

**CABINET – 20 JULY 2021****PROCEDURAL MATTERS****Members Questions****Question (1) Will Forster (Woking South):**

At the Full Council meeting in March this year the Cabinet Member advised that the council had entered into legal proceedings with Suez to resolve the outstanding issues relating to the Eco Park. Can the Cabinet Member please confirm the latest situation and advise when it is anticipated that the court case will be concluded?

**Reply:**

The legal process will be resolved next year with an estimated time frame of around 12 months from now. The dispute centres around several complex and inter-related issues with resolution sought on each. As will all legal disputes there are restrictions on what can be discussed in a public forum.

**Marisa Heath**  
**Cabinet Member for Environment**  
**20 July 2021**

**Question (2) Will Forster (Woking South):**

At last week's Full Council meeting, the Cabinet Member for Transport mentioned that the Council is planning to bid for a third tranche of Active Travel funding. Please confirm the amount of funding it will be bidding for and that the Cabinet Member will be consulting with members on which schemes to include.

**Reply:**

The Department for Transport (DfT) has indicated that Authorities should make bids to around the value of the award made for the Tranche 2 Active Travel schemes which are now in design and construction. £6.8M was awarded as part of the Active Travel Tranche 2 bid. As a result, the County Council will be making a bid in this region for tranche 3. The guidance from DfT indicates that schemes must ideally be part of a Local Cycling & Walking Plan (LCWIP) and must be to the standard set out in the cycling guidance LTN1/20. As a result, schemes being considered for the bid at this stage include those within Woking, Guildford, Reigate & Banstead and Spelthorne where predominantly LCWIPs are, or will be, in place by Autumn 2021 and where schemes are LTN 1/20 compliant. Bids must be made by the 9<sup>th</sup> August 2021. For future bidding opportunities we expect to be able to consider schemes from other District & Borough areas as the LCWIPs continue to be developed across the rest of the county.

As you will be aware, local councillors are involved in the development of the list of schemes that form the LCWIP and we will engage further with those members who have the proposed schemes in their districts to ensure agreement before bidding. We will also consult, once we have confirmation of a successful bid, with local residents and businesses ensuring local buy in to schemes prior to design and construction.

**Matt Furniss**  
**Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure**  
**20 July 2021**

**Question (3) Will Forster (Woking South):**

Please can the Council confirm how many Freedom of Information and General Data Protection Regulation requests it has received in the last year? How many were replied to within the 20 working days required? What is the longest time the Council has taken to reply to an FOI and GDPR request?

**Reply:**

*Statutory Requirements*

Generally speaking, FOI/EIR requests are required to be responded to within 20 working days from the date of receipt of a valid request although this can be extended to 40 working days in certain circumstances.

Requests made under GDPR/Data Protection Act 2018 have different requirements depending on the type of request being made but this ranges from one month to three months from the date of receipt of a valid request.

*FOI/EIR Requests*

From May 2020-May 2021 we received 1899 requests. On average 88% of responses were issued on time within the statutory period.

The longest time taken to reply to a request was 208 days. The request was in relation to the Pension Fund.

*DP Access And Rights Requests by Data Subjects*

Due to a change over of systems we are unable to report performance figures prior to September 2020 but since the introduction of the new icaseworks system the figures for September to December 2020 were 264 cases with 58% on time.

The vast majority of these cases relate to children's social care records and are often complex and voluminous.

Currently the longest running case is 476 days old and is a subject access request for a Children's Social care file where electronic data has been sent to the requester and now 20 plus paper files are being worked through.

**Tim Oliver**  
**Leader of the Council**  
**20 July 2021**

**Question (4) Jonathan Essex (Redhill East):**

On Item 11 of the Agenda:

- i) Please confirm if the land that Surrey County Council is proposing to be purchased for this road widening it itself green belt land, provide the outline estimates of carbon

emissions associated with both the transport infrastructure investment and the house building which is proposed to enable and what the anticipated environmental sustainability benefits of this scheme are.

- ii) Please confirm the full carbon assessment for this investment is carried out and as new scheme that fully aligns within the - council climate strategy and local transport 4 plan (now signed off by cabinet and out for consultation) is produced out and brought to cabinet before this land purchase to facilitate government spending is signed off. And if this cannot align with our strategy that it is not approved by cabinet.
- iii) In light of this council's commitment to protecting the green belt should the council be supporting housing infrastructure grants that facilitate house building on the greenbelt in Surrey?

**Reply:**

- i) To confirm, the majority of the land to be purchased for the A320 improvements is within the green belt, though there is a small amount of brownfield land.

Regarding carbon emissions that are a direct result of the A320 widening, there will be a reduction of approximately 22,821 tonnes over 60 years life time of the scheme. In addition, there are significant improvements for walking and cycling which support the Council's aim to encourage a shift from the private car to sustainable and active travel. The current road layout is not conducive to cycling or walking but the proposals will provide significant new infrastructure that makes walking and cycling easier. Similarly, the scheme will involve new landscaping and planting which enhances biodiversity, contributes to carbon sequestration and helps to prevent localised flooding. The additional housing as supported by the Housing Infrastructure Fund bid currently results in an estimated increase in carbon of 27,570 tonnes. Surrey County Council will be working with Runnymede Borough Council to put in place measures to reduce the carbon from the additional housing as far as possible.

- ii) A full carbon assessment has not been carried out. This scheme, fully funded through the governments Housing Infrastructure Fund supports the additional housing, including affordable housing, identified in Runnymede Borough Council's Local Plan. Both the draft Local Transport Plan and the Greener Future Climate Change Strategy contain measures that mitigate environmental impacts of transport and further support the reduction in carbon from the transport sector.
- iii) The HIF grant that has been received for this scheme enables the delivery of the Runnymede Local Plan 2030 that was adopted in July 2020, without which would not be able to delivered. The sites allocated by Runnymede Borough Council have been considered as part of the process for the adoption of the local plan and are shown on the plan's key diagram as outside of the Green Belt.

**Matt Furniss**  
**Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure**  
**20 July 2021**

**Question (5) Jonathan Essex (Redhill East):**

The overspend on Children's' Families and Lifelong Learning is estimated this year as being in part due to a £2.4m overspend on staffing due to the high level of agency workers. Please confirm a breakdown by number, pay grade and financial spend of agency and contract

workers across the Surrey County Council Directorates and what the reasons are for the reliance on agency workers now, and strategy for reducing their use in the future.

**Reply:**

The County Council faces a range of challenges about the recruitment and retention of staff in certain areas, particularly in relation to Social Work and care staff for our most vulnerable residents. This issue is not exclusive to Surrey and is a widely recognised problem, particularly in those counties close to London, where the labour market is most competitive. The directorate has a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy in place, as per our improvement plan, to strengthen our ability to recruit staff within the social work arena, which through attraction payments (including locum conversation incentives), staff benefits and support resources is gradually reducing our use of agency and interim staff.

Where used, agency and interim staff provide essential and appropriate cover for 'hard to recruit' vacant positions, as well as for periods of absence within some of our more complex services. In having an agency pipeline, the directorate can utilise this as a sourcing channel for high-demand specialist skills.

Provided below are figures from the last financial year. Unfortunately, due to reporting practices, we are unable to break down these totals further. It should be noted that as agency recruitment is a candidate-led market, the rates are inflated to keep in competition with neighbouring authorities. As such, rates do not reflect a Surrey pay grade, which additionally means we are unable to provide a breakdown by paygrade.

ELLC -	£1.8m
Rest of CFLC -	£16.4m
<u>CFLC transformation</u>	<u>£0.6m</u>
Total CFLC -	£18.8m

**Clare Curran**  
**Cabinet Member for Children and Families**  
**20 July 2021**

**Question (6) Catherine Baart (Earlswood and Reigate South):**

The governance details for the Your Fund Surrey were due to be published yesterday (19th July) in time for the first meeting of Advisory Panel of councillors to assess applications on the 26th July. Please you confirm the way that these governance arrangements will be scrutinised, both before the first Advisory Group meeting and in monitoring /reviewing it afterwards?

**Reply:**

The governance arrangements for Your Fund Surrey were initially developed with the input of a cross-party task & finish group of the Communities, Environment & Highways Select Committee. They have been the subject of Cabinet reports on multiple occasions to date, and these Council reports are publicly available. All Council Members will have had the opportunity to read the reports and attend and speak at these meetings.

The intent of the YFS governance document is only to bring all of the existing governance into one place for ease of reference. Every decision which is to be taken in relation to YFS will be subject to the full rigour of the checks and balances of the Council.

The YFS governance document will form part of the future audit plan as appropriate, and the relevant scrutiny panel has scope to look at the operation of YFS as part of its forward plan. The Terms of Reference for the Advisory Panel has within it that the panel itself might periodically review its own performance and effectiveness in relation to the Fund.

**Mark Nuti**  
**Cabinet Member for Communities**  
**20 July 2021**

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