

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

TUESDAY 12 JULY 2016

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

MR MIKE GOODMAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

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

There continues to be a large number of on-going anomalies regarding transport links with London, both with bus routes and in particular which Surrey stations are in zone 6 and which are not. Does the Council have any current plans to meet with the Department for Transport, Transport for London and the new Mayor's Office to see if a fairer system can be established?

Reply:

I agree with County Councillor Robert Evans that it is vital for this Council to continue to talk to and work with the Department for Transport and also Transport for London in considering cross border transport, ensuring that we collectively work hard to improve service for our residents. With the physical proximity to London, Surrey and the south east offers a real opportunity of a polycentric approach of delivering local growth as well as supporting the needs of the capital. We want to see greater integration and connectivity, linking places and people, not just with London but across the wider south east, including Surrey.

We regularly have positive and proactive discussions with Transport for London, discussing cross border bus services and suburban rail services, both of which provide access between Surrey and the Capital for residents of this county and London.

We are also in regular liaison with the Department for Transport and neighbouring councils, most recently on the opportunities the Buses Bill may afford this Council.

In recent weeks Officers have met with Transport for London to continue our discussions on potential further rail devolution, a subject that was raised at County Council in February of this year. We are also in discussion with peer Councils and government on this matter.

I hope this assures Members that by working with partners and government we are seeking to secure the best possible deal for our residents.

**MR DAVID HODGE, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND MRS HELYN CLACK,
CABINET MEMBER FOR WELLBEING AND HEALTH**

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

What are the likely financial consequences for the County Council as a result of the U.K leaving the EU? In particular, what direct funding does the County Council currently receive from the EU that would be at risk of being lost following the UK leaving the EU? What EU funding is also received indirectly by Surrey or the County Council via partner organisations such as the 2 Local Enterprise Partnerships, Surrey

Wildlife Trust, Surrey's universities and any other key organisations is at risk of being lost following the UK leaving the EU?

Reply:

The consequences of the outcome of the recent Referendum for the financial position of the county council will depend on a series of decisions that have yet to be made, including on public expenditure.

Future UK access to EU funding will be addressed as part of EU exit negotiations. At present, the council and other organisations in Surrey have access to various trans-national EU funds as well as European Structural and Investment Fund programmes managed at the level of Local Enterprise Partnerships to support growth and employment. The initial advice from national Government to LEPs is that these funds will remain available for the duration of the current programme up to 2020.

As more becomes known over the coming months, Members will be kept informed of developments.

MRS DENISE LE GAL, CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS SERVICES AND RESIDENT EXPERIENCE

(3) MR WILL FORSTER (WOKING SOUTH) TO ASK:

Please will the Council confirm if all of the requests in the last two years under the Freedom of Information Act were responded to in the required time? If not, how many requests took longer than they should have?

Reply:

The Information Commissioner is the Regulator for FOI requests and has set a standard of 85% as a target response time. Of the 3,822 FOI requests received by the County Council in the last two years, 88% were responded to within the required time in 2015-16 and 91% the previous year. For the period 2015-16 we currently have no requests outstanding.

The FOI Act allows authorities to place requests on hold in certain circumstances, for example, if the request is not clear or gives insufficient detail to enable a response to be made. Some of the requests that have been received during the last two years fall into the category of requiring further clarification and are therefore not included in these statistics.

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

(4) MR STEPHEN COOKSEY (DORKING SOUTH & THE HOLMWOODS) TO ASK:

The proposed Highways budget for 2016-2017 contains a proposal to save a significant amount of money by turning off street lights.

Would the Cabinet member for Highways please indicate:

- a) What criteria have been established in order to select those areas where street lights will be turned off?
- b) Whether a decision has been taken about whether lights will be turned off for a limited period or permanently and if for a limited period whether this period has been established?
- c) When and how will consultation be undertaken with local members and the local communities which have been selected for lights to be turned off?
- d) When is it proposed that this process will be implemented?

Reply:

The County Council is considering various ways to ensure our limited resources are spent in the most appropriate way for the benefit of our residents. This does include looking at how we illuminate the highway network. All four points to the question are explained below.

Part Night Lighting (where lights are switched off for some of the night) will initially be focussed in residential areas only. Any decisions will be based on work carried out by other Local Authorities who have implemented Part Night Lighting and research carried out by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM). Best practise has established a series of "Avoidance Criteria", if any of these factors are present Part Night Lighting will not be implemented on those specific roads. These factors include

- High volume traffic routes
- Locations where traffic calming measures such as chicanes and speed humps have been installed and require illumination
- Locations with formal Pedestrian Crossings
- Busy town centres
- Locations where the Police indicate that Part Night Lighting may have an adverse impact on crime
- Locations where a related Serious Road Traffic Collision has occurred during the proposed switch off period

All roads will be visited and risk assessed by officers prior to the implementation of Part Night Lighting against the above criteria.

Part Night Lighting has already been implemented by a number of Local Authorities. The LANTERNS study conducted by LSHTM and published in 2015 found no link to dimming and/or switching lights with any increase in crime or road traffic accidents. It is intended therefore that this will be a permanent change to the lighting profile in Surrey.

A presentation will be provided to Local Committee Chairs at its next meeting on 26th July which will be followed by the provision of a list of roads for each District or Borough. The implementation of Part Night Lighting will be widely publicised with detailed information available to residents in early September.

It is anticipated that the first phase which comprises approximately 33,000 lights and commence switch off from 1 October 2016. A further 12,000 lights are expected to move to Part Night Lighting in December 2016/January 2017 following the completion of site visits described above. The intention is that lights in affected roads will be turned off between midnight and 0500hrs every day.

MR DAVID HODGE, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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

I understand that the Three Southern Counties (3SCs) submitted a devolution prospectus to the Local Government Secretary in September 2015. Please can the Leader provide:

- An update on recent progress made and details of meetings held with outside bodies to Surrey County Council both in the run up to the prospectus being submitted to the government, and since that time. Please confirm which of these meetings were in public;
- Confirm what governance options are currently being considered for the 3SC proposal; and
- At what stage Surrey County Council is planning to invite scrutiny in public of the current prospectus prepared by Surrey Councillors, and when the public will be invited to give their views, such as in meetings or consultation in the future?

Reply:

Since the devolution prospectus was submitted in September 2015 there have been many discussions with Government, Members and partners. These include:

- a positive Ministerial challenge meeting with Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, Baroness Williams in January;
- discussions with our MPs;
- meetings of all 26 local authority Leaders and Chairs of the Local Enterprise Partnerships;
- a Member seminar here on 11 February and briefings to District and Borough Members led by our Chief Executive;
- officer meetings with civil servants; and
- a 3SC newsletter is circulated regularly with updates on progress. I recommend all Members sign up to receive it at https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKESCC/subscriber/new?topic_id=UKESCC_121 to help keep up to date with developments.

The Government recognises that our proposals are ambitious - rightly so with our residents' best interests at heart. Government has also made clear that the more ambitious the proposals, the more robust it expects governance arrangements to be. On the basis that form follows function, all governance options, including a combined authority or an elected mayor, are on the table.

Before any decisions are made, including on governance, each of the 3SC authorities will bring the proposed deal to their Council's membership to secure 'in-principle' approval.

Assuming this is secured, a governance review will be conducted to give residents, Members and partners the opportunity to express their views and help ensure any deal is right for the area.

MR RICHARD WALSH, CABINET MEMBER FOR LOCALITIES AND COMMUNITY WELLBEING

(6) MR MICHAEL SYDNEY (LINGFIELD) TO ASK:

In August 2015 you informed me by letter that only two members of library service staff had been given redundancy payments following the Library Service Staffing Review.

According to SCC FOI responses, 82 members of library service staff left between December 2014 when the Staffing Review started and October 1st 2015. By January 2016 this had increased to 91. Of the 15 who retired only two informed SCC of their intention to do so prior to the Review?

The new Library Service staffing structure introduced new ways of working, moving away from the traditional decades long staffing model with staff based at one location, to a team based model involving many staff members, many working part time hours, in roving posts/roles requiring base relocation and, in some cases, base rotation at up to 5 locations, and County wide travel.

Yet, from the outset, staff were told that there was no question of redundancy and, despite lobbying from the Trade Union, Unison, with whom I was in touch, requesting that SCC "urgently" circulate vital information to all affected staff, including those who had left, regarding all their rights and options in the restructure, the only message that did materialise was in an internal bulletin in May 2015. This was circulated six months after the start of the Review, three months after the end of the consultation period, two months after staff had to submit preference forms, and a week before staff had to take up their new posts. Since you sent the extract to me in August 2015, you are aware that this solely related to staff who had been offered a suitable alternative role and who were already part way through the four week trial period.

I have seen an e-mail from Unison's Regional Organiser sent in July 2015 which states "it would have been a good idea for clear information to have been provided to all affected staff explaining the law in relation to redundancy and redeployment in the context of the reorganisation. Having been copied in to emails during April and early May, and having had some input into the situation locally at that time, it was my assumption that this would then be pursued by the employer (SCC) with UNISON locally, and I would also have assumed that if that was not forthcoming from the employer that it would have been wise for the local branch to circulate the information themselves directly to UNISON members.

To provide this information directly to members of UNISON now would cause unnecessary confusion, as staff who have stayed and been re-deployed into alternative employment have now been working in those jobs for longer than the length of the statutory trial period, and therefore have no right to invoke these issues now to seek to leave the organisation with a redundancy payment. It is, effectively, too late to be of any use to those still employed."

My question to you is why did SCC adopt a policy of withholding vital information from Library Staff regarding all their options and rights in the staffing restructure? And how much money did this policy save the County?

Reply:

Thank you for your question, referring to the changes that have been made in the library service in particular to Lingfield Library.

The library service restructure was designed to ensure a sustainable library service, responding to economic pressures and technological change. Implementation was in accordance with the Council's published Change Management Policy, which is available on S-Net and in addition to a formal consultation period there was written documentation, local meetings, personal interviews and surgeries, a Frequently Asked Questions bulletin and staff bulletin. Regular meetings were held with Unison throughout the process.

Key principles of SCC's Change Management Policy include:

- Avoiding redundancies through careful planning and exploring tried and new ways to achieve it.
- Ensuring that redeployment is offered to employees who are at risk of redundancy thereby retaining where possible valuable skills, experience and knowledge within the council.

Support, including financial support for relocation was available to staff to help manage the transition.

I am pleased that we have been able to ensure continuity of employment for so many people. A number of staff have left for a variety of personal reasons. There is, of course, always some turnover of staff on a yearly basis and the figures you have quoted do not seem exceptionally high.

I have always been very conscious on my visits to our libraries throughout Surrey of how highly valued our staff and volunteers are by the users and communities in which they operate and it has always been this council's policy to strongly support our staff during any changes which may affect them. We consider that the changes that we have made will help to continue to keep all our libraries open and provide a good quality service to our residents. Alongside this, we have been able to make a year on year saving of £220,000 which as we all know is essential to ensure that we meet our budget.

DOROTHY ROSS-TOMLIN, CHAIRMAN OF POLICE AND CRIME PANEL

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

Has Surrey County Council had any discussions with the new County's Police and Crime Commissioner about the possible sale of the headquarters of Surrey Police, i.e. Mount Browne?

Reply:

Since the election of the new Police and Crime Commissioner in May 2016, the Surrey Police and Crime Panel have not had any discussions with the Commissioner about the possible sale of the Surrey Police headquarters. An item to discuss the Commissioner's estate strategy has been added to the Panel's work programme for future discussion.

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

(8) MRS HAZEL WATSON (DORKING HILLS) TO ASK: (2nd question)

How many hours per week is each County Council youth centre open for after school or evening youth provision? Please list each youth centre by name and location. How many youth worker vacancies are there?

Reply:

Thank you for your question. This answer demands a large amount of data, so I will send you the detailed information after the meeting. The information will also be made available for any other Member on request.

**MRS DENISE LE GAL, CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS SERVICES AND
RESIDENT EXPERIENCE**

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

Please can you confirm the pay rates (including agency fee) that Surrey County Council pays for its highest 10 paid agency staff, and the directorates within which these agency staff are employed?

Reply:

The Council employs a range of specialist agency staff who provide cover for vacancies (short and longer term) or specialist skills for short duration work. The directorates employing the highest paid locums are Business Services and Children's, Schools and Families.

The highest paid locums in Business Services are generally engaged as specialists on developmental projects with hourly rates of pay (including agency mark up) in the range £46 to £79.

The remaining highest paid locums are in Children's, Schools and Families and are generally engaged in specialist assessment roles working directly with Children with hourly rates of pay (including agency mark up) in the range £59 to £76.

This page is intentionally left blank