

**MR RICHARD WALSH, CABINET MEMBER FOR LOCALITIES AND WELLBEING**

**(3) MR ALAN YOUNG (CRANLEIGH AND EWHURST) TO ASK:**

Would the Leader of the Council agree that this Council should encourage measures to tackle the growing blight of litter in the county? Would he therefore support *Country Life's* 'Clean for The Queen' campaign, which has galvanised parish and town councils up and down the land to clean up the public realm in preparation for Her Majesty the Queen's 90<sup>th</sup> birthday?

**Reply:**

The Leader of the Council has asked me to respond, as this question has so much to do with volunteering, which comes within my portfolio.

The Council has been clear regarding its commitment to the fight against litter across our county. In 2013/14 the Leader of the Council together with the Leaders of Surrey's Borough and District Councils, championed a campaign to combat litter on our roads, high streets and across our beautiful countryside. We all know that it is a small minority who choose to litter impacting on the wellbeing of all our residents. Building on the

excellent work already undertaken by our Borough and District Councils, we raised awareness of the litter issue and the penalties for littering, encouraged our schools and businesses to get involved and supported our residents to volunteer in their local areas. I am proud that as a consequence we now have improved partnership working across key agencies and ongoing projects around enforcement, education, business and highways to improve the litter issue.

With the upcoming 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration of Her Majesty the Queen, I am delighted to lend my support, and that of this council, to the 'Clean for The Queen' campaign highlighted by Country Life. Surrey County Council are promoting 'Clean for The Queen' through staff volunteering and I am proud to report that there are events across the county being organised by our schools, residents associations, parishes, district councils and community groups. I am sure the number of events will grow as we get closer to the time (4 - 6 March) and I encourage everyone to get involved. I fully expect this initiative to be a success.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge firstly the excellent work of our borough and district street cleansing services and our highways services, who work tirelessly to help keep our county litter free. Secondly, I would like to pay tribute to the residents and businesses across Surrey who, through volunteering and donating employee time, continue to make significant contributions to keeping our county beautiful. I hope you all share the pride I feel in the efforts of our residents and employees when it comes to this matter.

Note: If anyone needs support regarding organising and registering their event with 'Clean for The Queen' ([www.cleanforthequeen.co.uk](http://www.cleanforthequeen.co.uk)) please contact Yvonne Rees, Strategic Director for Communities, Surrey County Council.

## **MR JOHN FUREY, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND FLOODING**

### **(4) MRS FIONA WHITE (GUILDFORD WEST) TO ASK:**

In response to a question in November last year, I was told by Highways officers that they had installed a couple of all-new pelican crossings in the last year and they cost about £130,000. I find that a guide cost in Wiltshire is £40,000-£50,000 with a comment that design and supervision/configuration of installation typically costs £15,000 in addition to the construction costs. Would the Cabinet Member please account for the difference in the costs between Surrey and Wiltshire for what doing what must be similar work?

### **Reply:**

It is difficult to comment on the Wiltshire scheme as every transport scheme is unique, with pelican crossings having different characteristics, i.e. a simple pedestrian crossing to a more complex crossing for cyclists and pedestrians. However the £40,000 to £50,000 value would seem to only account for provision of equipment only for a basic crossing, and does not include the additional costs of design, traffic management and costs of utility companies to complete essential pipe work diversions etc.

In Surrey, as standard, we will generally install puffin crossings, and frequently toucan crossings, to account for cyclists, rather than pelican crossings. In addition there is normally a requirement to widen footways and move out kerb lines, as well as upgrading existing lighting, signing and antiskid surfaces on the approaches. In Surrey,

our network is typically more congested in terms of underground services which often results in the need to spend large sums of money with utility companies before a scheme can even commence. In addition, traffic volumes are such that traffic management during the course of works can be more complex and at times will increase costs.

Over the past few years we have introduced a number of new signalised crossings and values are typically £100,000 to £150,000, unless on a dual carriageway where costs can increase. These costs include all aspects of a scheme from design and feasibility to delivery and remedial works. When appropriate and when site conditions allow, we are looking at opportunities to install zebra crossings rather than signalised crossings as these are less costly to install provided there are only minor ancillary items.

In terms of cost management we continually benchmark and negotiate with our suppliers to secure the best deals for equipment and labour, and these would be comparable to the costs quoted by Wiltshire. However, the cost of utility diversions is fixed by the energy market over which we have little influence, while traffic management costs will be dependent on the level of diversion and construction time unique for the scheme.

#### **MR DAVID HODGE, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

##### **(5) MRS HAZEL WATSON (DORKING HILLS) TO ASK:**

Does the Leader of the Council agree with the Economic Prosperity, Environment and Highways Board in rejecting the motion that the quality of life of Surrey residents who live near to roads and whose quality of life is adversely impacted by the noise generated from the road surface should be a factor which is considered along with cost when undertaking surface dressing work in the county or does the Leader of the Council disagree with the Board's decision?

##### **Reply:**

As Mrs Watson is aware, this motion was passed from this Council to the Economic Prosperity, Environment and Highways Board for consideration on 26 January 2016 and I support the conclusions that the Board came to after a full and thorough debate.

#### **MR MIKE GOODMAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING**

##### **(6) MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:**

Could the Council provide an update on the Surrey Waste Partnership / Surrey County Council plans to procure a joint waste collection contract across Surrey's Districts and Boroughs (note this was reported by Letsrecycle.com last April - <http://www.letsrecycle.com/news/latest-news/surrey-councils-seek-joint-100m-collection-contract/>).

Currently Reigate and Banstead collects paper separately from dry mixed recyclables. I understand in other districts and boroughs, these are all collected together (alongside food and residual waste collections).

What is the timescale and plans for this going forward; will Reigate and Banstead be required to switch to collecting paper and other recyclables together; and how will this

lead to the capital investment required to improve the separation, financial value and recycling rates that will be achieved in future across Surrey?

**Reply:**

The Surrey Waste Partnership is currently procuring a single contract for waste and recycling collection and street cleaning in at least four of Surrey's Districts and Boroughs. The procurement process is currently underway and the successful contractor is scheduled to be selected in the Autumn. Once the contract is awarded there will be a staggered start depending on when each council's current contract ends. The earliest to be in place will be in Elmbridge in June 2017.

The contract will be awarded against a common specification with one set of unit rates to maximise economies of scale and efficiencies across the partner authorities. The specification asks for a fully co-mingled collection of recyclate, and includes a change control mechanism so that the contract can adapt to the authorities' changing requirements over the term. As part of the mobilisation process, it is envisaged that there will be investment in new vehicles and equipment to support the delivery of the new contract.

All Surrey District and Borough Councils have the opportunity to join the four who have initially committed to the project as it progresses.

**MR MIKE GOODMAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING**

**(7) MR ROBERT EVANS (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK:  
2<sup>nd</sup> question**

The Mayor of London announced on 21 January 2016, plans whereby Transport for London (TfL) will assume control over several suburban rail routes into the capital, including those operated by South West Trains and other operators, through Surrey.

What discussions or other communications has the Council had on this subject with the Mayor and TfL?

**Reply:**

The announcement of 21 January looks at ways to give millions of rail passengers a better experience by examining the potential for a wide range of improvements, as set out in a prospectus published by Department for Transport (DfT) and TfL. The prospectus sets out a commitment to improving capacity and service levels across the region's rail network, ensuring that it is able to support the capital's growing population and help drive the economy.

It is vital that this Council continues to work with the DfT and TfL in developing these proposals, ensuring that we collectively work hard to improve rail service for our residents.

It is generally agreed that there is a need for closer working in London and the South East on rail services and delivery. As franchises come up for renewal, TfL is seeking the opportunity to transfer certain inner suburban services to them. As part of this there is a clear need to establish appropriate governance with local transport authorities, along with agreement on the timing of any changes. Importantly, we need to actively

safeguard the provision of longer distance services for areas beyond London in respect to any transfer of inner services to TfL.

In June last year I gave evidence to the London Assembly's Transport Committee, which at that time was carrying out an investigation of this concept. This was followed by a letter from the Leader of the Council to the London Assembly setting out the views of the Council, highlighting the need for rail infrastructure and rail services to support economic growth.

Discussions are continuing with TfL, closely linked to our collective work in developing and promoting Crossrail 2 - a scheme identified as a priority within our Rail Strategy. Our overall aim is to ensure that this Council is proactive in shaping our rail strategy and rail services to improve the offer to residents and to support our three southern counties devolution agenda.

This Council will respond to the current consultation which will close on 18 March 2016. Others of course may also wish to do so. Our aim is to ensure that through collaborative working with partners such as TfL we can meet the needs of rapidly rising passenger demand, create better connections and unlock new homes and jobs.

**MRS CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES WELLBEING**

**(8) MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:  
2<sup>nd</sup> question**

I understand that numbers of Looked After Children in Surrey have increased to around 900, including some 150 unaccompanied asylum seeker children. This additional responsibility sits alongside the need to recruit and retain more social workers to address the Improvement Plan following the Ofsted Report on Children's Services.

How much money has been allocated in the budget process for likely further increases in this budget line, due to Surrey's commitment to take its fair share of Syrian refugees, including unaccompanied children, and does the Cabinet Member responsible believe this is sufficient to ensure adequate services for all vulnerable children in Surrey who may require them?

**Reply:**

The numbers of Looked After Children have increased during 2015/16, with an increase of over 50% in Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) during 2015/16 (103 in April to 158 in December 2015). We do receive grant funding for UASC but this does not cover the full cost of the service (average shortfall of £10,000 per child per annum). These increasing numbers of Looked After Children and costs have been factored into the 2016/17 budget at an increased level of £2.5m, which is over and above general demographic growth and inflation. Front line staffing budgets have also been increased by £1.5m, to deal with the increasing demand.

We have a collective responsibility for Looked After Children with partners through our corporate parenting duties and we are continuing to provide sufficient increases in budgets to match current and estimated needs. The additional funding in 2016/17 is considered to be sufficient to support the levels of placements we need, including specialist placements for those at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) or with

therapeutic needs, as well as ensuring we are able to meet our duties to young people as they become careleavers and live independently.

**MR DAVID HODGE, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**(9) MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:  
3<sup>rd</sup> question**

The Government's "offer" (as it describes it) to reduce the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) it provides to Surrey to zero over two years (instead of four years as planned) makes it hard for the Council to refuse the Government's other "offer" to allow council tax to go up to 4% without a referendum.

Does the Leader of the Council believe that cutting support to Councils even faster across the UK is the best way for the Government to manage the national budget and that creating a shortfall in care budgets across UK councils is the best way to manage the nation's health?

Could the Leader of the Council please provide an update on the request for 'transitional funds' to address the former and what is planned to address the latter?

**Reply:**

The Government has set out a four-year settlement for local government and this is something that the Local Government Association has campaigned for. It gives Councils the ability to plan long term strategic decisions about delivering services to their residents. This is sound financial management.

It is also clear that the Government are not going to fund the pressures of increasing adult social care demand from general taxation. This burden must then fall on the local tax payer, so the ability to raise a further 2% in council tax precept is the only alternative.

As I have made clear in my report last year, we have known and were planning for the phasing out RSG over four years. The shock is the redistribution of the shrinking amount of RSG nationally from the shire areas to Inner London and Northern Metropolitan Authorities. This means that Surrey effectively loses this funding in two years instead of the planned four years.

That is why I have been vociferous in demanding Transitional Relief and worked tirelessly with my borough and district colleagues and other county councils to achieve this. This is so we continue to manage our finances in a strategic way and make the right decisions on providing services for our residents in the future.

What is absolutely clear – the Council's budget is not sustainable without Transitional Relief.

**MR DAVID HODGE, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**(10) MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:  
4<sup>th</sup> question**

I understand that the funding under the Better Care Fund is now rolled into the overall - much reduced - Revenue Support Grant that Surrey County Council receives from the Government.

What are the remaining responsibilities and financial cost of implementation of the Care Act, and timescale for this?

In particular, how will the Council support self funders? And what plans does the Council have to meet the volume of enquiries likely to be received from people self-funding their care?

**Reply:**

It is the Care Act funding which has been rolled in to the Revenue Support Grant – and effectively taken away, not the Better Care Funding.

**MR JOHN FUREY, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND FLOODING**

**(11) MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:  
5<sup>th</sup> question**

Under the new highways contract extension Surrey County Council (SCC) has the liability for pothole fixing if the number of potholes in Surrey exceeds the budgeted number. Please can you confirm what the unit charges for such pothole repair are and how they compare to those of other councils?

**Reply:**

The contract extension report includes, within the budget, a fixed fee to repair approximately 70,000 potholes per year. This volume cap is based upon a "typical year" and in the last six years SCC has repaired on average 65,000 to 70,000 potholes per year. The one exception was 2013/14, where potholes increased significantly due to the prolonged rain and flooding. If this volume cap was to be exceeded in the future, then the authority will pay £77 per pothole repair. This cost was bench marked to both County Councils in the South East and wider London highway authorities, as monitored by the annual independent Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance (ALARM) survey. The benchmark confirmed two average costs:

- £70 to £110 for a permanent pothole repair (i.e. damaged asphalt properly removed, square cut and filled with hot asphalt, with 2 year repair warranty)
- £52 to £65 for a temporary pothole repair (i.e. cold asphalt poured into damaged area and on average 6/12 month repair warranty)

Given the authority specification and commitment to delivering permanent pothole repairs, £77 was therefore agreed, following negotiation, as a competitive best value price.