

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

TUESDAY 10 DECEMBER 2019

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

DENISE TURNER-STEWART, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, FIRE AND RESILIENCE

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

How many times has Surrey Fire and Rescue Service had to call on neighbouring fire brigades for support so far this year and on how many occasions has Surrey FRS been called out to help neighbouring forces?

Response:

From 1 January to 26 November 2019, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service attended 544 incidents over the border. During the same period, other fire and rescue services have attended 106 incidents within Surrey.

MIKE GOODMAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND WASTE

2. MS BARBARA THOMSON (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK:

Across the County many communities are blighted by the number of HGVs operating from local sites who ignore restrictions and have no respect for the local residents who live in these communities. The Planning Authority (SCC) do hear and take action against some unlicensed sites operating without an Operator's Licence, but many others seem to ignore their licence conditions. Can the Cabinet Member assure us that SCC will review these Operating Licences, investigate any breaches, including access routes, and take action against those companies?

Response:

In order to use goods vehicles with a gross weight in excess of 3.5 tonnes for the carriage of goods on the public highway it is necessary to obtain an operator's licence ('O' Licence). In order to obtain an 'O' licence, an operator must have at least one place to keep their vehicle/s. This place is called an operating centre and has to be suitable for use as such. The vehicles covered by the legislation can range in size from relatively small tippers and transit vans, to 44 tonnes articulated vehicles.

'O' Licensing is centrally administered by the DVSA (Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency) from Leeds. England, Scotland and Wales are currently divided into 8 areas. Surrey County Council is situated within the London and the south east of England area. Each area has a Traffic Commissioner appointed by the Secretary of State. It is the function of Traffic Commissioners to determine applications for 'O' licences, and also to take disciplinary action against operators who breach any conditions attached to their licence.

Surrey County Council, as a Local Authority has a statutory right to object to applications to authorise the use of sites as operating centres within the County. Officers monitor these applications and notify the local Member of any applications in their area. Applications for new sites are reviewed and an objection made or conditions sought if there are highway safety or environmental concerns. However the County Council does not determine these applications or have any role in enforcing them. We will notify the Traffic Commissioner if we are aware that an operator is breaching a licence and ask them to investigate.

The grounds upon which Surrey County Council can object to these applications include the adverse environmental impact caused by the use of the site as an operating centre, but only in the vicinity of that site; the technical suitability of the access on to the public highway for the goods vehicles to be authorised; and also the capacity of the site to accommodate the vehicles to be authorised.

Aside for operators licensing, breaches of weight restrictions by Heavy Goods Vehicles can be a major problem for local communities. In October our Trading Standards team carried out a joint operation with Surrey Police in Chobham and as a result the Police were able to issue 7 fixed penalty notices, and we also wrote formally to the operators involved. We plan to carry out a further operation elsewhere in the county early in the New Year and will use the learning to consider how best to take this issue forward elsewhere.

TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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

In these Council papers a sum of £50m is pledged for a High Street Fund, in addition to the £1m per Division mooted in emails to members.

Could the Leader describe the systems for establishing the good governance for processing these payments, so as to ensure maximum impact and value for the public purse?

Response:

Surrey County Council has transformed its approach to capital investment. As part of this fresh approach, additional capital spend will: ensure a more environmentally sustainable future; support vulnerable residents; keep Surrey connected; and contribute to containing future revenue costs.

As part of the Capital Programme we are proposing to launch a £100m Community Investment Fund over 5 years, which is intended for investments in local communities that enhance those places and enrich the lives of residents. This may include the regeneration of some town centres and high streets. I would like to take this opportunity to clarify that we are proposing to launch one £100m Community Investment Fund. There will be no £50m High Street Fund or additional £1m per division.

We will work with Borough and District Councils, as well as other partners, including Local Economic Partnerships to either fully fund or pump-prime investment. There will also be an opportunity to leverage government funding, Community Infrastructure Levy and other sources to support this work. The proposal is subject to approval as part of the Capital Programme element of the budget next year. Following this, we will develop a set of rules and processes around what projects are funded. To launch this programme of work, I am proposing a workshop for all County Councillors to identify suitable projects that will make a real impact on communities.

MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS

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

At the 19 September 2019 meeting of the Communities Environment and Highways Select Committee a proposal was put forward to introduce on-street parking charges with the surplus parking income to be used to fund future parking reviews.

Is the Cabinet Member aware that in small market towns such as in Dorking:

- The top priority is to attract shoppers and visitors to the town as opposed to deterring them through additional on-street parking charges.
- The number of on-street parking spaces is very limited which would restrict potential income.
- The likelihood would be that cars would be displaced to nearby residential roads to avoid the charges.
- Existing time limited parking spaces free of charge facilitates churn on the High Street.
- As a result of introducing such charges, parking reviews in the District would be limited by lack of surplus income which is unrealistic to obtain?

Will the Cabinet Member thus reconsider this proposal for small market towns such as in Dorking where it is unrealistic and unworkable?

Response:

Thank you for your question about the planned changes to the councils on street parking policy. The recommendations to the select committee in relation to parking reviews are detailed here:

a) The review process has been refined over the last 10 years and there are no significant changes proposed to the process as we believe it is working well.

b) The scope of parking reviews should be adjusted to suit the funding available. Where there is no parking surplus or other income to put towards it, the review proposals should only include restrictions that maintain road safety, prevent serious obstruction or essential access to facilities.

c) Local and Joint Committees should look to introduce on-street parking charging to help improve access to retail areas.

As you will know the district and borough councils in Surrey carry out on street parking enforcement for us through agency agreements. They provide an effective service and most also manage to break even or make a surplus in the process. Parking charges can help provide a surplus but they are not essential for this to happen. Where there is a surplus from parking enforcement it can be put back into the local community by funding highway improvements or parking schemes. In addition Department of Transport advice on the operation of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) is that they do not expect it to be subsidised by the tax payer.

The recommendations above put the emphasis on local committees to consider the financial bigger picture when they are making decisions about on street parking restrictions. Some district enforcement teams, Mole Valley for example, consistently operate CPE at a loss (up to £90,000 deficit some years). This means the parking review process must always be funded from the council's revenue budget, which is not sustainable in the long term, particularly for non-essential parking restrictions.

The decision to implement parking restrictions lies completely with Local Committees, but in relation to Dorking you might want to consider:

- Providing a free parking period followed by a charge for staying longer than say 30 minutes, this could improve turnover
- Enforcement efficiency could be greatly improved reducing costs
- Visitors should be directed to the town centre car parks (which have a charge) rather than driving around the town centre looking for a free parking space which impacts on air quality
- I also understand there are resident parking schemes in many of the roads surrounding Dorking High Street so displacement should not be an issue

So my recommendation to you is for the local committee to work with the district enforcement team to review how parking enforcement could be carried out on a more cost effective basis and produce a comprehensive parking business plan that looks at both on and off street parking holistically.

TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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

The Impact Statement includes a bullet point in the Conservative future vision of Surrey County Council, to “consider the conversion of any surplus county council owned land to public allotments to produce food for food banks”. Please confirm a) why food banks are part of this vision, which is titled what the Conservatives believe a forward-looking County would look like, and b) whether the Council would consider community farms or food growing co-ops on surplus land, thereby enabling this to not only produce food but create local employment.

Response:

I am pleased Councillor Essex has read about the scale of this administration’s achievements in the Impact Statement.

Our vision is to make better use of our surplus land to better serve Surrey’s local communities. Allotments are just one possibility, and there are a range of potential benefits for local residents if we as community leaders can think more imaginatively about how this land could be used.

I am grateful for his constructive suggestion on how we can encourage our communities to get more involved in the use of surplus land. One of our focus areas for the next five years is to support communities to be more independent, and I would welcome his continued engagement in our agenda for supporting communities to participate more in civic life.

DENISE TURNER-STEWART, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, FIRE AND RESILIENCE

6. MR ROBERT EVANS (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK: (2nd Question)

After the Grenfell Tower tragedy, members were assured that there were no tower blocks or other buildings in Surrey which were built with the same dangerous cladding. In light of the

recent Bolton fire, further questions have now arisen. What additional safety checks have been made on buildings in this county since the 15 November fire?

Response:

Since the fire in Bolton on 15 November 2019, business fire safety teams have worked with building control officers and building owners of the three original ACM clad buildings to continue to monitor the current state of cladding removal and are satisfied with the progress and plans to keep residents safe.

Prior to 15 November 2019, a fourth building has been identified with HPL (high pressure laminate). A Business fire safety officer is working with the development owners and relevant building control to ensure that plans to remove this cladding are suitable and sufficient, timescales are realistic and that residents are adequately protected.

Since the Bolton Fire our teams have been working with all local borough planning officers to make contact with all owners and responsible parties to further identify all buildings above 11 metres as well as those above 18 metres. To support this further, four members of the SFRS Business Safety Audit Team will be dedicated specifically to this work. This will be a partnership approach to ensure that all of these buildings are assessed, fire risk assessments reflect any risks with cladding, and initial safety considerations and actions are identified. This will move into plans for the building to be made safe through appropriate remedial work.

We have been closely monitoring the findings of the Grenfell inquiry and the response from the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC). We will continue to follow developments and implement any future recommendations for fire services nationally.

MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS

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

The initial discovery phase of the Rethinking Transport programme ran from April to July 2019.

Given the importance of the programme for improving services for Surrey residents and to assist with tackling Climate Change, what were the findings of the initial discovery phase, how much money has been spent on the Rethinking Transport programme to date, what further progress has been made since July 2019 and what is the timetable including dates for taking the Rethinking Transport programme forward?

Response:

The Rethinking Transport programme is a key strand of the council's transformation portfolio, through which we are seeking to fundamentally redefine our relationship with transport and travel in Surrey: encouraging a shift away from single occupancy journeys made by road towards more sustainable forms of transport, including multiple occupancy journeys, public transport and active travel.

IMPOWER consulting were commissioned to help fulfil the objectives of the Discovery phase, which – through a wide-ranging engagement programme between April and July 2019 – sought to bring partners and residents together to understand how and why people travel, the strengths and weaknesses of Surrey's transport system and our inclusive ambition for the future.

The Discovery phase generated three core ambitions for the programme:

1. **Take journeys off the road / Reduce congestion** by reducing the need to travel through smarter working, making better use of existing assets and embracing innovation
2. **Improved air quality** for residents by encouraging a 'modal shift' to sustainable transport (with associated health and wellbeing benefits)
3. **Increase independence** by establishing the infrastructure to allow all residents to make their own travel arrangements with access to a greater range of sustainable transport modes

The engagement also provided valuable insight into the perception and Surrey's transport system the experience of travelling in and around the county:

- There are some recognised strengths in the current transport infrastructure and evidence of good cross-partner working, but there are also some common challenges – e.g. congestion, air quality and a lack of flexible and safe transport alternatives
- There are particular groups of residents, such as adults with additional needs, who often have poor travel experiences
- Problems across Surrey are starting to have an impact on economic development and are increasing costs to businesses
- There is an inability to speak with one voice about transport, which is contributing to disparate decision-making and an unintegrated transport system
- Transport requirements across Surrey are changing but there is no clear narrative about how transport delivery will respond and achieve the ambitions of the 2030 Community Vision
- There is no quick fix to solving Surrey's shared transport challenge – sustainable change will require leadership, investment, a sustained effort in tackling problems and a high level of cultural and behaviour change

The Discovery phase generated nearly 70 ideas for pilot projects, with the potential to help achieve the programme ambitions while also testing different ways of working and innovative concepts on a small scale before potentially scaling up.

In July 2019, the programme moved into the Development phase: developing a shortlist of pilot projects while also working with key strategic partners to establish the 'system leadership' required to address Surrey's shared and complex transport challenges.

The pilots, to be delivered in 2020, include schemes to:

- enable and encourage employees (public and private sector) to make sustainable transport choices;
- promote more sustainable modes of transport to and from major hospitals, enabling easier access and reducing congestion; and
- provide greater independence for adults with additional needs with the support of personal transport budgets and independent travel training.

IMPOWER produced a system leadership toolkit, providing a framework for working with partners on strategic issues, which can now be applied to a range of key policy areas.

Funding for the programme has been drawn from the council's Transformation Fund. Expenditure to date totals £215,000, which includes the services of IMPOWER consulting (£184,143) and internal Project Management resource (£31,120). IMPOWER continued to support this phase of the programme until October, from which point the council and its partners have continued to take the work forward in partnership.

Today, the council is also considering its response to the climate challenge, and we know that 46% of Surrey's emissions come from the transport sector. Subject to receiving support, the proposed Greener Future 'call for action' indicates where additional investment may be required, including in sustainable transport infrastructure.

TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

**8. MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:
(2nd Question)**

In the Impact Statement that accompanies the Organisational Strategy, it is stated that the county council is looking to make 14.6 hectares of its land available for building homes. Please confirm the location and size of each of these sites, as well as their current use.

Response:

The 14.6 Ha (36 acres) relates to some 15 properties, predominantly brownfield sites, distributed over 8 boroughs and districts across Surrey, that were identified in 2018 as being surplus to operational or service requirements.

We are unable to provide any commercially sensitive information, such as the identity of the sites, whilst they undergo the necessary due diligence.

MIKE GOODMAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND WASTE

**9. MR ROBERT EVANS (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK:
(3rd Question)**

Has the Council looked at the Heathrow Southern Railway proposal, which would provide frequent airport express trains with a planned journey time of less than 30 minutes from Guildford and just 19 minutes from Woking?

Following this Council's motion passed on 8 October; whether or not airport expansion goes ahead, if we are to reduce the number of cars, minicabs and taxis on our roads, a fast environmentally friendly link to Heathrow will still be important. Does Surrey County Council feel inclined to support the Heathrow Southern Railway initiative and if so, will the leadership lobby the government accordingly?

Response:

Improved rail access to airports is a key priority within our agreed Surrey Rail Strategy.

I am pleased to confirm that I and other Cabinet Members have met with Heathrow Southern Railway several times in recent years. We have discussed in some detail their proposal for a southern rail access to Heathrow Airport and exchanged ideas on the subject. Of course, Heathrow Southern Railway's proposals are one of a number that are being put forward by a range of organisations to improve rail connectivity to Heathrow Airport.

We have set out to Government the principles that we would require any southern rail scheme to deliver. The consortium of local authorities that comprise the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group have also done so. The principles that we and the Heathrow Strategic Planning Group have set out include a requirement for any southern rail link to deliver a comprehensive solution for improving access to and from the airport for passengers and

airport colleagues, from both the London and wider south of England. Vitally, we believe that enhanced rail connectivity should be in place prior to the utilisation of a third runway.

We have and we will continue to make the case for a southern rail access to both Government and Heathrow Airport. We believe that this vital infrastructure project is something Government and Heathrow Airport must progress as a priority. This is a matter that I will press the new Government to take forward after the general election, so that a southern rail link can be expedited and be better aligned with the opening of a new runway.

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

10. MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK: (3rd Question)

With regard to the current provision of universal youth services: a) please provide a breakdown on the current 657k budget spend by borough and district and location across the county and confirm how many of the 19.6 full time equivalent youth worker posts are currently filled, again by district and borough council area; and b) please confirm why it is proposed to only carry out an equality impact assessment after the consultation process is complete.

Response:

a) Cabinet has decided to undertake public consultation on:

- whether Surrey County Council enables the voluntary community and faith sector to use the youth centres for the benefit of young people at little or no cost and;
- Whether Surrey County Council delivers universal open access youth work.

There are no cost savings associated with this consultation to the council which is committing to the continued running costs of circa £975k for the youth centres owned and leased by the council.

The universal open access youth workforce of circa 100 staff but only 19.6 full time equivalent has a budget of £657k. The current distribution of the available youth worker hours is set out in the table below.

District/Borough	weekly youth work hours
Elmbridge	96
Epsom and Ewell	9
Spelthorne	36
Surrey Heath	55
Woking	59
Runnymede	9
Guildford	56
Waverly	22
Tandridge	53
Reigate and Banstead	68.5

Mole Valley	24
Other	27
Centralised	54
Weekly Total	568.5
Vacancies (not D&B specific)	140

There is no statutory duty for Surrey County Council to provide universal open access youth work. We are consulting on whether the existing workforce capacity supports the community, voluntary and faith sector to provide services for young people and also to provide targeted support for vulnerable groups.

b) The consultation will be open for a significant period of time until the end of April 2020 to enable local engagement with stakeholders and in particular young people.

The Council has a duty under the Education Acts which requires it to “secure, so far as reasonably practicable, provision of educational and recreational leisure time activities for young people”. In carrying out this duty, the Council must ensure that young people are consulted and have a say in the local offer.

Young People will therefore be involved in developing the equality impact assessment which will be completed throughout the consultation and used to inform any future decisions.

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