

**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL  
HELD AT WOODHATCH PLACE, 11 COCKSHOT HILL, REIGATE,  
SURREY, RH2 8EF, ON 24 MAY 2022 COMMENCING AT 10.00 AM, THE  
COUNCIL BEING CONSTITUTED AS FOLLOWS:**

Helyn Clack (Chair)  
Saj Hussain (Vice-Chair)

Maureen Attewell	Rachael Lake
Ayesha Azad	Victor Lewanski
Catherine Baart	David Lewis (Cobham)
Steve Bax	David Lewis (Camberley West)
* John Beckett	Scott Lewis
Jordan Beech	Andy Lynch
Luke Bennett	Andy MacLeod
* Amanda Boote	* Ernest Mallett MBE
Liz Bowes	Michaela Martin
* Natalie Bramhall	* Jan Mason
Stephen Cooksey	Steven McCormick
Colin Cross	Cameron McIntosh
Clare Curran	Julia McShane
Nick Darby	Sinead Mooney
Fiona Davidson	Carla Morson
Paul Deach	Bernie Muir
Kevin Deanus	Mark Nuti
Jonathan Essex	John O'Reilly
Robert Evans	Tim Oliver
Chris Farr	Rebecca Paul
* Paul Follows	George Potter
Will Forster	Catherine Powell
John Furey	Penny Rivers
Matt Furniss	John Robini
Angela Goodwin	Becky Rush
Jeffrey Gray	Tony Samuels
Tim Hall	Joanne Sexton
David Harmer	Lance Spencer
Nick Harrison	Lesley Steeds
Edward Hawkins	Mark Sugden
* Marisa Heath	Richard Tear
Trefor Hogg	* Alison Todd
Robert Hughes	Chris Townsend
Jonathan Hulley	Liz Townsend
Rebecca Jennings-Evans	Denise Turner-Stewart
Frank Kelly	Hazel Watson
Riasat Khan	Jeremy Webster
Robert King	Buddhi Weerasinghe
Eber Kington	Fiona White
	r Keith Witham

\*absent

r = Remote Attendance

**28/22 CHAIR [Item 1]**

Under the motion of Clare Curran, seconded by Will Forster, it was unanimously:

**RESOLVED:**

That Helyn Clack be elected Chair of the Council for the Council Year 2022/23.

**STATUTORY DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE:**

Helyn Clack made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office. She expressed her thanks to the Members of the Council for electing her as Chair for a second year and gave a short speech.

**29/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 2]**

Apologies for absence were received from John Beckett, Amanda Boote, Natalie Bramhall, Paul Follows, Marisa Heath, Ernest Mallett MBE, Jan Mason, Alison Todd.

Members who attended remotely and had no voting rights were Keith Witham.

**30/22 MINUTES [Item 3]**

The minutes of the meeting of the County Council held on 22 March 2022 were submitted, confirmed and signed.

**31/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 4]**

There were none.

**32/22 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS [Item 5]**

The Chair:

- Noted that her full announcements could be found in the Council agenda front sheet.
- Led the Council in a moment's silence for former County, Borough and District Councillors who have recently passed away, including former Surrey County Councillor John Carruthers, who served Ashford West for several terms during the 1990s and 2000s; and noted thanks to them for their service to Surrey.

**33/22 VICE-CHAIR [Item 6]**

Under the motion of John Furey, seconded by Rachael Lake, it was unanimously:

**RESOLVED:**

That Saj Hussain be elected Vice-Chair of the Council for the Council Year 2022/23.

## **STATUTORY DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE:**

Saj Hussain made the statutory declaration of acceptance of office. He expressed his thanks to the Members of the Council for electing him as Vice-Chair for a second year and gave a short speech.

*Joanne Sexton arrived 10.19 am.*

### **34/22 LEADER'S STATEMENT [Item 7]**

The Leader of the Council made a detailed statement. A copy of the statement is attached as Appendix A.

Members raised the following topics:

- Welcomed the increased highway allocation and spend.
- Welcomed Liz Bruce the Council's new Executive Director for Adult Social Care and Integrated Commissioning, who has joined at a challenging time with significant issues to be addressed around the Health and Social Care Levy, staffing and funding.
- Suggested that now might be the time for the Government to pause the process on reassessing county deals in light of the context around high inflation, rising food and energy costs, Covid-19 recovery, the war in Ukraine and movement of refugees, and the difficulty faced by local authorities in attracting and retaining staff.
- Welcomed the continued discussion by the Leader with the Borough and District Councils around Surrey's County Deal, however Members' scrutiny over the detail of what deal is proposed and the full costings would be essential; improvements needed to be made to the Council's current services.
- Stressed that Members, officers and foster carers had a collective corporate parenting responsibility to ensure that Surrey's Looked After Children are fully cared for; however noted that two of Surrey's children's homes faced issues which surfaced through the press whereby one closed and a change of culture was required in the other.
- Noted that as part of the Council's improvement through scrutiny, welcomed the extraordinary meeting of the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee to take place in June which Members might wish to attend.
- Noted that Members should be told immediately of any issues as well as positives concerning children's homes as reported by Ofsted, before they are informed via the press as Members require transparency and for the Council to have a willingness to understand and learn from issues.
- Highlighted the positive results for the Liberal Democrats in the recent local elections in Surrey, in contrast to the results for the Conservatives.
- Hoped the Leader genuinely listens to the concerns of voters and learns lessons from the results to change his party's approach as residents feel increasingly left behind by the Conservatives and the Council.
- Regarding the cost-of-living, worried that the Council was making the situation worse by increasing residential parking permits by up to 60%, and hoped that the Leader and the Cabinet would reconsider the increase.
- Noted concern about a lack of school places available for the refugees coming from Ukraine, Member question two highlighted that over half of the

children from Ukraine in Surrey already do not have school places and more children were incoming; a step-change was needed.

- Welcomed the highways proposal announced by the Leader on the doubling of Member's allocation from £50,000 to £100,000 and suggested that it would be useful for the Leader to circulate a briefing on where that in-year budget would come from.
- Highlighted that the Independent Review of Children's Social Care was published yesterday, real investment in the social care workforce was needed to stop placing 16- to 17-year-olds in potentially unsafe accommodation without supervision, and excess profits should play no part in children's care provision.
- Asked whether the Leader would support the Independent Review's call for a windfall tax on profiteering children care contracts with some providers making 20% plus profits, and for that to be returned to local authorities.
- Noted that the Independent Review called for more investment in community-based services for children and asked whether increasing ultra-local children's centre outreach would be part of how the Council reviews how its policies help those most in need and introduce better support for vulnerable families.
- Regarding sustainable transport and the Council's plans to deliver better local transport through a variety of initiatives, asked how the Council would work with Surrey's Borough and District Councils and engage residents.
- Queried whether the Local and Joint Committees might be repurposed to support the rollout of the sustainable local transport initiatives, alternatively what would happen to ensure that positive change is supported by Surrey's communities and happens faster.
- Asked how the extra £4 million a year allocation for transport was reflected in this year's budget.
- Asked the Leader to provide an update on the urgent negotiations with the bus companies for Ukrainian visitors hosted in Surrey, and the lack of school places for Ukrainian children.
- Stressed that many local residents were seriously affected by the cost-of-living crisis and were concerned by rising inflation and increases in energy bills, asked whether the Leader could provide an update on any specific measures that the Council has taken on the matter since March's Leader's Statement.
- Regarding the description for the Deputy Cabinet Member for Levelling up, asked for more detail on what the Leader understood by the description of levelling up with respect to Surrey and how he saw that agenda developing.
- Noted that residents would welcome the Leader's announcement about the additional £50 million over the next two years in capital spending for highways maintenance.
- Noted that over the last four years there had been a significant and sustained improvement in the quality of Surrey's highways network compared to the previous approach of managed decline.
- Noted that the £25 million in one year in capital spending would not be fully covered by the doubling of Member's allocation to £100,000 and asked whether an additional part of the additional capital spending would go to the so-called minor roads as those were important to residents.
- Emphasised that it was right that the Council would prioritise highways maintenance over the next few years through the additional funding, but asked whether all options were on the table in respect of future financial years regarding the individual capital spend per Member.

- Echoed the Leader's recognition of the good work by the Council's Customer Services team and welcomed the Council's move away from temporary contracts and appointment of those staff to full-time posts.
- Highlighted the impact of rising prices particularly on child poverty levels where parents often cannot afford their children's school uniform or equipment or do not have time to spend with them, and asked whether the Leader agreed that the decision of the Conservative Party to cut Universal Credit by £20 a week was wrong and asked whether he would call for the uplift in benefits in line with inflation.
- Highlighted a point of concern that the £100,000 in Member's allocation for highways over the next two years would be spent according to the suggestions of every individual Member, noting that it was a lot to expect that every Member would disperse that amount of money efficiently and wisely without there being an appropriate process behind it.
- Noted that there had not been a clear process around Member's allocation for highways or the new structure, highlighted the absence of a clear timetable for submissions, an indicative price of different works, and guidance on how to facilitate democratic community engagement.
- Welcomed the doubling of Member's allocation for highways and had been pleased by the guidance provided by the reshaped highways team; thanked the Leader and the Cabinet team for bringing in the changes to the highways team and look forward to seeing those progressing.

### **35/22 CHANGES TO CABINET PORTFOLIOS [Item 8]**

The Leader introduced the report, noting that the changes were to ensure that the Council's priorities were being addressed. He highlighted that the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Economy's portfolio would include economic development whilst retaining the strategic oversight of infrastructure, transport and planning; the Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways would have the day-to-day responsibility for delivering the new highways contract and budget. He highlighted that the Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Families and the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health would take on the specific responsibility for the mental health prevention and early intervention agenda, working with partners to improve the system and overseeing the spending of the mental health budget. He explained that the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health would also lead on the Council's equality, diversity and inclusion agenda with the Deputy Cabinet Member for Levelling Up in support. He concluded that the Council's priorities had been refreshed and the work plan for the next year would be shared at the upcoming meeting of Select Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs' Group; he welcomed Members' input.

A Member sought clarification on whether the non-road public rights of way fell into the transport portfolio or the environment portfolio.

The Leader responded to an earlier Member comment made under the Leader's Statement, noting that the intention in the first year would be to invest as much money as possible into the more minor roads. Regarding public rights of way, the Leader clarified that those fell within the environment portfolio; the determination of those would move away from the Local and Joint Committees.

**RESOLVED:**

That Council noted the updated Cabinet Portfolios (Annexes 1 and 2) (Appendix B).

**36/22 ANNUAL REVIEW OF POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY [Item 9]**

The Chair noted that officers had advised her that the percentages had been inverted between the Residents' Association & Independent Group, and the Liberal Democrat Group in the table under paragraph 4. The correct percentage was 20% for the Residents' Association & Independent Group and 18% Liberal Democrat Group.

The Leader introduced the report and noted the amendments.

**RESOLVED:**

That the committee sizes and scheme of proportionality as set out in Annex 1 (including the amended table under paragraph 4) be adopted for 2022/23 (Appendix C).

	Conservative	Residents' Association & Independent	Liberal Democrats	Labour	Green
Number of Council seats	47	16	14	2	2
Number of seats on committees	53	18	16	2	2
Percentage	58%	<del>18%</del> <b>20%</b>	<del>20%</del> <b>18%</b>	2%	2%

**37/22 APPROVAL OF COUNTY COUNCILLOR ABSENCE [Item 10]**

The Leader introduced the report and hoped that Councillor Alison Todd would rejoin Members in the near future, he noted that he would pass on Members' best wishes.

**RESOLVED:**

That Alison Todd may continue to be absent from meetings until December 2022 by reason of ill health. The Council looked forward to welcoming her back in due course.

**38/22 APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES [Item 11]**

The Chair referred to the nominations in the second supplementary agenda (revised items 11 and 12), issued due to last-minute changes to the membership of the Resources and Performance Select Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee - changes were marked in bold.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Council agreed: (Appendix D)

1. To appoint Members to serve on the Committees of the Council for the Council year 2022/23 in accordance with the wishes of political groups.
2. To authorise the Chief Executive to make changes to the membership of any of the Council's Committees as necessary during the Council year in accordance with the wishes of political groups.
3. To appoint the County Councillors representing divisions in the Woking borough area and Councillor Matt Furniss to serve on the Woking Joint Committee for the Council year 2022/23.
4. To appoint the County Councillors representing divisions in the Spelthorne borough area to serve on the Spelthorne Joint Committee for the Council year 2022/23.
5. To appoint the County Councillors representing divisions in the Runnymede borough area to serve on the Runnymede Joint Committee for the Council year 2022/23.
6. To appoint the County Councillors representing divisions in the Guildford borough area to serve on the Guildford Joint Committee for the Council year 2022/23.
7. To appoint the remaining County Councillors for each district/borough area to serve on the appropriate Local Committee for the Council year 2022/23, and to authorise the Chief Executive to appoint an equal number of district/borough councillors to the Local Committees following nominations by the district and borough councils, which they should be requested to make politically proportional to their Membership.
8. To appoint the Council's representative to the Surrey Police and Crime Panel for the Council year 2022/23.
9. To appoint four Members (one of whom must be a Cabinet Member and the others County Councillors representing divisions that include the Basingstoke Canal) to the Basingstoke Canal Joint Management Committee.
10. To appoint up to two Members to the Buckinghamshire County Council and Surrey County Council Joint Trading Standards Service Committee, one of whom must be a Cabinet Member; the other in an advisory non-voting role.
11. To note the Leader's appointments to the Council's Executive Committees as outlined above.

**39/22 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE CHARMEN AND VICE-CHARMEN [Item 12]**

As with the previous item, the Chair referred to the nominations in the second supplementary agenda (revised items 11 and 12), issued due to last-minute changes to one of the Select Committee Task Group Leads for the Resources and Performance Select Committee and the Vice-Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee - changes were marked in bold.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Members listed (Appendix E) are duly elected as Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen respectively of the Select Committees and Regulatory Committees as shown for 2022/23.

2. That the Members listed (Appendix E) are duly elected as Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen respectively of the Local and Joint Committees as shown until 31 October 2022.

#### **40/22 AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION [Item 13]**

The Leader introduced the report and highlighted the three main areas of change. Firstly, regarding the highways functions of the Local and Joint Committees and due to the changes to the Local and Joint Committees, the Officer Scheme of Delegation had been updated and approved, as a result the Council was asked to note the consequential amendments to the Constitution. He explained that the intention was to give six months' notice to the Local and Joint Committees. Secondly, regarding the Members' Allowances Scheme the changes reflect the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel previously approved by Council. Thirdly, regarding digital sealing the changes permit the electronic sealing of documents.

A Member referred to the Local and Joint Committees noting that residents were deeply disappointed about the changes and withdrawal of the highways responsibilities, it was difficult to understand what was happening and the changes were seen as a backward step.

**RESOLVED:** (with one Member voting Against)

1. That the executive function changes to the Officer Scheme of Delegation in relation to highways functions approved by the Leader in March 2022 be noted (Annex 1).
2. It is recommended that the consequential amendments to the Terms of Reference for Local and Joint Committees as set out in Section 2 – Responsibility of Function and Scheme of Delegation be noted (Annex 2).
3. That the consequential amendments to the Joint Committee Constitutions for Guildford, Runnymede, Spelthorne and Woking Joint Committees be noted (Annexes 3-6).
4. That the Members Allowances Scheme be approved (Annex 7).
5. That the changes to the Council's Constitution in relation to digital sealing be approved (as set out in paragraph 18).

#### **41/22 MEMBERS' QUESTION TIME [Item 14]**

##### **Questions:**

Notice of thirteen questions had been received. The questions and replies were published in the first supplementary agenda (items 11, 12, 14) on 23 May 2022.

A number of supplementary questions were asked and a summary of the main points is set out below:

**(Q1) Nick Darby** referred to the adjustments to be made at all of the Council's offices, noting that particular attention should be given to further adjustments at Woodhatch Place including travel arrangements from the various stations. He asked the Cabinet Member for Property and Waste what the proposed changes were and when those would be implemented.

In response, the Leader in the Cabinet Member for Property and Waste's absence, would look to provide a response in due course.

**(Q2) Lance Spencer** noted that the student referred to in his question had started school yesterday however the school was a forty-minute journey away. He noted concern on the volume of school aged children likely to be arriving from the Ukraine in Surrey - around 1,000 - and noted that there would be a shortfall of places available. He asked the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning whether she believed that the Council and the Government were doing enough to ensure that all schools, including academies, make places available with reasonable travel distances for the Ukrainian children from the host homes. With such a large volume of children arriving in such a short space of time he asked whether there would be sufficient qualified resource to support them properly in those schools.

**Jonathan Essex** highlighted that compared to the response the recent Ukraine update received by Members included figures which were more than double for primary-aged and secondary-aged children arriving from Ukraine. He noted that the challenge was greater than stated in the response and queried what the plan would be to address the huge deficit in school place requirements.

In response to both Members, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning provided assurance that the resources to support Ukrainian families within Surrey's schools was growing daily. The Council updated the Surrey Education Services Hub regularly with new resources including briefing documents produced by the International Rescue Committee aimed at schools and new daily consultation sessions to offer bespoke support to school leaders - to go live at the beginning of half term and would be delivered by the Council. The Council was regularly updating its FAQs for in-year school admissions, transport and pastoral support; and was working closely with its head teachers in the areas with the greatest number of Ukrainian children taking a coordinated approach to school admissions and enabling the children to settle quickly as close to their host home as possible.

**(Q3) George Potter** noted that there were some aspects of the response which appeared to be contradictory and he sought clarification. He noted that the response said that there would not be any retrospectively applied cap, however two paragraphs further down stated that the new approach would affect existing clients and he provided an example of a resident that had received further contact from the care provider saying that their funded service would be initially capped at 35 hours. He noted that he had further correspondence from the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health, and the service lead which confirmed that carers who accessed prevention and early intervention service would be offered up to 35 hours of carers' breaks. He queried whether that would represent a net increase or net reduction in the overall number of hours of care being provided, highlighting an example of a resident caring for their elderly father where it appeared that their respite would decrease from 150 hours a year to 35 hours a year. He asked the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health whether the cap of 35 hours would be applied to those in receipt of existing care and whether the change in policy would represent an overall net increase or net reduction in the number of hours of care being provided across the entire county in the year.

The Chair had requested the Member to ask his supplementary question succinctly and to be courteous.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health would provide a written response.

**(Q4) Robert Evans** asked the Cabinet Member for Community Protection how he would suggest that he responds to residents when they ask how the reduction in the number of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in Surrey aids community safety or the fight against crime or anti-social behaviour.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Community Protection clarified the response provided, noting that the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey (PCC) had contacted him clarifying that the deployment of resources was an operational matter under the remit of the Chief Constable and not the PCC. He explained that at the meeting of the Surrey Police and Crime Panel on 21 April 2022, the PCC clarified that Surrey Police had replaced twenty-two PCSOs with fully warranted officers - as those positions had become vacant - to improve operational effectiveness in neighbourhood teams. He highlighted that the PCC had expressed her concern that the replacement of PCSOs was being incorrectly linked to the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey's budget in tweets by Panel members.

**(Q5) David Lewis** (Cobham) welcomed the informative answer and the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Economy's commitment that the disruption to the roads around Cobham and Oxshott would be minimised during the work. He noted that the approval of the M25 junction 10/A3 Wisley Interchange work was a precondition for the potential development of the Wisley Airfield site and asked the Cabinet Member whether he could provide assurance that Surrey Highways would ensure that any future development of Wisley would not result in the narrow lanes around Cobham Downside and Hatchford becoming access roads for the new Wisley development.

*Stephen Cooksey left at 11.34 am.*

**Mark Sugden** referred to the Traffic Management Plan that needed to be approved by the Secretary of State following consultation with the Council and asked when that Plan would be agreed as works were due to start in autumn. He also asked for divisional Members to be informed on what local issues the Council was advising National Highways on.

**Colin Cross** noted that his division represented the other side of the A3 and surrounding areas would be hugely affected by the work to the M25 junction 10/A3 Wisley Interchange. He asked what detailed answer had been given on the matter and asked for further details of the traffic planning exercise that had taken place.

The Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Economy responded to David Lewis (Cobham), noting that following a divisional site visit he was happy to commit to the minimised disruption to the roads around Cobham and Oxshott during the improvement work. He had spoken to the Traffic Manager and Streetworks Team who were aware that when a planning application was forthcoming, the roads would be given special consideration to minimise or eliminate any through-traffic from a proposed development. If requested, he was happy to set up a meeting with the Member and the team to run through more detail prior to an application being received.

The Cabinet Member responded to Mark Sugden, noting that the local issues that the Council had been advising National Highways on was the local road programme so as not to clash with the M25 junction 10/A3 Wisley Interchange work, as a similar programme was underway with National Highways on the A320 concerning the upgrade to junction 11. He would advise the Member of any divisional issues.

The Cabinet Member responded to Colin Cross, noting that the draft Traffic Management Plan would be shared in due course with the divisional Members that would be affected so that they could provide feedback as part of the Council's consultation response back to the Secretary of State.

**(Q6) Jonathan Essex** noted that it was unclear from the response how the Council's investment in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) places would reduce the number of non-maintained and independent school (NMI) places procured by the Council in Surrey and outside the county; and what the likely impact would be on the Home to School Transport budget. He requested that the matter be scrutinised in more detail at a future meeting of the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning explained that significant capital investment and the expansion of specialist schools would reduce the Council's reliance on placements outside of Surrey and would reduce pressure on the Home to School Transport budget. She noted that by investing in more local provision, Home to School Transport could provide shorter journeys with a higher occupancy per vehicle, reducing unit costs and increasing sustainability. She welcomed scrutiny on the matter at the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee.

**(Q7) Catherine Baart** asked the Cabinet Member for Property and Waste for the reviews by the Department for Education (DfE) and the feedback from Reigate and Banstead Borough Council's planning department mentioned in the response to be shared with her.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Education and Learning in the Cabinet Member for Property and Waste's absence, noted that the Council was constrained by the DfE in terms of the funding and standards for education provision regarding the Priority School Building Programme. She noted that she would liaise with the Cabinet Member for Property and Waste on the status of those reviews and provide feedback from Reigate and Banstead Borough Council's planning department.

**(Q8) Nick Darby** noted that the 45p per mile travel allowance paid to staff driving for business purposes had not increased for a long time. The response indicated that the Council could approach Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and he asked the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources for the Council to do so; and he queried how the Council would liaise with the Trade Unions and staff on the matter. He further asked when the result was expected from the Council's liaison across its council networks on the appetite to lobby the issue, how that conclusion would be reached and how it would be progressed with HMRC. He also asked what the Council could reasonably expect its staff to do in relation to the current 45p per mile allowance which was insufficient particularly in light of the fuel increases.

**David Harmer** asked whether it was known how the 45p per mile figure was developed by HMRC and what proportion of that was supposed to be for fuel, so an updated figure could be ascertained.

In response to Nick Darby, the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources confirmed that the Council would approach HMRC, options were being reviewed and evidence would be needed. She noted that work on the matter was underway in terms of the Council liaising across its council networks. She recognised the concern but clarified that like many other employers the Council paid its staff the maximum rate. She explained that any voluntary increase above the HMRC rates would be taxable to staff and any increase would have a minimal impact on people's income as opposed to a pay rise, which was what the Council had provided to its staff.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member responded to David Harmer, noting that the HMRC rate was set in 2011 and no announcement had been made in the recent Government budget on any changes to the rate.

**(Q9) Robert Evans** acknowledged the challenging issue and assumed that the Leader was aware that several hotels across Surrey had recently been commandeered at short notice to accommodate mainly non-Ukrainian asylum seekers and refugees; including one in his division. He asked whether the Leader was aware that apart from a visit by the local MP, there was no local consultation with Spelthorne Borough Council. He asked that when the Leader next speaks to the Home Office, he urges them to do all they could to communicate with the Borough and District Councils and where appropriate with local Members to make the community aware of those sensitive developments.

In response, the Leader noted that the matter also affected the Council as well as the Borough and District Councils, highlighting that the Council has its own responsibilities for those requiring social care and school places. He noted that the Council does not receive advanced notice of what the Home Office was doing concerning the arrival of new asylum seekers in Surrey. He noted that he would continue to raise the issue with Lord Harrington, Minister for Refugees. He noted the disconnect between the Home Office and some of the other Government departments, and that the Council would continue to lobby for timely information which it would share with the Borough and District Councils.

**(Q10) Jonathan Essex** welcomed the detailed response which highlighted the current situation that there was a need for the financial package of support the Council provides to its foster carers in Surrey to be reviewed. He asked the Cabinet Member for Children and Families for confirmation that the review would be carried out now as a matter of urgency, given the rising cost of living and he requested that the new rates could be agreed and introduced before the summer.

**Catherine Powell** requested that the wider review covers the cost of expectations, particularly regarding the costs associated with travel to family time arrangements and in light of the discussion under question eight around the 45 per mile travel allowance, which she believed also applied to the Council's foster carers.

In responding to Jonathan Essex, the Cabinet Member for Children and Families explained that the review was underway at present. That along with

the Director of Corporate Parenting she had met with the Foster Carer Executive last week and the matter was one of the items under active discussion. She would liaise with the relevant parties on when they expect to conclude the review and when new allowance rates would be payable, and would confirm that to Members in due course.

The Cabinet Member responded to Catherine Powell, noting that her response indicated that payments for foster carers did include mileage to meet the needs of a particular child such as for transport for family time.

**(Q12) Jonathan Essex** asked the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health to confirm when the details of the spending would be confirmed and when the details would be taken through the scrutiny process before a Cabinet decision was made on how the money would be spent.

**Robert King** asked whether the Cabinet Member was aware that many residents on the border of Surrey accessed mental health services not commissioned by Surrey Heartlands where the surgery was based in the county but their home practice was outside the county. He asked how the Cabinet Member was ensuring that residents who were paying the Council Tax increase would also benefit from the increase in mental health provision.

In responding to Jonathan Essex, the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health agreed that the matter needed to be brought forward in terms of scrutiny. She explained that the system being set up by the mental health convener which would determine how the funding would be invested most effectively, would be reviewed by the Mental Health Partnership Board and the Health and Wellbeing Board, and scoping was underway to look at how the Adults and Health Select Committee, and the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee could also have sight of the process and provide input.

The Cabinet Member responded to Robert King noting that she would provide a written response.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families responded making specific reference to the Mindworks Surrey contract, which was based on a THRIVE model focusing on early intervention and prevention, grounded in a child's local environment. She noted that as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic the mental health system nationally was experiencing an unprecedented increase in numbers particularly of children and young people who were seeking support. By the end of the year the actual referral rate for children and young people was 16,000 compared to the predicted referral rate of 6,000. She stressed that both her and the Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Families were focused on ensuring that Mindworks Surrey meets its target of providing timely and effective support to children and young people, achieved through investing in mental health and wellbeing practitioners and support workers across the Boroughs and Districts, particularly in schools. She noted that a wide and accessible network of community services was needed to support children and young people so that no one is left behind. She concluded that the decisions for where the Council commissions additional services and invests extra money in early intervention and prevention would be considered at Cabinet and the relevant Select Committee.

The Chair welcomed the useful update provided by the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, and requested that she share that information as a briefing to Members.

**(Q13) Catherine Baart** noted to the Cabinet Member for Environment that she looked forward to hearing at the relevant Select Committee how the River Basin Management Plans update would impact the Council.

**Catherine Powell** asked that the Cabinet Member increases the use and the knowledge of the Environment Agency's (EA) flood risk map for surface water now available on the Council's Geographic Information System in addition to the EA's long-standing flood risk maps which she believed to be critical for the Council's ability to address the impacts of climate change.

**Nick Harrison** raised the issue of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and the consultations in relation to new planning applications where the Council was a consultee only on major applications. He noted however that most of the developments in his division were not major and had understood that the service would be looking to provide budgets for advice to be provided on smaller applications where there was a particular flooding risk.

In response to the three Members, the Deputy Cabinet Member for Environment in the Cabinet Member for Environment's absence, would liaise with the Cabinet Member to provide responses on the supplementary questions. He provided reassurance that he and the Cabinet Member would continue to work with other agencies like the EA and Thames Water to raise the importance of tackling water pollution, which also aligned with the nature recovery plan. He highlighted that Surrey's water environment included ponds and smaller water features, he and the Cabinet Member were looking at ways to protect those such as addressing parasiticides on dogs which were poisoning rivers and ponds across the UK.

#### **42/22 STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS [Item 15]**

Catherine Powell (Farnham North) made a statement on the transformation of a disused nursery into a new youth centre in the Sandy Hill estate, thanking the Council for its support and welcomed the funding secured by the Hale Community Centre. She continued to work with officers and local voluntary organisations to get the Hale family centre back into use, expanding the groups and services provided. She thanked the Deputy Cabinet Member for Levelling Up for visiting the three centres.

Mark Sugden (Hinchley Wood, Claygate and Oxshott) made a statement on the improvement works to the M25 junction 10/A3 at the Wisley Interchange to last for a minimum of two years, noting the concerns of his residents around further increased and potentially hazardous traffic levels and disruption. He thanked David Lewis (Cobham) for raising the matter under Member question five.

#### **43/22 REPORT OF THE CABINET [Item 16]**

The Leader presented the report of the Cabinet meetings held on 29 March 2022 and 26 April 2022.

### **Recommendations on Policy Framework Documents:**

There were no reports with recommendations for Council.

### **Reports for Information/Discussion:**

#### **29 March 2022:**

- A. Our Radical Agenda for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Surrey and Surrey County Council - One Year On
- B. Adoption of Moving Traffic Enforcement Powers

#### **26 April 2022:**

- C. A Devolution Deal for Surrey
- D. Home to School/College Travel Assistance Policy Refresh
- E. Surrey's Greener Futures Grant Programmes
  
- F. Quarterly Report on Decisions Taken Under Special Urgency Arrangements: 15 March 2022 - 13 May 2022

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That Council noted that there had been no urgent decisions in the last two months.
2. That the report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 29 March 2022 and 26 April 2022 be adopted.

### **44/22 MINUTES OF CABINET MEETINGS [Item 17]**

No notification had been received by the deadline from Members wishing to raise a question or make a statement on any matters in the minutes.

[Meeting ended at: 12.03 pm]

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**Chair**

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