

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****TUESDAY 8 FEBRUARY 2022****QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED UNDER THE PROVISIONS  
OF STANDING ORDER 10.1****MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE****1. ERNEST MALLETT MBE (WEST MOLESEY) TO ASK:**

The only information which local residents have concerning the Highway plans to replace the River Mole bridge on the Esher Road at East Molesey is second hand. No plans, timescale or costs have been placed in front of the Elmbridge Local Committee.

- a) Could some definitive information and plans be made available for viewing at Molesey Library and on the Council's website?
- b) Secondly, is there to be any local consultation on the desirability/intention of replacing the bridge with a wider one?

**RESPONSE:**

- a) The project team are working with the Highways Service's Works Communications Team to produce a dedicated webpage for project updates at regular intervals and key milestones. We are aiming to have this up and running within the next two weeks. These updates can also be made available at Molesey Library for viewing. The next milestone is the completion of the detailed design, which has experienced some delay due to constraints at the site.
- b) Following discussions with Elmbridge Borough Council Planning Team it was highlighted that planning permission would be needed as the bridge will need to be widened in order to bring it to modern standards and improve safety. In doing so we will be extending the highway into the land which currently belongs to the Environment Agency (EA) and Elmbridge Borough Council and is currently designated as green space. As such, the final design, along with supporting reports will be submitted to Elmbridge Borough Council, presenting an opportunity for wider consultation.

**MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**2. JONATHAN HULLEY (FOXHILLS, THORPE & VIRGINIA WATER) TO ASK:**

Surrey's proposed new Minerals and Waste Plan, which will ultimately guide how the Council handles minerals and waste management, and also set out measures to help Surrey adapt to climate change and mitigate against biodiversity loss, has been open to public consultation since November 2021.

Can the Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure update the Council on the number of responses received to date from members of the public and set out the different ways in which the county's residents can engage in the public consultation exercise, and what role does he envisage Members of the Council playing in promoting resident engagement in this process?

**RESPONSE:**

The first of several public consultations relating to the Minerals and Waste Local Plan commenced in November 2021 and is open to elected Members, members of the public, statutory consultees, and other interested parties until 7 March 2022. On 15 November, I notified all Members of the Council about the Issues and Options public consultation and encouraged them to spread the word to their local residents and engage with the consultation. Additionally, a range of stakeholders have been notified in writing about the consultation including Town and Parish Councils; District and Borough Councils; Resident Associations and Amenity Societies; statutory consultees such as Natural England, The Environment Agency, and Network Rail; and non-statutory consultees such as Surrey Wildlife Trust and the Surrey Hills AONB Board. Posters have been erected at prominent countryside locations such as Newlands Corner and at local libraries, and the consultation has been publicised through social media and on the Council's website.

As the consultation period moves into its final months, the consultation will be advertised in the local press and its social media campaign will be stepped up. Planning officers will also be undertaking organised focus group exercises with hard-to-reach residents including Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) communities, women, and 16 to 24 year olds to gauge their views about the issues and challenges facing future minerals and waste management development in the county; and holding several events in the community to engage with members of the public. The first of these advertised events was held at Farnham Library on Monday 7 February, and the next event is scheduled for Thursday 17 February at Addlestone Library.

To date, responses to the consultation have been limited so far. The digital consultation hub has received some 1,300 visits but only 38 responses to the consultation have been received as yet. Furthermore, most statutory consultees have yet to respond, including District and Borough Councils and other similar stakeholders. However, it is not unusual for consultations to attract a majority of responses toward the end of the consultation period. As the consultation period enters its final stages and publicity is intensified, officers expect increased engagement from members of the public and other stakeholders. To assist in this

regard, I would again encourage all Members to spread the word about the public consultation to their local residents and engage with the digital consultation hub or write to planning officers.

## **MARISA HEATH, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT**

### **3. ROBERT EVANS (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK:**

We all know a healthy bee population is essential to the future of our planet. Bee-killing neonicotinoid pesticides were banned across Europe in 2018 – but since then a number of “emergency authorisations” have been used to subvert the ban.

The Government have recently announced plans to again grant “emergency authorisation” to allow bee-killing pesticides to be used on sugar beet crops which would affect farms in Surrey.

Will the Council agree to promote the importance of bees and urge Surrey’s MPs and the Government to encourage farmers to use sustainable methods that protect pollinators and protect our planet, rather than use this loophole to make short-term decisions that will harm farmers and Surrey’s food chain in the long term?

### **RESPONSE:**

Studies show neonicotinoids harm pollinators and that they can contribute to serious [biodiversity decline](#). Insect populations have suffered drastic declines in the UK, and these are set to have far-reaching consequences for both wildlife and people. Recent evidence suggests we have lost 50% or more of our insects since 1970.

For that reason, in 2018, the Government supported new rules which prohibit the outdoor use of neonicotinoids. However, at the time, the Government made it clear that it could enact emergency authorisations of these chemicals in special circumstances where necessary because of a danger that cannot be contained by any other reasonable means, and where the risk to people, animals and the environment, and in particular to bees and other pollinators, was considered acceptably low.

Under this framework, in January 2022, the Government granted an application for emergency authorisation to allow use of a product containing the neonicotinoid thiamethoxam for the treatment of sugar beet seed in 2022. This is in recognition of the potential danger posed to the 2022 crop from beet yellows virus. This emergency authorisation is as result of lobbying by the National Farmers Union and British Sugar.

However, it should be noted that very little sugar beet is grown in Surrey, although other crops may be subject to other future emergency authorisations. The Council is committed to working with partners to improve Surrey’s biodiversity. Officers will work with the Surrey Nature Partnership to develop an approach which protects and promotes the importance of pollinators.

In direct response, the Council will review its own use of and look to undertake a number of actions to promote the importance of bees and other pollinators:

- By not allowing the use of neonicotinoids on Council land;
- Creating and adopting a pollinator strategy for the Council as has been done elsewhere e.g. Dorset which sets out the Council's commitment and actions to protect pollinators and which could be promoted:  
<https://www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/countryside-coast-parks/countryside-management/protecting-bees-and-butterflies>

**TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

#### **4. JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:**

What is proposed to replace the Local and Joint Committees, which currently allow local community engagement and cross-party discussion and agreement between county and borough/district councillors on local issues?

In particular, how will local decision-making on the different place-based approaches to deliver sustainable transport investments be made in different parts of Surrey?

#### **RESPONSE:**

A report currently being prepared for Cabinet to consider in February relates only to the current highway functions of Local and Joint Committees (LC/JCs) and outlines how these functions will be addressed in a different way. It is not proposed to replace LC/JCs at this time, and these will continue to operate beyond April 2022, but without these highway functions.

The proposed changes to LC/JC highway functions sits alongside the development of new engagement methods and tools developed as part of our wider community network approach, enabling Members to reach out more effectively to residents than is possible through the current model. This is in line with the commitment the Council made in 2020 to Empowering Communities.

The new engagement and consultation tools offer greater flexibility to adapt an approach to best fit the topic or issue under consideration than is currently offered through the formality of LC/JCs. For example, in developing our Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) we have and continue to engage with interest groups, stakeholders, local Members and residents to develop ideas, concepts and schemes. A similar approach is being followed as we develop our response to the Government's new national bus strategy, Bus Back Better, where we are also engaging with the bus industry. We believe this to be an effective and inclusive approach that leads to better understanding, consensus, and good outcomes for residents.

Throughout 2022, the use of new engagement methods and tools as part of the developing community network approach will help encourage and empower more residents to participate and influence the area in which they live, including those from whom the Council does not usually hear. Research has shown that far more

residents have been able to communicate with the Council through a wider range of tools and mechanisms than has been the case historically using traditional LC/JC processes.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, our residents are telling us that they want to be more involved in local decision-making but not through formal structures such as boards and committees.

Divisional Members can also use these tools and approaches to widen engagement to District and Borough (D&B) Councillors and neighbouring County Councillors, particularly for consideration of local integrated transport and wider infrastructure schemes.

In relation to infrastructure priorities, the Surrey Infrastructure Plan has established a process whereby schemes are assessed using a common framework agreed by the Council and the District and Borough Councils. Once schemes have been put forward and assessed, the results are then used as part of the decision-making process between the Council and the relevant District and Borough Council to establish joint priorities. Following this high-level agreement regarding priorities, divisional Members will also be asked to provide input. The resulting list of schemes would be brought to Cabinet every six months before more detailed work is undertaken to take them through the design, consultation, and delivery phases.

## **BECKY RUSH, DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES**

### **5. CATHERINE BAART (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK:**

What is the process for all Members to input into future initiatives for savings within and cross-department (known as the Twin Track approach)?

For example, linking the environment transport and infrastructure directorate to children services to maximise overall value across Home to School Transport and the Greener Futures aims to extend bus use.

### **RESPONSE:**

As the programme to develop future efficiencies through the twin track approach is still in the development phase, the exact scope and timelines for initiatives are still being worked through. Members will be updated on the programme and its progress in a variety of ways, for example Member Briefings, Budget Task Group and Select Committees. All initiatives identified through the twin track process will form part of updates to Cabinet and the relevant Select Committees. Engagement with Select Committees will commence much earlier than in previous years, in a manner to be discussed with committee chairs over the next two months. The agreed initiatives will then be proposed through the budget process for 2023/24.

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<sup>1</sup> For instance, in 2021/22, 11 online engagement sessions reached over 50,000 members of the public, whilst in comparison only 650 residents attended LC/JCs between 2019 and 2021 which included councillors from Parish, Districts and Boroughs if they attended to hear proceedings.

## **SINEAD MOONEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS AND HEALTH**

### **6. CARLA MORSON (ASH) TO ASK:**

- a) Has the Council had to respond to a care home closure or bankruptcy in the last six months?
- b) How many residents in Surrey are waiting for an assessment of their needs and how does that compare with previous years?

### **RESPONSE:**

- a) There have been two care home closures in the last six months. The Council managed both closures under the Provider Support and Intervention Protocol, ensuring all residents including self-funders moved to suitable alternative arrangements for their care and support needs. There have been no provider bankruptcies in the past six months.
- b) Although we do not hold a waiting list for assessments based on assessment tasks pending with our social care management systems, there were 336 people as of 1 February 2022 and this compares to 223 people in February 2021.

## **MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **7. ANGELA GOODWIN (GUILDFORD SOUTH-WEST) TO ASK:**

Since the introduction of 20 mph schemes, how much has been spent in total to date for 20 mph schemes (whether they are signage only or with signage & traffic calming measures) for each District & Borough?

### **RESPONSE:**

Since 2014 the Council has introduced 93, 20 mph schemes (some signed only, some with traffic calming). This demonstrates the Council's commitment to dealing with the impacts of speeding traffic following concerns raised by residents. Our work to improve road safety will be boosted by the proposed £3m increase in funding planned over the next three financial years, subject of course to the budget being agreed.

Unfortunately, calculating the cost of every 20 mph schemes introduced in Surrey is not possible. Primarily the Council's finance recording system is not set up with an individual scheme cost code identified for each 20 mph scheme. In addition, many schemes were implemented as part of a package of measure in an area. This makes identifying the cost of the 20 mph element impossible to quantify, also noting that some schemes predate the Council's current and soon to be replaced finance system.

Officers will continue to work on developing new schemes to address speeding concerns in other areas of the county in anticipation of the additional funding being

agreed, noting of course that Members can also allocate their own budget for highway improvements in their local areas to implement more 20 mph schemes.

**MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**8. WILL FORSTER (WOKING SOUTH) TO ASK:**

On 27 January, Baroness Vere, the Minister for Roads, Buses and Places, announced that from this May, local authorities in England will be able to apply for powers to fine those who disobey certain rules of the road, such as stopping unlawfully in box junctions and driving through no entry signs.

Will the Council agree to use these powers as soon as possible to roll out school streets where there is local support?

**RESPONSE:**

This year, the Department for Transport (DfT) will allow highway authorities in England to apply for new powers to carry out Moving Traffic Enforcement (MTE).

The Government sees the new powers as a key tool in reducing congestion and improving air quality, while promoting the attractiveness of active travel, e.g. by keeping vehicles out of cycle lanes. In addition, by keeping junctions clear the policy also aims to improve punctuality of bus services contributing to making sustainable travel a more attractive choice. Increasing compliance through targeted enforcement at problem locations, will also bring benefits to the experience of pedestrians including people with sensory impairments, older people, children, those looking after children, as well as carers.

This means that traffic enforcement cameras could be used to enforce a variety of highway restrictions on Surrey roads thereby increasing the effectiveness of measures developed in the new Surrey Transport Plan (STP) aimed at improving safety, reducing congestion and upgrading infrastructure for buses, cycles and pedestrians.

School streets can help reduce traffic levels around schools thereby improving safety and increasing air quality, and from a practical perspective, can only be effectively enforced by camera. This type of scheme may be appropriate in some parts of Surrey as part of our new transport strategies, subject to a traffic order consultation required to create a school street and the associated use of an enforcement camera. Effective consultation and engagement with residents and highway users will be a key aspect in the use of enforcement cameras.

We intend to apply for the new MTE powers in May this year. To that end, a report setting out the detail of this process will be presented to the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee on 8 March followed by Cabinet on 27 March.

**TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**9. STEPHEN COOKSEY (DORKING SOUTH AND THE HOLMWOODS) TO ASK:**

Will the Council please confirm how much it plans to spend on PR and communications across the Council in 2022/23 and how this compares with expenditure in the current financial year?

**RESPONSE:**

The budget for the Communications, Engagement & Public Affairs Directorate for 2022/23 is £1.9m, this is an increase from the £1.7m budget in the current financial year. There are smaller costs funded from other budgets in the Council, such as specific activities relating to transformation projects, but the majority of the spend is from within this corporately held budget.

**BECKY RUSH, DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES**

**10. FIONA WHITE (GUILDFORD WEST) TO ASK:**

- a) How much did the Council spend on agency and temporary staff in 2021/22?
- b) Is the Council on track to reduce this amount in the current financial year?

**RESPONSE:**

Agency and interim staff play an important and valued role in maintaining resilient services and delivering key projects. A significant number of our interim staff fill roles that are time-limited or project-based, bringing in expertise and experience to roles that would not be suitable for permanent recruitment. Taking interim staff specifically; at Month 9, over 50% were filling roles that were genuinely interim in nature. Access to temporary staff is also a valuable tool across critical front-line services where minimum staffing levels are necessary to provide a safe service, often at short notice.

We recognise that filling permanent vacancies with directly employed staff is likely to be more cost effective and provide more stability in the staffing structure and we are taking steps to reduce the reliance on agency and temporary staffing filling these roles. These measures include reviewing our pay and reward programme to attract and retain the best people. However, there will always be an element of agency and interim staff in our workforce. For children's social care as an example, the national average is for an agency rate of 15.4% of full-time equivalent staff. Whilst we aim to reduce our use of agency staff, it is therefore also important to ensure that we get value for money where we do use temporary recruitment.

Following the end of the previous master vendor contract with Adecco, the Council have entered into a Joint Venture (JV) with Commercial Services Kent Limited to deliver the ongoing temporary recruitment needs of the Council. The new JV is operating under the name 'Connect2Surrey' and will enable the Council to have



more flexibility and control over its recruitment in a changing market. While delivering wider benefits to the Council, one of the aims of the JV is to deliver cost savings through increasing direct recruitment, which in turn will decrease reliance and spend on the more expensive third-party supply chain.

- a) For the last financial year (2020/21), the Council spent £39.7m on agency and temporary staff, including £3.4m on temporary staff specifically recruited to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic. This represented 11.1% of the pay bill.
- b) For this financial year (2021/22) the Council is looking to reduce this spend to a forecasted circa £28.2m, which would represent 7.7% of the pay bill.

The reduction in agency spend from 2020/21 to 2021/22 is therefore £11.5m (29%) year-on-year.

## **MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

### **11. LANCE SPENCER (GOLDSWORTH EAST AND HORSELL VILLAGE) TO ASK:**

The Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure recently stated that since 2014 Surrey had introduced 93 formal 20 mph zones and a number of informal zones.

How many residents live in these 20 mph areas, and what percentage of the population of Surrey does that represent?

### **RESPONSE:**

I am pleased to confirm that since 2014, Surrey has indeed introduced 93, 20 mph schemes (some signed only, some with traffic calming). This demonstrates the Council's commitment to dealing with the impacts of speeding traffic and the concerns raised by residents. Our work to improve road safety will be boosted by the proposed £3m increase in funding for road safety planned over the coming three financial years, subject to formal approval of the budget.

The number of dwellings within the limits of the 20 mph scheme is not specifically calculated as 20 mph scheme areas are expected to benefit users beyond those that live within the zone. The positive impact each scheme has on the many more people who drive, cycle or walk along each stretch road, all of whom benefit from a lower speed environment is more important.

The draft Surrey Transport Plan (Local Transport Plan 4) reaffirms the county council's support for 20 mph schemes in busy town centre shopping streets and residential roads where the needs of people walking and cycling requires greater priority. Officers will continue to work on developing new schemes to address speeding concerns in other areas of the county in anticipation of the additional funding being agreed, noting of course that Members can also allocate their own budget for highway improvements in their local areas to implement more 20 mph schemes.

**MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**12. LIZ TOWNSEND (CRANLEIGH & EWHURST) TO ASK:**

The Government's Bus Back Better scheme is in tatters with the funding pot slashed in half to £1.4bn for the next three years. With the focus on levelling up and the amount of bids to this scheme reported as totalling between £7bn to £9bn, it would suggest that areas like Surrey will be last in the queue for funding to support the long-awaited improvements to our bus services outlined in Surrey's Transport Plan 2022 to 2032, and which are relied upon to be delivered in Surrey's Greener Futures Delivery Plan. In rural areas like Cranleigh and Ewhurst bus services are critical, not only to help address the climate emergency but to also tackle inequality and social exclusion for the many people who do not have access to a car. In fact, far from improving, our services have deteriorated even further this year, with Stagecoach forced to run a reduced service due to the impacts of Brexit and the pandemic, and with no sign of this improving. Young people attending local schools now have around a 30 minute wait between buses and more of my residents are compelled to use private cars to get to work.

Surrey's Transport Plan states that it relies heavily on capital funding from several sources, including central government. How will the serious drop in funding from the Bus Back Better scheme affect Surrey's ability to deliver its Transport Plan, particularly against the backdrop of a service already under serious pressures?

**RESPONSE:**

We, like all Local Transport Authorities in England, are waiting for the outcome of the Department for Transport's (DfT) review of the Bus Service Improvement Plans (BSIP) and, in turn, what funding Surrey might be allocated.

We see the Government's focus on Bus Back Better as one of the most positive approaches to the bus industry for many years and welcome any funding that helps support our aspirations around growing bus patronage and sustainable transport more broadly.

As an authority, we are investing some £47m in zero emission buses and Community Transport vehicles, as well as bus priority schemes and expanding our Real Time Information network.

The county is progressing with our planned capital investment for public transport which is going ahead whether we get all our funding request as part of the BSIP process or just some. There are also plans, working with partners such as the Borough and District Councils, as the planning authorities, and the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) for additional investment in public transport to deal with housing growth.

Additional investment awarded from BSIP money will be planned and spent with operators on both capital schemes, mainly focused on bus priority measures which is

something the Government have clearly stated they expected to see; and revenue investment on interventions like fares support and service enhancements.

Obviously, there is a chance that, with the BSIP totals across England coming to over £6bn, we may not be allocated all the funding we want. The amount of Government funding will impact on the scale and timescales in which we can deliver the step change in public transport envisaged by the Transport Plan and Climate Change Strategy. In that scenario we will need to think carefully and work with operators on what we can deliver that will create sustainable passenger growth over the next three years. A measure that Government will look at should any future rounds of funding become available.

However, growing sustainable transport is more than simply injecting capital funding. The draft Surrey Transport Plan also focuses on behaviour change and policy change to encourage and enable people to make different, more climate conscious, choices about how they travel.

## **MARISA HEATH, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT**

### **13. PAUL FOLLOWS (GODALMING SOUTH, MILFORD & WITLEY) TO ASK:**

Across Surrey 28% of the carbon emissions come from our homes. The Council needs to ensure over 30,000 houses have been upgraded by 2030 to hit the Greener Futures Delivery Plan targets.

How many houses have currently had the necessary work done and, what is the average cost per house where the work has been completed?

### **RESPONSE:**

Rapid decarbonisation of Surrey's homes is a key priority in Surrey's Climate Change Delivery Plan. The Plan sets out a number of key performance indicators to be achieved by 2025, including;

- 20% of fuel poor homes decarbonised
- 20% of off-gas homes decarbonised
- Energy reduction/renewable energy installed in 13% of all other homes

Since 2013, 26,393 fabric insulation measures have been installed in a total of 19,282 Surrey low incomes households with funding from the Government's ECO grant schemes.

In 2020, Government announced the £2bn Grow Back Greener Programme, which made funding of up to £10,000 available to low income households living in energy inefficient homes through the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Programme (GHGLAD). Since the launch of GHGLAD in October 2020, 664 decarbonisation measures (including heat pumps, solar, external wall insulation and other fabric insulation) have been installed in 523 fuel poor homes in Surrey. The average cost of measures per home to date has been £7,849.

The Council will continue to draw down grant funding where available, including the £13m that has been allocated to Surrey from Government's Sustainable Warmth programme.

However, clearly, scaling up the decarbonisation of Surrey homes is necessary to meet the targets set out in the Climate Change Delivery Plan. To this end, the Council is also planning create low/zero interest loan funding to unlock sectors that are traditionally hard to decarbonise, such as the private rented sector. Finally, the Council will lobby Government to put effective finance mechanisms in place to enable Surrey residents to decarbonise their homes affordably.

#### **TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

#### **14. ROBERT EVANS (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK: (2<sup>nd</sup> Question)**

The Resolution Foundation (a leading think tank), calculates that most households in Surrey will be hard hit in April when the National Insurance contributions rise comes in at just the same time as the Government is increasing the energy price cap.

Does the Leader agree that when you add to this the alarming rise in inflation, forecast to be at least 5%, that the immediate future looks pretty bleak for many hard-working families in this county?

What measures does the cabinet propose to help alleviate the impact of this crisis?

#### **RESPONSE:**

We recognise that many households in Surrey are going to be hard hit by the cost of living increases and we are committed to offering financial and non-financial support to those who need it. We have been working closely with our District and Borough Council colleagues, foodbanks, and countywide charities to ensure help is available for residents to alleviate the impact of these pressures and ensure that no one is left behind in the county. We have also recently invested £560,000 in our local Citizen's Advice charities to provide welfare support for residents around budgeting and to ensure people are accessing help they are entitled to and able to manage difficult financial situations. This is alongside investment in the Surrey Crisis Fund and establishing a grants programme with the Community Foundation Surrey using match funding to turn £200,000 into £400,000 of benefit to address urgent issues around the economic impact on our communities over the coming months.

In addition to the action we are taking in Surrey, on the 3 February, the Chancellor announced a support package where domestic electricity customers will get £200 off their energy bills from October, with 80% of households receiving a £150 Council Tax rebate from April. The rebate to bills will be made directly by local authorities from April, and the Council will work with the District and Borough Councils to respond to the relevant guidance provided by Government and ensure this benefit reaches residents in Surrey.

Unfortunately, the cost of living and inflationary pressures does not just affect domestic households, they are also impacting the services we provide. An increase in the price of fuel, energy, resources, materials, staffing, and food have all added to the costs the Council is currently facing, alongside a significant reduction in our funding since 2010. An increasing number of the most vulnerable residents are relying on our services to meet their needs, and these services are often the most expensive public services to deliver. We spend more than £1 million per day providing social care to adults and £500,000 per day providing support to children and their families.

Council tax is our primary funding resource and provides around 75% of revenue, with every penny being invested in the people and place of Surrey. The decision to raise council tax at a time of increased cost pressures on households is not one the Cabinet has taken lightly. The proposed 4.99% increase in council tax will enable us to continue delivering high quality services for all residents who need them while investing in mental health services to tackle the impending crisis. 4% of the increase will be directed to social care and mental health. The remainder will provide funding to meet the increased cost of delivering vital services across the Council. Because many of our services provide support to the most vulnerable, forgoing an increase in funding at a time when pressures on those services are increasing significantly may well have the opposite effect and be to the detriment of those who need our services most.

## **BECKY RUSH, DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES**

### **15. CATHERINE BAART (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK: (2<sup>nd</sup> Question)**

Cost of living increases are now outpacing wage rises for many in Surrey and expected fuel price rises in the near future will further impact low income households. With this in mind please set out:

- a) What is included in the Council's pay offer to provide additional support for our lowest income employees?;
- b) What additional support will be provided to those contracted to Surrey, such as Care Workers?; and
- c) What is the Council doing to provide additional support to households across Surrey on low incomes?

### **RESPONSE:**

#### **Workforce**

- a) The Council is currently considering options for a 2022/23 pay award for all employees and the People, Performance and Development Committee will be asked for their views on these options over the coming months. A three-year programme of reward reform has also just commenced and the objectives include ensuring a fair and transparent approach to pay and reward, whilst

also encouraging retention, development and achievement across the Council workforce.

- b) As part of this reward offer the Council is currently negotiating new enhanced rates of pay for staff who work unsocial hours. The vast majority of these staff are lower paid care workers. The Council recognises that staff at the front line, providing essential services to our residents, should be rewarded accordingly. A decision was made early in the 2021/22 budget process that the entire budget for pay increases should be directed at staff earning up to £29,333 in 2020/21, with pay for staff earning more frozen. This is in contrast to a number of councils who take part in the National Joint Council pay process, which has yet to reach a conclusion on 2021/22's pay.

### **Households**

- c) The response to this question is provided as part of the response to Question 14 to Tim Oliver, Leader of the Council.

### **CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

#### **16. WILL FORSTER (WOKING SOUTH) TO ASK: (2<sup>nd</sup> Question)**

How will changes to funding for the Adoption Support Fund affect Previously Looked After Children and Young People within the Adoption South-East catchment area who need to access therapy 2022/23? What has the council done to try and mitigate any funding shortfall and what measures are in place to support those young people who may no longer be able to access the help they need?

#### **RESPONSE:**

Following the requirement for local authorities to form regional adoption agencies, Surrey has ceased to be an adoption agency. From April 2020 we became part of Adoption South East (ASE) with East & West Sussex and Brighton and Hove.

There is no change to the process of how individual applications to the Adoption Support Fund (ASF) are managed by the Local Authority (LA)/Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) (Adoption South East).

Every year the DfE (Department for Education) is given an allocation of funds for the ASF, as part of the central government funding review. This week it has been confirmed that ASF will continue to be funded for a further year for 2022/23. Whilst this is an annual grant there has been no change to the funding for 2022/23.

This means that LAs (and in our case the RAA) can continue to make applications on behalf of adopted and Special Guardianship Order children who have been assessed as in need of therapeutic support. Once funding has been secured, support is then commissioned from a range of independent providers.

Under the ASF rules, applications can be made for funding up to a 'fair access limit' of £5,000 per child, per year. In addition, an application can be made for funding of a 'complex assessment' up to a further £1,500. In the unlikely event that this is not sufficient, the Council can match additional funding on a 50:50 basis.

With regard to the procurement of services from independent providers, ASE has invited all current and prospective providers to participate in a procurement process which is being led by East Sussex, (the host local authority for the RAA.)

To date there has been a positive response, and most providers have applied and been accepted, with support available to those who do not yet meet the quality and compliance requirements.

ASE is intending to apply a waiver process to enable any existing therapy arrangements to continue into the new financial year, where the provider has not successfully registered. This is to ensure that no therapeutic relationship is prematurely ended.

## **MARISA HEATH, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT**

### **17. JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK: (2<sup>nd</sup> Question)**

The Council has recently been allocated £3.2 million from central government and has tasked Action Surrey to target energy efficiency improvements to low income households in Surrey, who need to have been signed up by the end of March 2022.

What is the Council doing to make sure everyone hears about this and ensure this grant reaches those most in need?

### **RESPONSE:**

On behalf of the Surrey consortium of local authorities, the Council has been awarded £3.2m from Government's Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery 2 (GHGLAD2) scheme, to decarbonise energy inefficient homes of residents with low incomes. Funding of up to £10k is available per home for measures including solar and fabric insulation (loft, cavity wall and underfloor insulation). The scheme will be delivered by Action Surrey, with the Council as the local authority lead.

Promotion of the scheme will be starting imminently. As this funding is restricted to low income homes, the following approach will be used to target those who are most in need:

- Targeted social media posts, including Google Ads, Facebook posts and Twitter feeds;
- Printed flyers which will be delivered to each Local Authority for distribution in council offices, community centres and libraries;
- A press release which will be drafted and circulated to each Local Authority;
- An article in Surrey Matters;

- A dedicated webpage for the scheme to which Local Authority partners can link;
- Promotional articles (including case studies show casing satisfied customers from previous GHGLAD schemes), which will be included in Action Surrey and Local Authority newsletters (including the SCC Greener Futures e-newsletter);
- Promotion of the scheme by Action Surrey to their pipeline of eligible residents who signed up after the closing date for the earlier GHGLAD schemes.

**TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**18. STEPHEN COOKSEY (DORKING SOUTH AND THE HOLMWOODS) TO ASK:  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Question)**

What benefits will the proposals in the Levelling Up White Paper provide for Surrey residents?

**RESPONSE:**

Surrey's Community Vision 2030, the Council's four priority outcomes (growing a sustainable economy from which everyone can benefit, thriving and empowered communities, reduced health inequalities and a greener future, as well as the principle of no-one left behind) and the extensive partnership arrangements across the county that the Council have established, align well with the scope and ambition of the Government's Levelling Up White Paper.

The White Paper helpfully sets out an initial 'Devolution framework' showing how Whitehall will support local government to deliver more for its residents, by devolving freedoms, powers, flexibilities and/or resources to councils, through County Deals. The government has indicated that all areas that want a County Deal will have one that suits their circumstances.

County Deals are a welcome initiative in enabling authorities like ours to deliver bespoke local solutions that will benefit Surrey residents on e.g. the climate emergency and net zero ambitions, sustainable transport, supporting local businesses, protecting the natural environment and nature recovery, effective and strategic deployment of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, funding and support for skills improvement and adult education programmes and shared powers with Homes England for compulsory purchases.

We will continue to promote and work in the interests of Surrey and are actively working with the Government to secure an ambitious County Deal that will support, through powers such as those above, the work we are already doing to deliver against our four strategic priorities, tackle inequality and achieve more for residents.

We are also continuing to work with government to ensure it recognises that 'levelling-up' must happen within local areas, to address the inequality and disadvantage that we know exists in our communities in Surrey.



At the time of writing, we have had the 332 pages of the White Paper for just three days and are still analysing the detail and building an understanding of the full implications it will and could have for Surrey's residents. Further updates and reports will be provided to Members in due course.

## **CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

### **19. LIZ TOWNSEND (CRANLEIGH & EWHURST) TO ASK: (2<sup>nd</sup> Question)**

I was shocked to read on [Surrey Live](#) on 1 February 2022 of the continued failure of a Surrey Children's Home, previously described as "bearing little likeness to a family home", to provide adequate care to the vulnerable young people it is meant to protect. The Ofsted Report listing the failures was released on 28 January and included errors in medication requiring medical attention, descriptions of poorly decorated, cluttered and unhygienic rooms and the account of a child who was moved into temporary accommodation, without it appears adequate and timely checks and balances in place to ensure that this was dealt with as an urgent case and was mindful of the needs of the child. The article also quotes a spokesperson for the organisation that "nothing has changed since the last report".

- a) Can the Cabinet Member advise firstly whether or not the children's home in question is run by the Council? If yes, what action is being taken to rectify the failings listed?
- b) If no, will the Cabinet Member confirm whether the Council has placed children at this home in the past and whether, in light of this inspection report, it intends to do so again in the future?

### **RESPONSE:**

The Children's home referred to in the Surrey Live (01/02/2022) article is an independent children's home. As such the Council has no responsibility whatsoever for the management of the home. It is regulated by Ofsted.

We do not currently have any children placed in this home and this has been the position for over twelve months.

When placing children in any externally managed children's home, we have a robust process in place to ensure the quality of the provision and this includes reviewing all Ofsted monitoring reports. We will not place any children in this home until we are satisfied with the quality of the provision and that it can meet the identified needs of the child we need to find a home for.

**BECKY RUSH, DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES**

**20. WILL FORSTER (WOKING SOUTH) TO ASK:  
(3<sup>rd</sup> Question)**

Please confirm how many Council employees earned salaries of more than £50,000 in 2021/22 and how this number compares to 2020/21.

**RESPONSE:**

The number of Council employees who earn salaries of more than £50,000 in 2021/22 is currently 1,166 (9.6% of total employees), compared to 1,057 (8.9% of total employees) in the previous financial year (2020/21).