

**STRATEGIC INVESTMENT BOARD  
16 FEBRUARY 2021**

**1. STRATEGIC INVESTMENT BOARD 2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT TO CABINET**

This Part 2 annex contains information which is exempt from Access to Information requirements by virtue of paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including commercially sensitive information to the bidding companies).

**Details of decision:**

The 2019/20 Annual Report of the Strategic Investment Board was endorsed and it was agreed that the report be presented to Cabinet on 23 February 2021.

**Reason for Decision:**

To inform the Council about the activities of the Strategic Investment Board.

The Strategic Investment Board has been established in accordance with best practice governance to ensure effective oversight and alignment with the strategic objectives and values of the Council.

**CABINET MEMBER DECISIONS  
MARCH 2021**

**CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY PROTECTION**

**1. PETITION - CHOBHAM FIRE STATION**

**Details of Petition:**

A petition of 269 signatories was submitted by Mr Richard Wilson. The petition was presented by Ms Amy Moqbel.

**The petition read:**

“Chobham Fire Station is set to close between 7am and 7pm, Monday to Friday, from 1 December 2020. The Council's Making Surrey Safer plan dates back to 2019 and does not take account of coronavirus. Lockdowns mean families are at home during the day midweek now. This means increased risk of house fires and more fatalities when they occur.

Response times are very important when dealing with house fires, so when a fire engine arrives from a more distant station it may be too late. Weekdays should be treated like weekends or evenings until the pandemic is over.

Please postpone the daytime closure of the fire station until the pandemic is over. This will protect lives and property in Chobham, Windlesham and the surrounding area.”

**Response to the petition:**

“The priority for Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) is keeping Surrey residents safe. Our main objective is to ensure that incidents do not happen in the first place, which the Making Surrey Safer Plan (MSSP) addresses by rebalancing resources. In an emergency however we will always respond to an incident.

SFRS operate a dynamic response model which uses real-time data showing fluctuating levels of risk and incidents across the county. Our fire engines are moving around the county using differing fire stations as deployment locations all of the time. The dynamic nature of the response services provided, which changes on the basis of risk at any time, means that fire station ‘grounds’ or areas perceived to be responded to by a given fire engine or fire station, only exist for the purpose of delivering Community Resilience activities.

In 2012, SFRS decided that daytime cover was no longer required from Chobham Fire Station based on data and evidence. If a fire engine was required in the area this would come from a neighbouring fire station. Chobham Fire Station has been a nights and weekends on-call unit since 2014. Therefore, there were no operational changes at Chobham Fire Station as a result of the MSSP.

There was a historic issue with misaligned employment contracts and it has taken until recently to ensure these have been aligned to the requirement for Chobham set out in 2014 (i.e. staff on contracts they were unable to fulfil due to the MSSP stating weekends/night only) which has now been rectified. This error impacted not only Chobham station but also Gomshall and Guildford fire stations who had staff on mixed and day contracts. All of these people have now been issued the correct contracts.

Our performance data shows that we have been exceeding our target of first frontline appliance to critical incidents within 10 minutes and have started to improve even further since

the first Phase of the Making Surrey Safer Plan was implemented on 1st April 2020. Our current performance data from 1 April to 31 December 2020 shows that our average response times for first appliance to critical incidents is 7 minutes and 45 seconds, which is well within our response standard. In 2020, we saw a 9.6% decrease in incidents attended in Surrey.

The service is confident that we have designed the optimum plan for the people of Surrey that is fit for the future.”

*(Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Community Protection – 9 March 2021)*

## **CABINET MEMBER FOR ALL AGE LEARNING**

### **2. PROPOSAL TO OPEN A SPECIALIST CENTRE AT THE ORCHARD SCHOOL**

#### **(i) Details of decision**

The Cabinet Member for All Age Learning determined the statutory notice thereby bringing into effect the formal commencement of a Specialist Centre with 6 places for pupils from Year R to Year 2 with Speech Language and Communication Needs (SLCN).

#### **(ii) Reasons for decision**

Demand for specialist centre provision in the north east area for pupils with Special Educational needs is high. The provision of a specialist Speech Language and Communication (SLCN) centre will help support local families who would otherwise have to travel further afield. This will not only enable local provision for local children, but also decrease home to school journey times and associated costs.

Pupils attending the centre would be in addition to the mainstream Planned Admission Number (PAN) of the school. The school would manage meaningful inclusion into the mainstream classes which is wholly individualised to the needs of the child. Some pupils would spend more time in the centre than others and it would be the responsibility of the school to manage the specialist offer and inclusion levels in partnership with the parents and LA officers.

The Orchard School is using existing space within the current building to run a temporary centre environment. It is proposed that this space is permanently used for the new provision, therefore there is no capital investment and additional building needed.

For these reasons, it is recommended that the Cabinet Member for All Age Learning determines the Statutory Notice, to bring the creation of the specialist centre into effect from 1 September 2021.

*(Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for All Age Learning – 9 March 2021)*

## LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

### **3. PETITION – UNITARY STATUS**

#### **Details of Petition:**

A petition of 5,288 signatories was submitted and presented by Hannah Dalton.

#### **The petition read:**

“Currently the delivery of local council services in Surrey are via a two tier system split between Surrey County Council (SCC) and the 11 Borough and District Councils. The proposed Unitary business case would abolish the Borough and District councils and develop the County Council as a single council managing all services for Surrey’s 1.2 million residents resulting in: - A council where a Cabinet of 12 elected representatives or a single Mayor make decisions - Decision makers with scant knowledge of the local area, let alone any real concerns or interests in the impact of their decision making. The response of the 11 Borough and District Councils to the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted how critical it is to have in place a local authority which has a strong relationship with the community it serves. If the Unitary business case is successful, at a time when our local authorities should be focused on economic recovery and supporting residents through recession, it will instead be engaged in implementing a radical restructuring of local government.”

#### **Written Response of the Leader of the Council:**

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.

Surrey County Council, working with its partners, has over the past year amply demonstrated a real and knowledgeable concern for and strong relationships with local communities and residents. Sitting as full Council, Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees, with Divisional Members and staff working tirelessly in people’s homes, neighbourhoods, villages, and towns, we have more than risen to the challenge for our 1.2m residents across the County. We will continue to do so 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, but the current two tier system can often cause confusion for residents who are unclear as to which authority is ultimately responsible.

Further to the Minister’s announcement on 3 July 2020 that there was to be a Devolution and Recovery White Paper in the Autumn, I wrote to the Government to set out our ambition for Surrey and our wish to engage with Government on the reforms needed to ensure its achievement.

As a consequence of not being invited by the Government to submit a business case for change and the urgent priority of tackling the pandemic in Surrey, I have made it crystal clear that Surrey County Council stopped all work on submitting a business case in October 2020.

The Leaders of the 11 District and Borough Councils in Surrey commissioned a report from KPMG which recognised that the current system of local government is not sustainable. As well as exploring unitarisation for Surrey, it identified a number of areas where authorities could deliver savings through greater collaboration. Indeed, it has become very apparent

during the current budget process that many District and Boroughs have insufficient funds to deliver their services and many are having to use reserves which cannot provide a long term solution.

The County Council has a strong track record in recent years of transforming and improving services and driving out efficiencies in service delivery and is ready to engage with any proposals from the District and Borough Councils that will deliver better and improved services to our residents and will potentially ultimately reduce their council tax.

**Further comments by the Leader of the Council:**

It was the Government's decision not to progress with the Surrey County Council submission and unless the Government changes its position then no further work has been, or will be, undertaken by the Council on this issue. If the Government does invite a business case, then there will be a full public consultation and it will be down to residents to decide if they want any change to the local government structure.

The position of the boroughs and districts is simple in that there needs to be better quality and lower costs services which may lead to a reduction in Council Tax.

*(Decision taken by the Leader of the Council – 18 March 2021)*

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