

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**TUESDAY 10 JULY 2018 2018****QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED UNDER THE PROVISIONS
OF STANDING ORDER 10.1****DENISE TURNER-STEWART, CABINET LEAD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY
SERVICES****1. MR ROBERT EVANS (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK:**

One year on from Grenfell Tower, what lessons has Surrey Fire and Rescue service learnt from the tragedy and what changes have been made in Surrey?

Reply:

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service provided a crew and its Aerial Ladder Platform (the tallest in England) on the morning after the Grenfell Tower fire. Over the subsequent days and nights, the service provided further vehicles, equipment, crews and officers to support London Fire Brigade.

Following advice from the National Fire Chiefs Council and at the Leader's request, a review of all high-rise buildings took place in Surrey. Fire service teams also carried out reassurance visits, reminding owners and managing agents of their responsibilities and providing an on-line high-rise safety leaflet for residents.

DAVID HODGE, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**2. MR CHRIS BOTTEN (CATERHAM HILL) TO ASK:**

Could the Leader of the Council indicate how, as part of the Children's Improvement process, he will amend our partnership arrangements with health colleagues such that we are able to hold them to account on the delivery of shared, agreed objectives? It seems unreasonable that Surrey Officers are to be held to account but that health colleagues are not directly accountable within our improvement processes.

Reply:

As the democratically accountable body for Surrey as whole, any judgement on our Children's Services is given to the County Council although it is important to recognise that inspections such as Ofsted look at the whole system and there will be lessons for our partners as well as the Council. We will only improve outcomes for children by working together and Health is a key partner for us. I am committed to driving forward this improvement and will continue to challenge both the Council and partners through the new independently chaired Improvement Board to ensure we hold each other to account. We are also working closely with health through our devolution deal with discussions progressing at pace around how we might commission jointly in the future – this is an exciting area and gives another opportunity for us to review the way we work together, strengthening both governance and accountability to ensure the best results for our residents.

COLIN KEMP, CABINET LEAD MEMBER FOR PLACE

3. MR STEPHEN COOKSEY (DORKING SOUTH AND THE HOLMWOODS) TO ASK:

About 10 years ago the former Education Building in Dene Street, Dorking, closed and has been empty ever since. In December 2016 Mole Valley Council approved plans submitted by Surrey County Council for redevelopment of the building as flats but the permission required commencement within 3 years. My enquiries always receive a response indicating that work will commence soon but to date nothing appears to have happened. Will the responsible Cabinet Member please give reasons why no work has yet been undertaken on the re-development and a clear indication about when work will begin?

Reply:

I can advise the Member that the surplus asset in question is within the first tranche of sites allocated to be developed as part of Surrey County Council's Residential Joint Venture development with Places for People. The Council have now this month concluded final legal negotiations and therefore both the Council and Places for People will have established the new Joint Venture vehicle by the end of July 2018.

Places for People are aware of the current planning status of the building and our officers will be working with them to now ensure that there is a robust deliverable programme that addresses the requirements for delivering the right outcomes for Surrey residents from the exciting development opportunity.

MEL FEW, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS

4. MRS ANGELA GOODWIN (GUILDFORD NORTH) TO ASK:

At the end of March 2017, ten independent Carer Support Schemes closed their offices and, through a Tender process, Action for Carers Surrey (ACS) was awarded the two year contract to support Carers across Surrey. Can the Cabinet Member please confirm exactly how many adult Carer details from each Carer Support Scheme (including Guildford, Waverley, Surrey Heath, Runnymede, Spelthorne, Epsom & Ewell etc.) were transferred across to ACS from the start of the new contract on 1 April 2017. And what is the total number of adult Carers they now have on their books at the end of their first full year of operating this model (ie as at 31 March 2018)?

Reply:

There were a total of 4,325 transferred from the start of the new contract and this comprised:

Elmbridge - 657
Epsom and Ewell - 564
Guildford - 717
Mole Valley - 440
Runnymede - 281
Spelthorne - 440
Surrey Heath - 336
Waverley - 517
Woking - 373
East Surrey - Nil*

*East Surrey Carers' Support Association continued to operate and therefore did not transfer any cases.

At the end of March 2018 Action for Carers had a total of 10,344 adult carers on the new service's books.

COLIN KEMP, CABINET LEAD MEMBER FOR PLACE

5. MRS HAZEL WATSON (DORKING HILLS) TO ASK:

What progress has been made to establish a joint venture to manage properties and when can we expect the County Council's vacant buildings to be either utilised, sold or let?

Reply:

I can advise the Member that the Council has now this month concluded final legal negotiations and therefore both the Council and Places for People will be establishing the new Joint Venture vehicle by the end of July 2018.

Places for People are aware of the requirement to deliver at pace the business cases and development opportunities for the first tranche of assets within the Joint Venture business case. Our officers will be working with them to now ensure that there is a robust programme that addresses the requirements for delivering the right outcomes for Surrey residents from this exciting opportunity.

CABINET MEMBER FOR ALL-AGE LEARNING

6. MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:

How many pupils were placed in non-maintained and independent schools outside of Surrey for each of the last 10 years? Please provide the number and cost for each year. How many were SEND pupils, and how many were non-SEND pupils?

Reply:

This is a very timely and constructive question that recognises and supports Surrey County Council's work to transform services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities as well as children's services. This transformation will focus on opportunities to ensure there is good quality local provision to meet children's needs closer to home and in their communities.

It has not been possible to gather all the data together to answer the question fully in the time available. However, officers have confirmed preliminary figures based on the Council's financial data. They are continuing to work to pull together all the data requested through a detailed analysis of the SEN2 2018 data, which has only just been published by the Department for Education. This will be shared with Cllr Essex and any other Council Members who are interested in due course.

To confirm, there were in

- 2016/17 – **359 pupils** with SEND in out of county non-maintained and independent settings at an annualised cost of **£22.0m**; and in

- 2017/18 – **403 pupils** with SEND in out of county NMI at an annualised cost of **£25.9m**.

The cost is based on the annual cost of all the pupils who were in placements at the end of the Council's financial year and is net of Education Skills and Funding Agency funding where that is applicable. This is the full cost of the placements including social care, and health.

Councillors may also find it useful to refer to the information that was provided at Full Council in December 2017 in response to a Council Motion by Cllr Botten. That information included a detailed explanation of the picture of in county and out of county placements for children with special educational needs and disabilities, using SEN2 data for 2016 and 2017.

In summary, that analysis showed that while the numbers of children attending establishments outside Surrey increased between 2016 and 2017, the proportion was unchanged in the younger cohort (4-18), and fell significantly in the older cohort (age 19+) from 40.6% to 25%, meaning a greater percentage of young Surrey people with SEND are learning and living closer to home.

COLIN KEMP, CABINET LEAD MEMBER FOR PLACE

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

Is the Council fully satisfied with the quality and standard of pothole repairs in the County? Does this represent value for money?

Reply:

Carriageway potholes are repaired in accordance with national best practice, detailed within Surrey County Council's Work (Technical) Specification, which is a modified extension of Highways England's National 'Specification for Highway Works'.

All permanent repairs are guaranteed for two years and the quality is checked through a monthly audit regime. Any failures are discussed with the service provider, rectified at their cost and recorded at the Make the Network Safe Scrutiny Board. Trends or reoccurrences are discussed directly with the operatives involved and repeat issues have resulted in gangs being dismissed. Generally we achieve around a 98% pass rate on quality out of thousands of potholes per month.

Due to the very high volumes of potholes reported over the last few months we have had no option but to carry out a large number of temporary repairs. These involve making the pothole safe by filling it in without cutting it square, and can be mistaken for poor quality repairs. These jobs remain open and are not completed until they are revisited and a permanent repair carried out. As pothole repairs are paid for by the Council via an annual "lump sum" arrangement, there is no additional cost to the Council when a temporary repair precedes a permanent repair.

The value of the lump sum, methods of working, systems used and materials used are regularly reviewed to ensure value for money and continuous improvement is achieved.

MEL FEW, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS

8. MRS ANGELA GOODWIN (GUILDFORD NORTH) TO ASK: (2nd Question)

With the majority of the Carer Support Schemes mentioned in question 4 closing their offices / meeting rooms, can the Cabinet Member please confirm how much Action for Carers has spent on mileage, and other related travel expenses such as car parking fees, for their staff - such as Carer Support Workers to meet with Carers - in each of the four areas (known as Lots) from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018?

Reply:

Although the bidding process for the new Carers' Support Service was advertised as four area lots, it was let as one contract and is monitored as such. In the financial year 2017/18, the total amount spent in Surrey on mileage and parking costs was £22,998.

The model for service delivery groups the County's 11 Boroughs into four areas. Within this the Carers' Support Advisers work within a defined Borough/District and are therefore keeping travel costs to a minimum.

DAVID HODGE, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

9. MRS HAZEL WATSON (DORKING HILLS) TO ASK: (2nd Question)

The County Council's Investment Board Annual Report for the 2017/18 financial year approved by the Council's Cabinet on 26 June 2018 states that it aims to create "a diversified and balanced portfolio of investments". However the report reveals that 42% of investments were in the retail sector and that tenants include Poundstretcher and Poundland. Given the significant proportion of the Council's investments in the retail sector, the growth of on-line shopping and recent closures of retail stores by major retail chains, what steps are the County Council taking to protect the Council's investments from the risk of loss of rent as a result of voids in its retail sector properties?

Reply:

Investments will be subject to inherent economic and market risks, and therefore a balanced portfolio of investments is being created. The Investment Strategy notes a preference toward assets within Surrey that are of good quality, in good or growth locations. However, in order to create a diversified portfolio, a mix of geographical locations will be required. The Investment Board monitors the portfolio to ensure that an appropriately balanced and diversified portfolio is created over time, across the combination of directly Council-owned assets and those owned by Halsey Garton Property Ltd.

The increase in retail assets follows the purchase of a retail park in Malvern, Worcestershire. Additional purchases in other sectors will help to balance the portfolio and reduce the holding in the retail sector.

Officers in Property and their appointed Asset Management consultants, CBRE, continually monitor the impending lease and other events such as Company Voluntary Agreements (CVA's) that would impact on the performance and void rate within the overall portfolio. A pragmatic approach is taken which will consider the sector risks that retail is currently experiencing and market factors that might prevail with the particular

retail sub-type (foodstore, edge of town or high street retail) in any particular location. Current tenant voids, as measured in terms of an estimate of rent that would otherwise be receivable as a % of the total rent receivable from the portfolio, are currently 5%, which is below market indices for a mixed portfolio.

MEL FEW, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS

10. MRS ANGELA GOODWIN (GUILDFORD NORTH) TO ASK: (3rd Question)

Can the Cabinet Member update Members on what Action for Carers has done from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 to extend their opening hours (to include evenings and Saturday mornings), and what specifically are they doing to innovate technology and triage?

Reply:

In their tender submission, Action for Carers undertook to offer an extension of hours. Following the TUPE process the schemes were 51% resourced. The new provider is now able to commence recruitment to fill the vacancies (as due to the TUPE requirements the new provider could not recruit until the start of the new contract). The recruitment and training of staff has taken longer than anticipated given the difficult landscape of employing staff in Surrey.

As agreed with Commissioners, Action for Carers will introduce extended hours with a marketing campaign to publish this development from September 2018. This will include extended weekday hours and Saturday mornings. An initial evaluation of the effectiveness of the new arrangements will be undertaken in December.

A triage system, giving Carers a prompt telephone response through a Carers' Information Centre, has operated since the start of the contract. The Centre currently operates from 9am-5pm for telephone enquiries and residents can make contact any day of the week by email. A response will be sent within 2 working days to email enquiries. Through this, carers are given information and advice, referred to other sources of help and can opt to join local carers' groups and as necessary have face to face meetings with Carers' Support Advisers.

A new "Carers Digital Resource" has been developed in partnership with Action for Carers, Surrey County Council and the national charity Carers UK. The digital offer is a web based resource that provides advice, information and support for carers. This includes national and local information relevant for carers. This scheme has been commended by the Department of Health as good practice. Carers UK are supporting the ongoing development of this system that is now being used by 33 other organisations across England.