

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (ELMBRIDGE)

DATE: 26 November 2018



SURREY

LEAD OFFICER: Nicola Morris, Partnership Committee Officer

SUBJECT: SCC CONSULTATION ON SERVICE CHANGES IN ELMBRIDGE

DIVISION: All

SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

Despite making significant savings in previous years, the County Council needs to make further savings of £85m in the next year. To achieve this and continue to provide services to residents some changes will need to be made. On 30 October 2018, the County Council launched a series of consultations on five service areas to shape those services for the future: children's centres; concessionary bus fares; special educational needs and disability (SEND); libraries and cultural services; and community recycling centres.

The Local Committee is invited to consider and discuss the proposed service changes as they relate to the Elmbridge local area.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Local Committee (Elmbridge) is asked to note the current consultations on five service areas and how they may affect the Elmbridge area and decide whether it wishes to submit any comments on behalf of the Committee to the Cabinet.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

To allow the Committee to input its local knowledge and suggestions into the current consultation

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 The County Council is facing huge financial pressures. The number of residents needing support – whether it is for learning disabilities or elderly care – is rising. But the core government grant has been cut by more than £200m since 2010.
- 1.2 More than half a billion pounds of savings in areas that have the least impact on residents has been found, but the challenge is getting harder. For instance, Surrey already has more than 93,000 residents aged over 65 who can't manage a domestic task on their own and this will rise by 36 per cent by 2030.
- 1.3 After talking to the residents and the partners we work with, such as borough and district councils, the voluntary sector and businesses, a new community vision for Surrey by 2030 has been launched. This aims is to transform the support provided to residents and communities, but to get there some very difficult decisions need to be made.

www.surreycc.gov.uk/elmbridge

- 1.4 Over the next year a further £85m of savings need to be made, which means changes will need to be made to some services. On 30 October 2018 a series of consultations were launched and views are invited by 4 January 2019 to help us shape those services for the future.
- 1.5 The consultations cover changes to services in five areas: children's centres; concessionary bus fares; special educational needs and disability (SEND); libraries and cultural services; and community recycling centres.
- 1.6 Some of the things being proposed will not be popular, but we have to find ways to change how we do things and provide best possible support with the resources available to us, especially to those that are most vulnerable.

2. ANALYSIS:

Children's centres

- 2.1 The aim of the consultation is to focus resources on the families who need help most. Improving the support we give those families early on will help prevent them needing social care services in the future. We want to create a network of hubs in areas with the most need which support children until they are aged 11, rather than five as is currently the case. The proposals may result in the closure of some centres, but the service is not just about buildings – outreach workers will visit families in their homes and partners would work with us to provide the right help at the right time. There are currently 58 centres in Surrey and under the proposals this will reduce to 21 main centres, at least one in each Borough or District. There will also be smaller centres, which will offer fewer services, but will be places where workers who are supporting families can meet with them. In Elmbridge the proposal is for centres in Walton and Three Rivers with a satellite centre in Cobham. Centres in Burhill, Weybridge, The Dittons and Claygate would close but the buildings may be available for use by other services.

Bus passes

- 2.2 The consultation is proposing changes to concessionary bus fares. Surrey has been providing benefits over and above the national scheme for many years. The national scheme allows people with a disabled person's bus pass to travel free on buses after 9.30am and before 11pm on weekdays and all day at weekends and on public holidays. Surrey is one of a few areas in the country still offering free travel for disability pass holders at all times and a free companion pass for qualifying older or disabled bus pass holders who need help to travel. Under the proposals these extra concessions would be removed, which along with other efficiencies, would save around £400,000 a year.

Libraries

- 2.3 More people are using our online services with fewer visiting in person, so changes to the library service are proposed to do things differently to fit better with modern life. Views are being sought on the strategic principles that will shape the future service – such as whether libraries could bring together a range of local services under one roof.

SEND

- 2.4 The consultation covers changes to special educational needs and disability (SEND) services. The draft strategy includes proposals for giving support as early as possible, which would be better for those who need help. The aim is also to provide support nearer to home and reduce the need for children to go to schools out of the county. To achieve this an extra 350 specialist school places are planned to be created in Surrey over the next two years. Overall the changes will mean better outcomes for children and families and with government funding failing to keep pace with the big increase in children needing help, they may also avoid more costly services being needed in the future.

Recycling Centres

- 2.5 Despite changes to recycling centres last year, the financial pressures are so severe that consideration needs to be given to whether further savings can be found at community recycling centres. Proposals include:
- Permanently closing a number of smaller, less effective CRCs, whilst increasing the opening hours at some CRCs. Up to six CRC sites are under consideration for closure: Bagshot, Cranleigh, Dorking, Farnham, Lyne and Warlingham.
 - Introducing a charge to dispose of construction wood and roofing felt.
 - Increasing the cost of disposing of items we already charge for.
 - Charging an annual application fee for van, pickup and trailer permits.
- 2.6 There are no recycling centres in Elmbridge and residents would probably use the centres in Leatherhead or Epsom which are not proposed for closure, but whose opening hours may change.
- 2.7 Further details on all the consultations and the opportunity to submit views on these proposals can be found at www.surreycc.gov.uk/consultations.

3. OPTIONS:

- 3.1 The analysis of the responses to the consultations will be presented to the county council's Cabinet in January 2019 for consideration and then to full Council in February. In the case of Libraries and Cultural Services and SEND, there will then be a second phase of consultation where we will share detailed proposals in 2019 to seek resident's views before any final decisions are made.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 9.1 The Local Committee (Elmbridge) is asked to note the current consultations on five service areas and how they may affect the Elmbridge area and decide whether it wishes to submit any comments on behalf of the Committee to the Cabinet.

ITEM 11

Contact Officer:

Nicola Morris, Partnership Committee Officer

Sources/background papers:

- Consultation documents published on surreycc.gov.uk