

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**TUESDAY 16 MARCH 2021****QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED UNDER THE PROVISIONS
OF STANDING ORDER 10.1****JULIE ILES OBE, CABINET MEMBER FOR ALL AGE LEARNING****1. MR CHRIS BOTTEN (CATERHAM HILL) TO ASK:**

With the recent advertisement for three project managers ([Surrey County Council - Job details \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk)) to lead the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) transformation, have the Council's transformation projects been held back by lack of capacity, and if so, what is the reason for this? How can such capacity gaps not have been recognised before?

RESPONSE:

I would like to thank the County Councillor for Caterham Hill for his question as it draws attention to the significant long-term investment Surrey County Council has made in our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) transformation programme. As I set out in my report to Cabinet last month, and in my update to Council today, we have invested significantly to meet the needs of children with SEND earlier and closer to home: nearly £80million in 1,600 additional specialist places, a new Graduated Response service and Learners' Single Point of Access as well as the expansion of programmes to support young adults into apprenticeships and internships.

We have also made sustained progress in delivering our SEND improvement plan, which was formally recognised by the Department for Education's sign-off at the end of last year. I was particularly pleased that the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee also recognised the achievements the programme has delivered and that it had met each of the recommendations made by the SEND Task Group chaired by the County Councillor for Caterham Hill.

While these developments are already having a positive impact for children and families, there is more work to do. Our SEND transformation programme is ambitious about delivering sustained improvements for children with SEND. As the SEND transformation programme expands and evolves, it is understandable that programme resource requirements will change. All programmes are dynamic, and we regularly review the resources required. The three specific posts mentioned in this question are one year fixed term project posts to support the embedding of the Autism Strategy, the new approaches to meeting the needs of children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs and the development of a 'Team around the School' model to support children with SEND to remain in mainstream schools where this is appropriate for them.

We will continue to ensure that we have the right leadership, capability and capacity to deliver this complex transformation programme of improvements in SEND, all the while maintaining our focus on the experience and outcomes for children and families.

JULIE ILES OBE, CABINET MEMBER FOR ALL AGE LEARNING

2. MR TIM HALL (LEATHERHEAD AND FETCHAM EAST) TO ASK:

Contrary to the false and disappointing claims from the Liberal Democrats that this Council is failing in its Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services, it is even more encouraging to see that this Council continues to invest in its SEND provision, so that we can deliver improved outcomes for our young people.

This administration has responded to the increasing demand placed upon SEND provision, by creating up to 1,600 new specialist places and investing £79 million for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities to learn closer to home.

Could the Cabinet Member for All-Age Learning therefore please set the record straight on the support this Council continues to provide our young people and families with SEND?

RESPONSE:

I would like to thank the County Councillor for Leatherhead and Fetcham East for the important points he has made in his question about the significant investment that Surrey County Council has made in support of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

It is disappointing when any child, much less a vulnerable one, is used in politicised and inaccurate claims. Damaging misinformation undermines the trust of children and families in the new and improved services that we are providing for children with SEND. It means that the Council has to work that much harder to engage them with the support that is now there for them.

We are very fortunate to have a vibrant parent carer forum in Surrey – Family Voice – who we work with closely to ensure that parents and carers receive the correct information about our SEND local offer – including the significant number of new specialist places closer to home, our expanded apprenticeship programmes for young people with SEND, the Learners’ Single Point of Access and our Graduated response service. Despite the challenges of the pandemic and lockdown, our new admission arrangements for children with SEN have resulted in over 90% receiving confirmation of their September 2021 school place by the key date of 15 February. The others have received confirmation of their placement type and we are working closely with those remaining families to secure an appropriate school for their child over the next few weeks.

All of this investment is making tangible improvements in the experiences and outcomes for children with SEND and their families and it is most definitely not a failing service. Nor is it true, as also claimed, that we fail to listen to residents about special needs packages and school places.

BECKY RUSH, CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES AND CORPORATE SUPPORT

3. MR PAUL DEACH (FRIMLEY GREEN AND MYTCHETT) TO ASK:

This Council welcomed £2m as part of the Government’s generous £170m COVID Winter Support Grant, to ensure support is available for Surrey’s most vulnerable families.

The additional £739,000 which has just been granted as an extension of the Winter Support Grant is also very good news. Therefore, could the Cabinet Member for Resources and

Corporate Support outline how this extra funding has been spent to help the families and individuals hardest hit by the pandemic?

RESPONSE:

The Council has played a lead role in ensuring funds provided by Central Government have reached the most vulnerable. The Winter Support Grant funding totally £2.1m has enabled the provision of food vouchers to those entitled to Free School Meals over the Christmas and Easter holidays and February half term. This has supported in excess of 20,000 children in schools and Early Years settings. In addition, this funding has been distributed to Food Banks, Care Leavers, supported the homeless Winter Cabins and been used to support the Council's existing Crisis Fund. The Crisis Fund has utilised this additional funding to increase our offer to over 2500 residents at their most vulnerable, to provide essential funds as well as support with the provision of white goods and furniture where needed.

The Government announced an extension to the Winter Grant Scheme in February and this resulted in an additional allocation of £739,000 being awarded to the Council. This funding has to be spent by 16 April, making it important that existing mechanisms to get this funding to those most in need is utilised. It is proposed that this additional funding is used to increase the level of food vouchers provided to children entitled to free school meals over the Easter holidays - to support the provision of additional meals (for example a healthy breakfast or a hot evening meal) in addition to the lunchtime support already committed to from the initial funding announced. Additionally, it is proposed that this additional funding is used to increase support to Care leavers over Easter.

In addition, other areas of further support are being assessed to ensure compliance with the grant terms; including supporting the provision of food to children from low income household attending holiday activities during the Easter holidays and further support to eligible Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS) organisations.

At the time of writing the response for Council the exact breakdown of spend of the additional £739,000 is not finalised.

TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

4. MS AYESHA AZAD (WOKING SOUTH-WEST) TO ASK:

I am pleased to see the support that International Women's Day received on 8 March. It is vital that we all play our part in calling out bias and it is reassuring that tackling inequalities to ensure no-one is left behind is a core focus of Surrey County Council. This year's theme was #choosetochallenge. So, can the Leader confirm what the Council is doing to challenge gender and inequality, and inequalities more generally across Surrey?

RESPONSE:

I thank the County Councillor for Woking South-West for her question and echo her support for International Women's Day. She is right in that everyone associated with the Council is responsible for challenging their own biases as well as those of others.

We know gender parity is still yet to be achieved for women, and we need to do more at this Council to work towards this for our residents and staff. We know, for example, the majority of domestic abuse victims in Surrey are women, and lockdown has led to abuse of those victims becoming more severe. We are working with our partners to think about what we

need to do together to support women to improve their health and economic circumstances as the county recovers from the pandemic.

There is also more we need to do to support our female members of staff. For example, although nearly three-quarters of our workforce are women, the Council reported a 16.8% gender pay gap in 2019. That is why in February, the Cabinet endorsed a new equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) action plan and policy statement, both to reaffirm our commitment to EDI but also to tackle the barriers that get in the way of our female colleagues fulfilling their potential and giving their best for Surrey residents.

To mark International Women's Day, we have been celebrating the contribution women make, as well as raising awareness with all our staff to be allies to the women they work with. For example, we held events for staff during the week of 8 March, one of which the County Councillor for Woking South-West took part in, to raise awareness of the achievements of women and to raise awareness of women's equality. We also have a thriving Women's Network for staff that holds us to account for improving the experiences of women working for the Council and, importantly, provides a wider support network with others to help their wellbeing.

So we are making progress, and this Council needs to continue maintaining an unerring focus on tackling inequality to make sure no-one is left behind.

MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS

5. MR DAVID HARMER (WAVERLEY WESTERN VILLAGES) TO ASK:

I am delighted that Surrey's new Lane Rental Scheme has been given the go-ahead to start in April by the Secretary of State for Transport. This Council recognises the disruption that roadworks can cause Surrey residents, that is why it has pushed this scheme which will really help to ease congestion on Surrey's busiest roads and minimise disruption. Could the Cabinet Member for Highways clarify how the revenue from any charges will be put to best use to ensure we keep Surrey moving?

RESPONSE:

In accordance with regulations, revenue from the Lane Rental Scheme will firstly be used to cover the costs of operating the scheme. Any surplus revenue, after costs have been accounted for, are intended to be used to reduce the disruption or other adverse effects arising as a result of street works. Guidance in the document [Lane Rental Schemes: Guidance for English Local Highway Authorities](#) July 2019, issued by the Department for Transport advises that the types of projects that can be funded using Lane Rental Surplus include:

- investment in innovation and developing new products or disruption-saving techniques;
- trials of new techniques and products;
- installing "pipe subways" or ducting that enable apparatus to be accessed more easily and without causing disruption to traffic;
- measures to improve the quality or accessibility of records about the location of underground pipes, wires and other apparatus;
- measures to help abate noise, pollution or safety hazards arising as a result of works;

- repairing potholes caused by utility street works; and / or
- implementing extraordinary measures to mitigate congestion caused by works, especially major works projects.

A governance process detailing how surplus funds can be applied for, how applications are assessed and how funded projects are implemented and evaluated, will be introduced from the start of the scheme and will be available on the Council's website.

The Highways service are currently carrying out a number of trials aimed at providing better and faster intelligence about the road network using AI and machine learning and are trialling a number of different materials and processes to provide longer lasting lower carbon solutions or solutions that are quicker to deliver thus providing less disruption the network. In the future these types of trials could form applications for funding from Lane Rental Surplus.

MARK NUTI, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES

6. MR WYATT RAMSDALE (FARNHAM SOUTH) TO ASK:

I welcome Surrey County Council's ambitious Your Fund Surrey Project, which gives local communities a generous £100m over the next five years, to enable residents to initiate community-led projects and improve their local areas.

This Council has continued to show its commitment to revitalising its relationship with Surrey residents and giving communities considerably more influence and power over issues affecting their lives. Could the Cabinet Member for Communities provide an update on the progress of Your Fund Surrey and engagement with residents?

RESPONSE:

Thank you, County Councillor for Farnham South, for your question regarding the progress of Your Fund Surrey (YFS) and how we are engaging with residents. As you have outlined, the Fund is part of the wider work the Council is doing to empower communities, by enabling them to propose and develop projects that will leave a real legacy for the areas in which they live.

Since launching YFS in November we have seen over 1,000 ideas put forward, and over 74,000 people visit the Commonplace website where people can see what projects are being proposed in their areas. That is the equivalent of 6% of Surrey's population, and a great reflection of how the Fund is starting to engage with communities.

We are starting to see positive relationships form between residents and Surrey County Council as a direct result of Your Fund Surrey and the emphasis the Fund has on prioritising what is important to their communities. From the outset the Council has taken an open and transparent approach to the development of the Fund. The application process was designed with input from residents to ensure it is accessible to all ensuring no-one is left behind.

Since launching YFS officers have hosted regular question and answer sessions. These have been well received with over 300 people signing up to find out more about the Fund and talk through their ideas. These sessions have been invaluable in helping us understand the current challenges people are facing and provide us with feedback to continually adapt and improve the management of the Fund.

On 1 March, we opened the first stage of the online application process and have already received 42 applications. In fact, within hours of the portal being open, we had three applications submitted. This really reflects the positive engagement we have had with residents. We will continue to be proactive and creative in the way we engage with residents across the county to encourage more innovative project ideas to come forward.

We will continue to adapt our approach using the data and experiences of our direct and non-direct engagement. Close monitoring of the type of YFS queries we receive will help us in developing clear guidance. Assessment of the community projects submitted will help us identify geographical areas and specific communities that might be underrepresented, enabling us to offer added support and guidance as required.

The team have begun to review the first stage applications received to date and will continue to reach out and support people in making applications. The next step will be reviewing first stage applications to invite to full application. The really exciting part of the process is still to come, and it is our intention that the first awards will be made in the summer when we can start to see a range of great projects become a reality.

SINEAD MOONEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE, PUBLIC HEALTH AND DOMESTIC ABUSE

7. MR RICHARD WALSH (LALEHAM AND SHEPPERTON) TO ASK:

I am assured that this administration at Surrey County Council is taking mental health very seriously and is rightly tackling health inequality as a key priority.

Surrey has made a considerable effort to support its residents with mental health needs, especially throughout the pandemic, such as through launching Surrey's Virtual Wellbeing Hub to support mental well-being and establishing a new service to improve outcomes and independence for people with mental health needs.

This Council further welcomes the new child and adolescent mental health services planned – with talking therapies and more mental health support workers, to ensure our school children receive the support they deserve.

Could the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Domestic Abuse confirm that this Council will maintain its local partnerships, especially those strengthened during the pandemic, so that Surrey residents can access the best mental health provision possible?

RESPONSE:

The mental health and wellbeing of residents, including children and young people, is one of our key priorities, as is tackling health inequalities, as set out in [the Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#).

The Council-organised Mental Health Summit in November 2020, was a powerful partnership event, prompted by the clear impact Covid-19 and the associated control and containment measures were having on the mental health and well-being of residents of all ages. As you have highlighted, throughout the pandemic we have continued to work closely with our NHS, Voluntary Community Sector organisation partners and District and Borough Councils, to ensure the need of the local population is served effectively. We are continuing to work closely with our partners in the response phase and as we go into recovery we are already:

- Building on and enhancing our close partnership working through an improved governance and accountability structure.
- Regularly reviewing data and gathering insight as well as user experience to ensure population needs are identified and responded to accordingly.
- Engaging with existing service users to co-design services to enhance access, appropriateness and quality of service provision.

We are aware that mental wellbeing is also closely linked with physical, social, environmental and economic factors. The recently established independently chaired Mental Health Partnership Board, administered by the Council, is using the strong partnership relationships developed during the pandemic to undertake a thorough review of mental health outcomes, experiences and services in Surrey with a view to making significant improvements.

As well as continuing to work to improve the provision of mental health services, the Council is giving priority to prevention, early help and support for those experiencing well-being and mental health challenges, so that Surrey residents can access and benefit from the best mental health services, experiences and outcomes possible.

TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

8. DR PETER SZANTO (EAST MOLESEY AND ESHER) TO ASK:

I am delighted with Surrey County Council's £116m investment in infrastructure to boost economic growth across the county.

This shows that this Conservative administration recognises the importance of keeping our economy strong, so that businesses and communities can thrive, as we recover from the pandemic.

Could the Leader therefore please explain how this Council will prioritise and deliver essential infrastructure that will reduce carbon emissions, improve connectivity, support innovation, while creating jobs for Surrey residents?

RESPONSE:

The Cabinet approved the Surrey Infrastructure Prioritisation Plan at its meeting of 23 February. This sets out a framework for which infrastructure projects across a wide range of themes, including place, environment, social and economic, can be assessed against their intended outcomes and their deliverability. This links to the carbon reduction metrics work that is being led by the Greener Futures team and will ensure that the carbon reduction potential of infrastructure projects is captured and fed into decision making processes. The intention is that the framework assists the decision-making process in terms of prioritisation of infrastructure projects and forms the basis for wider engagement with partners such as the Districts and Boroughs. Alongside this, the Council has approved a £5million project feasibility fund which can be used to develop the business cases for those projects that are widely supported, considered deliverable and score highly against relevant outcomes. Those business cases will then be used to secure and attract funding to deliver those projects, whether that be using Surrey County Council funds, external grants or investment from the public and private sector, and/or Community Infrastructure Levy or a combination of them.

Cabinet will be regularly informed of progress and how schemes that are prioritised help to achieve economic growth, reduce carbon emissions and improved connectivity as well as biodiversity and natural environment improvements.

In terms of delivery, the Council has through its reorganisation of the Environment, Transport and Infrastructure department created a dedicated group that will be responsible for co-ordinating and delivering infrastructure schemes. This Group has now been recruited to and is formed of experienced technical staff and project managers who will be using best practice project management approaches to deliver quality schemes at scale and pace.

NATALIE BRAMHALL, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

9. MR JOHN O' REILLY (HERSHAM) TO ASK:

Surrey County Council is making great strides in transitioning Surrey to a greener future, through investing £105m for Greener Future projects such as renewable energy, active travel and low emission transport. Could the Cabinet member for Environment and Climate Change confirm how this welcome investment will help ensure the Council meets its ambitious net-zero carbon emissions target by 2050?

RESPONSE:

Surrey is making huge strides in reducing carbon emissions by committing substantial amounts of capital and revenue finance and this demonstrates the Council's commitment to our carbon reduction targets. Despite this, analysis carried out by Leeds University has highlighted that over £13 billion needs to be invested in the county by 2030 for Surrey to stay within its carbon budget and to meet our net zero by 2050 target. Clearly it would be impossible for the Council to shoulder this level of investment alone and there is a real need for public and private sector partnerships and National Government action, such as further grid decarbonisation and changes to national policy. There is also a need for increased and sustainable green finance and significant behaviour shift amongst residents and businesses in the county.

We are, however, in a strong position to use our capital investment to draw in additional funding as we did with the Government's Green Homes Local Authority Delivery programme (GH LAD) programme, where Surrey's financial contribution of £750,000 drew in funding of over £6m to invest in decarbonisation measures for Surrey's lowest income households. The role of the Council as catalyst in creating and coordinating packages of low/zero carbon projects (such as retrofit decarbonisation measures in housing/buildings, renewable energy generation, EV infrastructure, natural capital etc) to draw in investment from different sources (including private sector investment and community finance) is currently being developed by officers in partnership with Leeds University. This catalyst approach will be included within the Climate Change Delivery Plan which is due to be published in June.

As part of officers' work on the delivery plan, they are also developing a suite of carbon reduction metrics that will be applied to all of our programmes. These will help us to understand the carbon reduction impact of our activities as we work towards our net zero carbon targets.

BECKY RUSH, CABINET MEMBER FOR RESOURCES AND CORPORATE SUPPORT

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

Please can the Council confirm:

- (a) the cost of Members' travel expenses in 2020/21; and
- (b) the cost of staff travel expenses over the same time period?

So far this financial year, what has been the cost to the Council of staff and Members' travel expense claims?

RESPONSE:

- a) The cost of members' travel expenses from April 2020 to February 2021 was £4668.90. This is a significant saving against last year's costs of just over £50,000 and demonstrates the financial benefits of continuing to adopt agile working practices beyond the pandemic.
- b) The cost of officers' travel expenses over the same period amount to £2.1m, this is less than half the equivalent spend for last year.

DENISE TURNER STEWART, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY PROTECTION

11. MRS FIONA WHITE (GUILDFORD WEST) TO ASK:

In relation to the Surrey Fire & Rescue Service (SFRS), the Cabinet Member's updates have referred to average response times which are well below the target. However, they are average times. Please would she tell us how many times the 10 minute target was exceeded and by how much? The information must be available because she has informed me that SFRS always takes such occasions seriously and carries out a management investigation to learn from the incident.

If the Cabinet Member believes that she should not provide a reply because it is an operational matter, please would she explain how she believes the Service's operations would be hampered or impeded by giving the information requested.

RESPONSE:

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service follow a similar performance measure for responding to incidents as is used by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services by which it measures the average response times across the county. This allows for benchmarking on average response times with other fire and rescue services. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services have already said in the State of Fire report: *'There are no nationally established response standards based on the risk of an incident or the likelihood of surviving it. This is even the case for the most common incident types such as a two-vehicle road traffic collision or a house fire. Most Services have given public commitments to a response standard, namely that the first engine will get to the scene in so many minutes. But some services don't even do this and give no time commitment.'* [sic]

The average response time, over a 24-hour period, since Surrey Fire and Rescue Service introduced the first Phase of the Making Surrey Safer Plan, on the 1 April 2020, is 7 minutes and 10 seconds, this is well within the performance target of a first frontline appliance to critical incidents within 10 minutes. This response time standard did not change with the implementation of the Making Surrey Safer Plan and has remained the same for 10 years.

Each month the Service reviews critical incidents that have not met the response time and these are then subject to further local management investigation as required. These can be due to any number of operational reasons, for example because of road conditions, weather, poor crew performance, delayed turn out, interrupted calls, wrong addresses, breakdowns, redirections, collisions etc. Any learning from these sessions is then shared to inform improvements as necessary. Due to the sensitive operational nature of this information, potential impact on staff and data protection we would not as a matter of course make this information public.

Since the full implementation of the Making Surrey Safer Plan, January this year, there have been 294 critical incidents. Of these 251 incidents were responded to within the 10 minute time standard and 43 incidents exceeded 10 minutes.

The detail regarding the length of time over the 10 minute response time standard for both this year and for the same period of time last year is set out in the table below:

Number of responses over 10 the minute response time standard (prior to implementation of the Making Surrey Safer Plan) 05-01-20 to 28-02-20

Number within 12 minutes	Number > 12 but within 15 minutes	Number > 15 minutes	Average Time
77	68	51	13 min 56 secs

Number of responses over 10 the minute response time standard (post full implementation of the Making Surrey Safer Plan) 05-01-21 to 28-02-21

Number within 12 minutes	Number > 12 but within 15 minutes	Number > 15 minutes	Average Time
18	14	11	13 min 39secs

The Service established its performance measures last year following the commitment in the Making Surrey Safer Plan to carry out a review. These reflect the national measures, so that benchmarking can take place. As a result of the Making Surrey Safer Plan the Service has invested in new resources focused on engagement activities which includes new public focus groups. The information that residents would like to have reported to them forms part of this activity. Feedback from engagement will be used to make changes or add to the data that the Service already provide (along with how it is provided) to meet public and partner expectations and the Service's accountability to the public.

DENISE TURNER STEWART, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY PROTECTION

12. MRS PENNY RIVERS (GODALMING NORTH) TO ASK:

Is it true that Surrey is failing to pay pensions to its Retained Firefighters?
This affects several residents of Godalming.

And, if it is true what is the plan to correct this blazing oversight and precisely when will it be implemented?

RESPONSE:

All members of On-Call staff are entitled to join the pension scheme, they are automatically opted in on appointment, but of course can opt out if they want to.

Anyone who had retired from Godalming after 2006 (when they were first eligible to join the pension scheme) and who was in the pension scheme would be receiving a pension, providing they met the minimum criteria for the pension.

DENISE TURNER STEWART, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY PROTECTION**13. MR ROBERT EVANS (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK:**

In December the Cabinet Member responded to my question with the information that since 2011, the number of full-time equivalent fire fighters employed in Surrey has been reduced from 641 to 448 by November 2020. The population of Surrey is 1.2 million which gives a ratio of 1:2679.

How does this figure compare with the London Fire Brigade and our statistical neighbours?

RESPONSE:

There is a legal requirement upon each Fire Authority to provide a publicly facing Integrated Risk Management Plan. This document sets out how the Fire Authority will meet the needs of the local community. It must include how resources are balanced between prevention, protection and response activities. In Surrey this is the Making Surrey Safer plan.

Services must sustain maximum effectiveness and efficiency whilst maintaining the highest standards with performance measures that are quantified locally. Nationally this has led to many differing risk management plans that define the way in which Fire and Rescue Services determine local risk, allocate resources and set response standards. National benchmarking for Fire and Rescue Services is provided by the Home Office and is available on their website.

The Making Surrey Safer Plan is based on a thorough analysis of national and local risks and how to respond to them according to the demand and demographics across the county. This has meant formulating clear proposals for new ways of working and a new model of delivery in Surrey.

Population data cannot be used in isolation to determine the resources that the Service needs, including the number of fire fighters, to meet the risks in Surrey. In accordance with national guidelines the Making Surrey Safer Plan considered the following risks:

- population characteristics, such as age, living alone and mobility issues
- the built environment
- the transport infrastructure
- rivers and lakes
- green environment and climate change
- national and regional risks

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service have used this information to determine the balance between prevention, protection and response activities.

The Making Surrey Safer plan has been scrutinised and assured by the National Fire Chiefs Council Advisory Group, reviewed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service, externally verified and independently given full assurance by Brunel University, London.

TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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

The Leaders of Surrey Boroughs and Districts have collectively requested, on more than one occasion, that the Leader of the Council provide copies for them of the PWC report that this Council commissioned on the subject of establishing a single unitary Council in Surrey.

In expectation that the administration would share this report, the District and Borough Leaders provided the administration with the report that they had commissioned KPMG to carry out on behalf of the Districts and Boroughs.

Would the Leader please clarify the reasons behind his refusal to make this report available to the Leaders of the Surrey Boroughs and Districts?

RESPONSE:

I assume this question is asked more in the capacity as the Liberal Democrat Leader of Mole Valley District Council rather than as a Member of this Council.

The County Councillor for Dorking South and the Holmwoods asserts that there has been a formal request for me to disclose the PWC report, but I have no record of any such request. I have written to him separately requesting a copy of the letter.

Irrespective of that, as I have said previously and consistently, what is most important to me, beyond any structural change or governance, is our residents, their priorities and giving them more influence over their own communities. I want Surrey to be a uniquely special place where we address health inequalities and grow a sustainable economy from which everyone can benefit; that has a greener future and empowered communities and where no one is left behind.

We will continue to pursue these ambitions, as we move from tackling the pandemic to focusing on economic recovery and building back better. The residents of Surrey want local government to deliver the best services they can and to keep council tax as low as possible.

The PWC report was prepared last summer, in anticipation of a Government White Paper on Devolution and Recovery in the Autumn of 2020 and an invitation from Government to submit a business case for reform of local government, which would enable the achievement of our ambition and aims for Surrey. As the Government did not invite Surrey County Council to submit a business case for becoming a unitary council, we stopped all work in October 2020 on this.

The impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic has been seismic and felt no less acutely across Surrey. As a consequence, and understandably, the PWC report of 2019 no longer fully or properly captures all the relevant issues and priorities we as local government in Surrey must now address going forwards.

If and when we, collectively, are given the opportunity to work with our residents on preparing proposals that will deliver an improved and more cost effective model of local

government for Surrey, I am sure we will all be prepared to share any supporting documents commissioned and/or created as part of that work.

In the meantime, can I suggest the County Councillor for Dorking South and the Holmwoods in his capacity as the Leader of the Liberal Democrat led Mole Valley District Council focuses on delivering some of the cost saving and efficiency recommendations in the report they commissioned from KPMG, which I am sure residents would want them to do.

Of course, Surrey County Council continues to stand ready to work with District and Borough Councils, to explore further collaboration as proposed in the December 2020 KPMG report and to collectively pursue improved services at lower costs, should they decide to engage with us.

NATALIE BRAMHALL, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE / COLIN KEMP, CABINET MEMBER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

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

At its last meeting Cabinet considered a report setting out plans for the development of Woodhatch Place, which stated the intention that this would be in line with the Reigate and Banstead Local Plan by including the provision of key worker housing. The Reigate and Banstead Borough Council (RBBC) approved Development Management Plan has plan policies for the protection of urban open land and its Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) requires new social housing to be at 'social' rather than 'affordable' rents. Please can you confirm therefore the masterplan will comply with RBBC local plan and its Affordable Housing SPG?

RESPONSE:

Any development proposals for the site will take into consideration local planning policy and guidance.

ALISON GRIFFITHS, DEPUTY CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH

**16. MR WYATT RAMSDALE (FARNHAM SOUTH) TO ASK:
(2nd Question)**

Our carers do a fantastic job and this Council appreciates how extra challenging the pandemic has been for many. Could the Deputy Cabinet Member for Health provide an update on the work that Surrey County Council is doing to support Surrey carers in their caring role and ensure that no-one is left behind?

RESPONSE:

There are an estimated 115,000 carers who live within Surrey, 10% of the population. Based on the Valuing Carers 2015 research, these carers save the public purse an estimated £1.8 billion a year in Surrey.

Carers are from all sections of the population: a sizable number balance caring for someone with working full or part time and/or are parent carers. There are also a significant number of young carers, aged under 18 years who juggle their caring responsibilities with their education.

One of the overriding messages that Carers convey is the need for social care and health care to work hand in hand, similarly with the voluntary sector. In Surrey we have a strong

track record of partnership working, led by our joint Carers Team and the Carers Partnership Board.

Early intervention is key to sustaining the wellbeing of the carer, the person they provide care for and the wider family. Surrey County Council, in partnership with the Clinical Commissioning Groups for Surrey residents, invest in the region of £6million in carers early intention services, which are in the main commissioned from the voluntary sector. This support includes:

- Information and advice: contract Action for Carers Surrey;
- Financial advice: contract with Surrey Welfare Right Unit;
- Opportunities for peer support: contract with Action for Carers Surrey;
- Replacement care to enables carers to take a break: these might be over night or during a period in the day, they might be over a series of nights, they might be home based or offer alternative accommodation, depending on need. The contract is with Crossroads Care Surrey;
- Online support for mental health carers: contract with Space2beyou which adopts a whole-family approach in supporting families when caring for someone with a diagnosis of a mental illness;
- Support Carers' Voice: contract Action for Carers Surrey to ensure Carers have the opportunity to feed into strategy development, feedback any concerns about services and/or broader issues.

We are currently re-procuring the support for carers for new contracts to be in effect from April 2022. This re-procurement is based on refreshed specifications informed by carers and other stakeholders.

Other initiatives include:

Surrey Carers Prescription: an electronic form widely used by health and social care and some voluntary sector services. The prescription is a quick way to refer carers into a multiple number of services quickly and efficiently and there is resource attached where the support required has a cost attached.

End of Life website: this has just been published and underpins our support to carers in the very difficult process of caring for their loved one at the final stages of life. The site (www.caringtotheend.org) contains information for carers and families about the issues faced and the processes when caring for someone at end of life in a sensitive manner.

Carer Confident Accreditation: both Surrey Heartlands and Surrey County Council has secured Carers UK Carer Confident Accreditation, recognising the initiatives that have been put on pace to support effectively members of staff who having caring responsibilities.

Supporting Carers during the pandemic: As people have either not been able or were reluctant to use external care support for fear of Covid19 transmission, many carers have been providing a greater amount of support and care than they would normally expect and are now in need of a break. We have invested an additional £120,000 in the Carers' Breaks contract with Crossroads outlined above to address this need.

Covid-19 Vaccinations for carers

Under cohort 6, eligible carers are now able to access vaccinations via three routes:

1. If carers are registered with their GP surgery (red flag) they will be contacted by the surgery and invited to come forward.
2. If carers are not registered by their GP but meet the eligibility criteria as defined below they will be contacted by the national booking system. Councils have worked with local organisations to send through details of carers known to them. This data collection and submission is protected by section 259 of the Health and Care Act 2012

3. For those carers who have not been contacted by the above two routes, those who are eligible can self-identify and book their vaccine via the national booking system

Eligibility for carers vaccine is defined by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation as follows:

Those who are eligible for a carer's allowance, or those who are the sole or primary carer of an elderly or disabled person who is at increased risk of COVID-19 mortality and therefore clinically vulnerable.

It is also important to note that young carers (aged 16 to 18) who meet the eligibility criteria will only be able to access the Pfizer BioNtech vaccine as this is the only one authorised for use for under 18-year olds. They will therefore be contacted by their GP surgery if eligible.

PPE for carers

Free PPE is now available for carers who live outside of the household of the person they are caring for. This can be accessed by contacting Action for Carers Surrey or their local Surrey County Council Social Care Team.

Finally, there has been much activity during the last 12 months to develop our Surrey wide Carers Strategy, joint between health and social care. This reflects comments from a wide range of carers and other key stakeholders and will be published in July. An important element of this strategy is the commitment to ensure that all carers, regardless of their age, gender, ethnicity, location or sexuality or that of the person they care for, have ready access to the support they need, the commitment to ensuring that no-one is left behind.

MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS

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

The recent snow and rain has had a serious effect on many of our roads. Has the Council had a chance to assess the additional number of potholes and the escalating backlog of repairs? Is the Government giving any indication of additional money to address the situation in Surrey?

RESPONSE:

We are receiving higher volumes of defects as can be expected for this time of year and as a direct result of the recent cold snap. On average we received 225 new defects per day throughout January, 378 per day throughout February and 396 per day in March (up to 10 March). So far, the peak number in terms of new defects received within a single day was 586.

We have increased the number of gangs dealing with safety defects to 22 gangs which compares with a business as usual number of around 10-15 gangs. We have the potential to increase this number further if necessary, as part of our service resilience plan.

Despite the increased volumes of defects, we have no back log of defects that we are unable to fix within our business as usual response times and we are currently fixing all reported priority 2 and 3 defects in an average of 3.6 working days.

In addition to fixing defects we have a number of other programmes of work to help us address deterioration of roads and keep pothole numbers as low as possible which include

our major maintenance programme to address significant lengths of deteriorated roads and our preventative maintenance programmes which help us to lengthen the useful life of roads that are yet to show significant signs of deterioration.

Government is not giving any indication that there will be any funding in addition to [funding already announced](#) to fix potholes.

TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

**18. MR STEPHEN COOKSEY (DORKING SOUTH AND THE HOLMWOODS) TO ASK:
(2nd Question)**

At the meeting of the Council on 9 February 2021 the Leader of the Council stated:

'I am aware that the Leaders of the Districts and Boroughs in Surrey commissioned a report from KPMG which recognised that the current system of local government was not sustainable.'

I understand that it is your intention to repeat that statement in response to a petition opposing your proposal for a single unitary Council in Surrey when you consider that petition on 18 March.

Would you please indicate precisely where in the KPMG report this statement is made?

RESPONSE:

The December 2020 KPMG report, commissioned apparently at a cost of some hundreds of thousands of pounds by District and Borough Council Leaders, contains the following (my emphases):

"The District and Borough Councils of Surrey jointly identified the **need** to explore potential options for Local Government Reorganisation within the County, whilst assessing future opportunities for collaboration within existing structures".

"Councils have **ongoing challenges** with the 'levelling up' agenda, health and social care integration, ongoing financial pressures and the need to deliver greater digitisation.

"Surrey are also facing a number of **cross-cutting challenges**, including an aging population, areas of economic decline, congestion, affordable housing, health inequalities **and increasing demand for services**".

"Councils must **deliver quality service improvements** for their local communities".

"There remain **ongoing challenges of financial sustainability** and a desire to further improve outcomes for residents, the District and Borough Councils feel that collaboration will support them to address these challenges".

Taken together with the commissioning of a piece of work based on an identified need to explore potential options for Local Government Reorganisation within the county, this very strongly suggests that the Leaders that commissioned the report and KPMG, recognise that the current system of local government in Surrey is not sustainable.

It would be very helpful if the District and Boroughs explained to residents what steps they are taking to implement the very clear recommendations on how to reduce cost and deliver efficiencies that are contained in the report.

TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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

Surrey County Council (SCC) has had and is planning large contracts and programmes of capital development works in the areas of property development on council owned sites, highways and waste management. The Council still has in place a joint venture with Places for People and a significant pipeline of property developments. Similarly, the current highways contract will soon end, and the council is tendering for a new, potentially 21 year highway contract worth around £2.5bn contract and the council's waste management PFI contract runs for 25 years from 1999 so new future arrangements will need to be put in place.

Please provide details of independent value for money or effectiveness audits which have been carried out by SCC in the areas of property, highways and waste management and what is planned before new contracts and/or major financial commitments are put in place?

RESPONSE:

Land and Property are changing the approach to procurement to maximise efficiency of services through key suppliers, build in opportunities for standardisation and optimisation, improve buying power through volume purchasing and reduce the risk of costly and lengthy piecemeal delivery. Suppliers will be procured competitively, returns benchmarked and be subject to ongoing market validation. Future tender prices for work and purchasing will be validated by independent consultants who will make recommendations against value for money and anticipated market pricing level criteria. Benefits through confidence in SCC as a client will be realised by support from independent professional consultants on technical matters and through informed engagement with the market.

In terms of Highways we have employed various mechanisms across the different contracts to assess value for money and effectiveness, these include benchmarking, improvement programmes and utilising the procurement process. We have also carried out a number of internal audits on our contracts over the years and in relation to our Term Maintenance contract have also carried out independent assessments by the Local Partnerships organisation, and more recently by Proving Services which assessed the contract as providing value for money and assisted us with the development of a further improvement programme across a number of activities. The new Highway Contract is currently being procured and as part of the submission process we have asked bidders to specifically include details of how they will ensure value for money for the duration of the contract, in addition to us competitively testing value through the pricing returns. These submissions will form part of the contract enabling us to hold the successful supplier to account once the new contract starts.

With regards to the waste disposal contracts, we have put in place a programme team to deliver the Rethinking Waste Programme which includes re-procuring waste disposal contracts for Surrey. The new arrangements will be in place from September 2024. The process for re-procurement has already started and we are in the analyse phase within which we are looking at past performance as well as future need and challenges. This will include an assessment of effectiveness of the contract and value for money. A recent

Members meeting in February outlined the process and other Members briefings will be provided at appropriate times within the procurement process.

MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS

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

What incentives are being proposed to encourage staff to use public transport and car share for those commuting significant distances to Woodhatch Place?

RESPONSE:

To support the move of approximately 1,300 staff plus Members of the Council from County Hall, Wray Park, and Consort House to our new headquarters at Woodhatch Place we are completing a comprehensive Green Travel Plan. This work is almost complete, comprising four key elements, namely:

- A site review to understand the conditions and characteristics of the local area, including a review of accessibility and the existing facilities at Woodhatch Place;
- A review of staff data, including that from the staff travel survey completed in December 2020;
- An analysis of staff home postcode data, accompanied by work to identify feasible travel options so that we may better understand opportunities to change future travel patterns and behaviours; and
- The identification of issues, interventions and recommendations.

A range of recommendations and improvements that will support staff getting to and from Woodhatch Place by active travel modes and by public transport are set out in the Green Travel Plan. These are all being worked through. Examples include:

- Increasing secure bicycle parking and increasing the number of lockers for staff so they may easily store bicycle and motorcycle equipment, with some lockers big enough to accommodate folding cycles for those staff using both train and bicycle;
- Increasing the number of showers to support active travel;
- Consideration of a new local bus service to provide direct, fast and frequent links to Redhill Station; and
- Increasing the number of electric-vehicle charging points.

These are just some examples of the initiatives being considered. Once the Green Travel Plan is complete, all the improvements and initiatives to be taken forward will be shared widely with both staff and Members. This will support a change of work base for staff, our agile work programme and move us toward achieving a net zero carbon Council by 2030.