

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**TUESDAY 10 OCTOBER 2017**

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

**MS DENISE TURNER-STEWART, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES**

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

Will the Council please enlighten members as to the current position regarding the future of the fire and rescue service provision in Spelthorne?

**Reply:**

Surrey County Council confirmed in February this year that Staines fire station will stay open until the new Fordbridge fire station is operational. The outstanding consideration regarding fire and rescue provision in Spelthorne, is how many firefighters and fire engines will operate from Fordbridge fire station when it opens. To help inform the best possible outcome for this decision we are considering the responses from the consultation, alongside other factors and we will be engaging with Divisional Members and key Stakeholders over the coming months. I will update Members on the outcome of these discussions in due course and the recommendations on crewing arrangements will then be presented to the Cabinet for decision.

**MRS MARY LEWIS, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION**

**2. MR CHRIS BOTTEN (CATERHAM HILL) TO ASK:**

How many state schools in Surrey have submitted a deficit budget for 2017/18?

**Reply:**

Surrey has 271 maintained schools and only five schools had deficits at March 2017 (less than 2%) and a further two are projecting deficits by March 2018. Officers and Babcock 4S are working with these schools to implement recovery plans.

Deficit Balances

In recent years Surrey has had relatively few schools with deficits, as follows:

	As at 31 March 2015	As at 31 March 2016	As at 31 March 2017
Deficits as % of total budget	No. of schools	No. of schools	No. of schools
0 – 5%	2	4	2
5 – 10%	1	0	2
10% +	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>

**MR MEL FEW, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS**

**3. MRS ANGELA GOODWIN (GUILDFORD NORTH) TO ASK:**

What financial modelling has been carried out to estimate the increased demand in Adult Social Care in the next financial year following the withdrawal of Housing Related Support? Similarly, what estimations have been made with regard to the impact of this decision upon warden schemes in Surrey's boroughs and districts?

**Reply:**

**Demand for Adult Social Care in the next financial year following the withdrawal of Housing Related Support?**

Payment of this benefit is in the majority of cases paid to organisations and not individuals. We have checked other authorities as to their experience in withdrawing funding of this nature with no response. We have concluded that it is not possible with any degree of certainty to 'financially model' the impact of this decision.

As set out in the Cabinet paper an amount of the funding for this service will be held in reserve who meet the eligibility criteria to be assessed as to their needs going forward. The withdrawal of funding does not impact the socially excluded as set out in the cabinet paper.

**Impact of this decision upon warden schemes in Surrey's boroughs and districts?**

Providers meet the costs of employing a scheme manager/warden through various income streams, including rent, service charges, charitable funds and the County Council's Housing Related Support contribution. Housing Related Support is capped at £11 per person per week for older people and 10 hours per person per week for people with a disability.

Withdrawal of Housing Related Support funding will not necessarily mean the service will end or that the scheme manager/warden service will be withdrawn. It will very much depend upon the provider's response to the Council's decision. Providers may find alternative funding streams to retain the service unchanged, they may reduce or remodel their offer.

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

**4. MRS HAZEL WATSON (DORKING HILLS) TO ASK:**

Will the Leader of the Council confirm that, if the County Council's bid is successful, he will be seeking for all or as much as possible of the County Council's proportion of the income that will be received from the Business Rate Retention pilot scheme to be used to fund services such as Children's services and Adult Social Care?

**Reply:**

The application for Surrey as an area to apply to become a Business Rates Retention Pilot presents an opportunity to help shape in inform the development of a new model of funding local government in England, and demonstrate the high degree of

partnership working between the local authorities in Surrey – something that is not that common throughout the country.

The prospectus from the Department of Communities and Local Government inviting pilots made clear they want them to be innovative and look to support both local authority financial stability and sustainability, and economic growth and regeneration. All local authorities in Surrey are facing severe financial pressures from cuts in government funding and rising demand for services – particularly social care for the County Council. Similarly, all local authorities recognise the long term prosperity of their areas depend on helping businesses to develop and grow.

Although Business Rates Retention Pilot will not solve all these issues, it will help. And the partnership working by the county, borough and district councils will be an example of how local authorities can work together.

## **MRS HELYN CLACK, CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH**

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

What lessons can be learnt from the County Council's handling of the sexual health services contract, the lack of consultation with services users, the critical comments from Healthwatch and incurring extra costs of £1.7m?

#### **Reply:**

Surrey County Council and NHS England (NHSE) have commissioned a sexual health and HIV service a service that fulfils the statutory duty for both organisations. The challenging financial situation faced by the county council has meant that services need to be delivered in a different way, encouraging self-care and prevention to reduce the need for face to face consultations where appropriate. The exit of three previous contracts was complex and through mobilisation the full extent of this was realised. To ensure that the transition was safe it was necessary to extend the contracts for Frimley Park and Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals (ASPH). Both SCC and NHSE take note of the feedback from Healthwatch and a patient working group has been established to work through key issues especially in relation to the phase three transfer of services from ASPH to Central & NW London NHS Foundation Trust. The Adults and Health Select Committee recommended that the Committee establish a task group to review the implementation phase, consultation process and lessons to be learned from the commissioning of sexual health and HIV services, with a view to informing future commissioning of services. Commissioners will participate fully in the task group and implement learning.

## **MS DENISE TURNER-STEWART, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES**

### **6. MR DAVID GOODWIN (GUILDFORD SOUTH WEST) TO ASK:**

Why was the initial consultation on the future of Surrey Performing Arts Library only scheduled to last for two weeks?

#### **Reply:**

The questionnaire on the Performing Arts Library (PAL) was targeted at the users of the library and was sent to all registered contacts/ users of the Performing Arts Library.

The purpose was to establish how the various options would impact on direct users. The original timescale seemed realistic within this context and in fact the bulk of the responses appeared early on within the two weeks.

When I became aware that the survey had been widely picked up and spread through social media and was generating considerable interest beyond the intended recipients I asked the service to extend the deadline to 1 October.

At closure, over 1400 on-line consultation responses had been received and 220 comments. We are confident it has reached the local (and wider) music and drama community and the results are providing useful feedback to assist us with how we can make the required financial saving and help us identify options for the future of PAL.

**MR MIKE GOODMAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT**

**7. MR STEPHEN COOKSEY (DORKING SOUTH & THE HOLMWOODS) TO ASK:**

Now that the Cabinet Member has reversed his plans to close 4 Community Recycling Centres, plans which he described as "comprehensive and efficient", will he outline what further spending reductions he plans to make in this financial year given the predicted savings underachievement in Waste of £2.6m, according to the Council's budget monitoring report?

**Reply:**

This year the waste service has brought forward a number of initiatives to reduce the cost of operating the service. These includes a reduction of £1 million in recycling credit payments to districts and boroughs and changes to the CRC service which will result in a saving of £0.34- £0.48 million in 2017/18 and £1.08 - £1.56 million in a full year. We are currently in discussion with our waste management contractor Suez to see whether further savings can be identified within the contract and we are also looking carefully at our projected spend on waste management for this year to ensure that we have fully accounted for the effect of the significant savings activities to date. For example the reduction in waste volumes at the community recycling centres.

Officers are working hard to identify ways to reduce expenditure across all of Environment and Infrastructure services within this financial year in order to compensate for the shortfall in targeted savings and will continue to do so.

**MR JOHN FUREY, CABINET MEMBER FOR ECONOMIC PROSPERITY**

**8. MR WILL FORSTER (WOKING SOUTH) TO ASK:**

Please will the County Council confirm if it has submitted any expressions of interest or bids to the Government for Forward Funding under the Housing Infrastructure Fund? If so, what bids were submitted? What consultation was undertaken with the relevant divisional member or members on these schemes?

**Reply:**

The County Council submitted five expressions of interest for Forward Funding under the Housing Infrastructure Fund focused on respectively:

- Woking Town Centre
- A320 north of Woking
- A22 in Tandridge
- Slyfield Regeneration Programme
- A31 in Farnham.

The expressions of interest were developed with and supported by the relevant boroughs and districts. For any proposals accepted by Government the next stage is development of a detailed business case at which point there will be the opportunity for wider and more detailed discussion and engagement including with relevant divisional members.

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

**9. MRS PENNY RIVERS (GODALMING NORTH) TO ASK:**

According to the County Council's Section 151 Officer, the Watts Trust is:

*"financially viable - with support received from a number of patrons and benefactors and gross income in 2015/16 of £3.4m. The Trust has total funds of £38.4m, of which £1.2m is in unrestricted funds, £9.6m in restricted funds and £27.5m endowment funds, which includes the value of its artworks and buildings".*

Please can the Leader of the Council explain the significant amount of financial support that the County Council is giving to an organisation that is financially viable and in possession of funds worth just under £40M, given the enormous cuts being made to essential services across Surrey?

**Reply:**

Recently I have agreed a package of financial support for the Watts Gallery as whilst the Trust have capital assets their revenue budget would be impacted by the loss of time-limited annual funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. This would mean, going forward, that even with the benefit of a new (and smaller) funding stream from the Arts Council as a recently designated National Portfolio Organisation, that they would not be able to continue to deliver - and develop - projects and activities that contribute to education, social welfare, health and wellbeing programmes that are to the benefit of Surrey residents and complement council priorities. Payments will be made in arrears – and based on performance against delivery targets.

**MR TIM OLIVER, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY & BUSINESS SERVICES**

**10. MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:**

The October 2017 to January 2018 Cabinet Forward Plan highlights plans to progress the disposal of county council owned sites (noted in the Cabinet Forward Plan, OJEU Reference No. 2017/S 032-058452). The concession performance criteria focus on an estimated value of £1.5 billion (excluding VAT) through a joint venture over 15 years, working with other public sector organisations and initially focused on 32 sites but with the 'further range of over 100 sites, with potential for over 5,000 units. This is noted as sites 'primarily for/with a residential focus, including private rental sector asset opportunities'.

Please confirm how the council's plan relates to the housing strategy announced at the last council meeting.

The planned appointment of this Joint Venture Partner is stated as aiming to “ensure optimal performance and returns from investment activities”. With this in mind please confirm that ‘optimal performance’ will include affordability and environmental sustainability and confirm whether, in addition to reliance upon the local plan policies of the relevant boroughs and districts, this joint venture will set out delivery standards that maximise delivery of (truly) affordable homes and deliver best-practice standards for environmental sustainability.

**Reply:**

The Council will through the Joint Venture assess each site individually to meet a broad range of both local and regional objectives whilst seeking to deliver an optimal return for Surrey residents. Schemes to be developed will have to take into account the relevant national and local planning policies.”

**MR TIM OLIVER, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY AND BUSINESS SERVICES**

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

What financial investments (if any) does Surrey County Council still hold in tobacco firms?

**Reply:**

The county council does not hold any investments with tobacco firms.

The Surrey Local Government Pension Fund, of which the county council acts as administrator, does hold investments with tobacco firms. The value of these are set out in the table below, as at 29 September 2017.

	<b>Market valuation</b>
ALTRIA GROUP INC COM	£6.4m
BRITISH AMERICAN TOBACCO ORD GBP0.25	£12.0m
IMPERIAL BRANDS PLC GBP0.10	£2.0m
JAPAN TOBACCO INC NPV	£6.7m
SWEDISH MATCH NPV	£0.2m
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£27.3m</b>

The Pension Fund has a duty to ensure that it acts in the best interests of its past, present and future members – both employees and employers - and also that it acts impartially.

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

**12. MRS HAZEL WATSON (DORKING HILLS) TO ASK:**

Does the Leader of the Council support Leicestershire County Council's proposals, also backed by Essex and Kent, for a new funding formula for county councils?

**Reply:**

The current method of distributing funding to local authorities is flawed. It was flawed when introduced over ten years ago as it was designed to move funding away from county councils – it did not take account of the cost pressures that county areas faced, especially in areas such as social care. And over a decade later it is still flawed and the distribution of funding has diverged even further from the cost pressures faced by most county councils – especially in the South East.

It was to address the unfairness in funding between councils that I made representations to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to set up a Fair Funding Review of local government funding. I am aware of models that have been proposed by other local authorities and I do not accept the methodology behind them. A Fair Funding model has to match the distribution of funding to the principal cost drivers – such as Learning Difficulties, Older People and Road Use. In addition, the relative weightings applied to these are factors have to be proportionate; the difference between the two tiers in shire areas recognised, and finally the model must be evidenced based – not just on judgement.

I do not want Surrey to be treated as a special case, but I want its residents to be treated fairly so they receive the services they deserve. I am therefore happy to continue to work with the Secretary of State so that the Fair Funding Review delivers fair funding for all and is based on robust evidence.

**MS DENISE TURNER-STEWART, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES**

**13. MR DAVID GOODWIN (GUILDFORD SOUTH WEST) TO ASK:**

Many Surrey libraries are due to reduce their evening opening hours at the end of October. Can the Cabinet Member confirm what consultation with users was undertaken before this decision was taken? What other service reductions will take place in the library service by the end of the financial year 2017/18?

**Reply:**

The planned reduction in evening opening hours do not represent a significant change to the library service and is below the 15% per library change threshold which requires Local Committee approval. No public consultation was carried out.

In planning these reductions to opening hours the service looked at what will have the least impact on library users based on current data- patterns of visitor figures and book issuing. This study clearly showed that the evening opening hours were significantly the least used of library opening hours. Across the library network consistently less than 4% of visits occur after 5pm.

Small SCC managed libraries and community partnered libraries are unaffected by these changes. Largest busiest libraries will retain two late evenings or one late

evening according to levels of use, but late evenings are being withdrawn from the medium sized libraries. An Equalities Impact Assessment for these changes was undertaken and the Chairmen of Local Committees were briefed on the changes in July.

The Library Service is continually working on service efficiencies and this completes the total £397,000 savings for the library service in the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2017-18.

## **MR MIKE GOODMAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT**

### **14. MR WILL FORSTER (WOKING SOUTH) TO ASK:**

Some bus companies and local authorities have introduced audio-visual (AV) announcements on buses. These AV announcements helps passengers with disabilities travel with confidence by providing audible and visible information identifying the respective route and each upcoming stop. However, it is also useful to passengers unfamiliar with the route. During the summer, the Department for Transport launched a consultation on improving accessibility in transport, with a view on improving accessibility throughout Great Britain. This consultation closes on 15th November. Please will the County Council agree to submit a response to this consultation, if it has not already done so, and call for better accessibility on public transport? Regardless of the Government's decision, please will the Council work with local bus companies and install AV announcements on buses in Surrey?

### **Reply:**

The benefits of audio-visual announcements on buses are recognised across the bus industry. Audio visual announcements make travel by bus easier, encourage more bus use and increase customer satisfaction. This is because passengers know exactly where they are on their journey and when they have reached their stop.

As Councillor Forster notes, this provides a greater degree of confidence for everyone, including blind and partially sighted people or those who maybe unfamiliar with an area, for example, students who have just started at a new college or are beginning their first year at University.

In Surrey, the Stagecoach bus fleet which operates through Waverley and Guildford, and the Metrobus bus fleet operating in the east of Surrey are already equipped with audio-visual announcements. I am encouraged that these bus operators are already making investments such as this to benefit the travelling public.

Turning to the Department for Transport's Accessibility Action Plan consultation that was launched on 24 August, I can confirm that it is my intention to reply to this wide ranging consultation, which closes on 15 November.

By working collaboratively, this council will continue to develop enhancements that aim to make travel by bus easier, encourage more bus use and increase customer satisfaction.



**MR TIM OLIVER, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY & BUSINESS SERVICES**

**15. MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:**

The Surrey County Council Investment Strategy Review approved earlier this year plans to invest up to £1bn by 2020/21, with a maximum return of only 2%. It notes the aim for “a diversified portfolio to mitigate against risk”.

- a) What plans does the Council have to secure income streams from investments other than property to contribute to delivering this level of return on investment; and
- b) How will the benefits of these investments be monitored and evaluated to assess the extent that they improve value through improved Surrey County Council service delivery, the wellbeing of Surrey residents, and in terms of climate and environmental sustainability?

**Reply:**

The approved investment strategy is ‘to enable significant growth in the portfolio to reach an income target of £10m per annum by 2020/21’ and the net income return takes into account all costs associated with the strategy – in particular funding costs, administration, professional advisors and the cost of voids. The value of the eventual portfolio and returns from the strategy will depend on the quality of the assets purchased, and a diversified portfolio will have a range of returns. We estimate that on balance the overall net return will be between 1 and 2% but this is not an upper limit. The returns will depend upon our risk appetite – the higher the return the higher the risk.

The Council continues to assess other ways in which to deliver an income to enhance its financial resilience and where appropriate and within its powers the Cabinet will consider other forms of investment. In order to mitigate risk the Council will however focus on those areas in which it has some experience and expertise.

The benefits derived from investments are monitored by the Investment Board, a summary financial position is reported in each month’s financial report to Cabinet and the Investment Board produce an annual report. The income delivered by the strategy contributes to the council’s financial resilience and goes some way towards mitigating the impact of the loss of other more traditional sources of funding – such as government grants.

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

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

At its October 2013 meeting, Council passed a motion calling on the Government to prioritise investment in road and rail connections to the airports.

In view of the fact that bus routes into Heathrow, from the south of the airport, are now being reduced, what representations has Surrey made or will Surrey make to the Government, to seek more support for improved public transport links to the region’s two airports ?

**Reply:**

Heathrow airport is a prime economic driver for much of the South East. A key issue for this Council is surface access to the airport, particularly as any expansion will only be a success for residents and businesses if there is a clear, agreed framework for the necessary supporting infrastructure and services.

A number of bus routes serve Heathrow Airport from the south, although the coverage of routes from the south is not as comprehensive as that from the north, east or west. That said, I am pleased that we have managed to maintain much of the local bus network in the north west of Surrey, including south of Heathrow, following bus company Abellio's resignation from a range of local bus contracts in late 2016. We have achieved this by maintaining the services our residents rely upon the most and within agreed budgets.

More recently and working with Heathrow Airport Limited I am pleased that we have been able to introduce additional early morning journeys onto route 442 serving Stanwell Moor Village and Terminal 5. Discussions are ongoing with Heathrow Airport Limited, focussed through the Heathrow Area Transport forum, to see how we may collaboratively improve bus provision yet further from south of the airport, with an Officer meeting scheduled for tomorrow, 11 October.

Turning to rail, our Rail Strategy sets out the need for a Southern Rail Access to Heathrow. We continue to press Government to commission Network Rail to identify the optimum infrastructure and service combination for those being proposed. In conclusion, I would remind all Members that the Leader supported by fellow Cabinet Members has been working tirelessly to press the case for a better funding deal for this council to both Government and our MPs. This is because a key driver in our ability to provide any service, inclusive of buses, is our ability to pay for it.

**MR TIM OLIVER, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY & BUSINESS SERVICES****17. MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:**

The Monthly Monitoring Report at the September 26<sup>th</sup> Cabinet meeting highlights that of the council's 7,039 budgeted staff posts (full time equivalent), there are 729 vacancies (the difference between budgeted and occupied FTEs). It is recruiting to 487 of these live vacancies, 381 of them are in social care. Please can you provide?

- a) A breakdown of the number of these posts which are currently being recruited to, and those being left vacant, by Directorate; and
- b) Links to the assessments of the equality impact assessments that relate to this, particularly where the net staffing levels (after recruitment) is greater than 5%.

**Reply:**

a) *A breakdown of the number of these posts which are currently being recruited to, and those being left vacant, by Directorate; and*

	<b>Budgeted FTE</b>	<b>Occupied FTE</b>	<b>Vacancies</b>	<b>Active</b>
<b>Adult Social Care</b>	1,800	1,494	306	169
<b>Children, Schools &amp; Families</b>	3,013	2,766	247	212
<b>Business Services</b>	187	182	5	42
<b>Chief Executives Office</b>	67	58	9	7
<b>Legal, Democratic &amp; Cultural Services</b>	656	637	19	41
<b>Environment &amp; Infrastructure</b>	1,316	1,173	143	16
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,039</b>	<b>6,310</b>	<b>729</b>	<b>487</b>

**Please note:**

- Current vacancies figures may vary (more or less) if in year changes to establishment have been made that vary from those envisaged when the MTFP position was set; e.g. additional vacant roles may have been deleted or created by a reformulation of establishment
- Recruitment figures are indicated of the level of recruitment activity and are based on a count of posts under recruitment; i.e. we may be recruiting 2 part time posts which equate to one FTE vacancy. This will help explain why the recruitment figure in Legal, Democratic and Cultural Services is higher the vacancy figure.
- Recruitment figures in Business Services currently include recruitment to vacant posts in Orbis.

b) *Links to the assessments of the equality impact assessments that relate to this, particularly where the net staffing levels (after recruitment) is greater than 5%*

Within each directorate managers are able to make interim arrangements to cover vacancies, either agency workers, additional hours for existing staff or drawing on bank workers. In this way managers ensure service delivery is maintained.

This page is intentionally left blank