

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

TUESDAY 09 JULY 2019

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

TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

1. MR WILL FORSTER (WOKING SOUTH) TO ASK:

In March 2017, Surrey County Council unanimously agreed my motion opposing the Government's educational funding offer and called for more resources for Surrey schools. Following that motion, the then Leader of Council wrote to the Government highlighting our concerns that Surrey schools needed more funding.

Please will the Leader of the Council confirm what response, if any, the Council has received from the Government?

Response:

Following Cllr Forster's motion the former Leader wrote to all Surrey MPs on 5 April 2017, and received confirmation that a number of them wrote to the then Secretary of State for Education or the then Minister of State for School Standards.

A generic response was received from the Minister of State for School Standards that was not tailored to Surrey but that set out that core school funding was almost £41bn in 2017/18 and would increase to £42bn by 2019/20 as pupil numbers begin to rise. There was also a link to a recent consultation on national funding formulas for schools.

Since then the government has implemented a national funding formula for allocating funding to local authorities for mainstream schools. This is estimated to mean an average increase of 4.8% per pupil for Surrey schools, although this increase is being phased in over three years and not all schools will see any increase. This increase is still seen as insufficient to cover the cost pressures previously identified by schools. In addition the government has provided separate grants to part fund the teachers' pay increase from September 2018 and the increase in employers' pension contributions from September 2019.

We will continue to lobby Government for additional funding for Surrey schools.

TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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

Given the growing importance of Local Plans in the planning and delivery of Infrastructure, much of which is the County's responsibility, what arrangements will the Leader make for the co-ordination of infrastructure needs in each Borough/District, and will there be senior oversight to ensure that the County Council is able to advise, and appropriately benefit from, section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding?

Response:

Co-ordination of infrastructure needs is undertaken at both a county and local level.

At a county level, the County Council and District and Borough councils have worked together in recent years to produce the Surrey Infrastructure Study, which provides a strategic evidence base for infrastructure needs in Surrey.

At a local level, as part of the statutory Local Plan process, my officers continue to work with each District and Borough to assess infrastructure needs and develop Infrastructure Delivery Plans that set out the additional infrastructure required to support planned development in an area, both in highways & transport and educational infrastructure terms.

The current position in Surrey is:

- Nine of the local planning authorities have adopted the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and two have yet to do so.
- Section 106 contributions are sought from specific planning applications and the contributions have to directly mitigate the impacts of the development upon the local infrastructure.
- Where section 106 is able to be sought for highways & transport, education or libraries infrastructure, it is secured where the local planning authority accept the request; the local planning authority determining whether the request meets the criteria for such contributions and whether the request is reasonable, given that other contributions may be being sought by other infrastructure providers or the local authority itself, on an application by application basis.

CIL is effectively a development tax and its allocation towards infrastructure projects in an area is determined by the local authorities, who have a range of criteria to assist them in determining which applications they are willing to support, usually taking the relevant elements of their Infrastructure Delivery Plan into account.

My officers will continue to seek section 106 and CIL funding for necessary infrastructure, to mitigate the impacts of new development, when and where the opportunity to do so occurs.

MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS**3. MRS HAZEL WATSON (DORKING HILLS) TO ASK:**

Road safety is correctly a top concern for local residents. The partnership between Surrey County Council and Surrey Police which created Drive SMART was widely viewed as a successful initiative to change behaviour and reduce casualties on our roads.

Will the Council agree to relaunch Drive SMART to improve road safety for our road users?

Response:

Our 'Community vision for Surrey in 2030' recognises the role we and our partners have to play in road safety, with a stated ambition that journeys across the county are easier, more predictable and safer.

A new Drive SMART scrutiny board consisting of the Cabinet Member for Highways, the Police & Crime Commissioner, senior Police colleagues, the Chief Fire Officer and Highways England representatives met in September 2018 and again in January 2019 to reinvigate

our Drive SMART Partnership. Officers have also been working hard with Police, Fire and Rescue and Highways England colleagues to produce a new draft Drive SMART Strategy and Action Plan, which is now ready for submission to the Board. The meeting is to be scheduled soon, following changes to police colleagues' responsibilities. At the next Drive SMART scrutiny board we will discuss how to best publicise the reinvigorated partnership and our new Strategy and Action Plan, coupled with how we may promote our work to reduce the number of road casualties, especially fatal and serious injuries, and improve outcomes for residents.

Officers also continue to work closely with police colleagues on a day to day basis, for example, on the development of highway safety schemes at collision hotspots, speed management plans for every borough and district, the provision of safety camera enforcement, road safety outside school assessments and road safety audits of new highway schemes. Our Drive SMART Partnership will continue to provide scrutiny and ensure our collective work has focus, with road safety activity and investment effectively coordinated.

TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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

The Chairman of the Local Government Association, Lord Porter, has said that whoever becomes the new Prime Minister must make the financial sustainability of councils their top priority.

The Local Government Association has also warned that councils are "completely in the dark" over how much money they will get from central government next year, and has called for "urgent guarantees" they will get enough to provide key services like child protection and social care.

Additionally one in three councils apparently 'fear they will run out of money to meet their legal obligations within three years'.

Does the Leader agree with Lord Porter and how many of these concerns apply to this council?

Response:

Lord Porter has done an excellent job advocating for Local Government over many years, and I would like to place on record this council's thanks for all his efforts on our behalf as he stands down from his role at the Local Government Association.

This week he highlighted some of the important issues affecting local government finance, most notably the significant cost pressures in Adult and Children's social care, and the impact of uncertainty about future funding levels on our ability to plan our finances on an informed basis.

It is a fact that the key financial challenge for us remains balancing the demand for services with reducing the levels of resource. This is particularly testing in relation to services for vulnerable people, where we hold true to our ambition to ensure that no one is left behind.

The ambitions we have signed up to as part of the Surrey 2030 vision, the transformation programmes that we have put in place and are now delivering benefits in terms of better outcomes and more sustainable finances, help make me more optimistic than some of those

surveyed. The challenges we face are significant, but our ambition is to overcome them and to become one of the leading County Councils, providing great outcomes for Surrey and our residents. We have a long way yet to go before we can see ourselves as having achieved this, but we will do so in the medium term.

MARY LEWIS, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES

5. MR ERNEST MALLETT (WEST MOLESEY) TO ASK:

Apart from a £2m cut in the Youth Services budget, little has been published in Transformation details concerning the current operating policy on Youth Services. Local evidence appears to indicate that the council is abandoning direct provision of Youth Services and hoping that voluntary organisations will replicate the previous provision.

- What therefore is the present position on council Youth Service provision?
- How many Youth Centres are closed or closing?
- What is the typical number of hours that any remaining council Youth Centres are opening?
- What progress has been made to replicate closing or closed council Youth Services by voluntary organisations?
- What help is being offered to these organisations in way of making premises available, equipment and advice?

Response:

As part of delivering the new Family Resilience model, we have restructured our services to create a Targeted Youth Support Service that will work with our most vulnerable young people. The universal youth work provision has remained unchanged during the restructure whilst we undertake a review of the wider youth offer. In the long term, we do not see a role for the county council in the delivery of open access youth work such as youth centres and believe there are other agencies that are able to do this better. There are numerous examples in Surrey where community and voluntary organisations already do this effectively. The opening hours of centres across the county vary but we know that often buildings are not being used to their full potential.

We are actively reviewing the current youth estate identifying which sites have the potential to be used more effectively for the benefit of the community and those that could either be disposed of or used for other purposes. We are committed to working with local communities and the voluntary sector to maximise the potential of buildings; there are emerging examples of how this could potentially work with centres such as The Edge Youth Centre in Epsom and Ewell and the Horley Young People's Centre in Reigate and Banstead. Over the next 6 months we will be recommissioning our Early Help Services which will include the coordination of level 2 services for young people in each district and borough. We will also be able to confirm which youth centres we will be supporting the community and other agencies to maximise their potential.

TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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

The Annual Report of the Shareholder Board notes that the South Ridge Development Limited Liability Partnership, a Joint Venture of Surrey County Council with Places for People was incorporated in September 2018 and that it is looking at options for the development of 14 vacant Surrey County Council sites.

Please can you confirm the locations of these sites, the length of time they have been vacant and previous uses?

Response:

Further to the Joint Venture partnership going “live” operationally on 6 September 2018 with Places for People, I am pleased to confirm that the Joint Venture has now started work on assessing the feasibility of a number of sites.

Officers are working closely with the Joint Venture company to ensure that the right levels of due diligence is undertaken to bring forward the first round of sites for redevelopment to meet the requirements and needs of local residents and these will go through the Council’s internal governance as necessary and will then become a matter of public record.

However as the Member may recall from previous enquiries the sites at this stage ahead of any formal planning application are commercially sensitive and any public release before planning may well jeopardise future development potential.

A briefing under the Part 2 of the Local Government Act remains available if so wished.

MR MEL FEW, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE

**7. MR ROBERT EVANS (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK:
(2ND Question)**

When is the new Fordbridge Fire Station in Ashford due to open?

How much has this project cost and what does the council anticipate getting from the sale of the Sunbury fire station site?

Response:

It is expected that the final handover will be by the 31 August 2019 after which a suitable date will be determined for the official opening.

A full accounting of actual spend to investment proposal will be undertaken on completion of the handover from contractors.

The future of the Sunbury fire station will be determined in line with the Strategy as set out in the April 2019 Cabinet paper “Surrey Asset and Place Strategy”.

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