

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**TUESDAY 11 OCTOBER 2022****QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED UNDER THE PROVISIONS
OF STANDING ORDER 10.1****CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING****1. NICK DARBY (THE DITTONS) TO ASK:**

How many Members, and separately officers are included on the Home to School Transport Appeals Panel?

RESPONSE:

Appeals are heard by three people. There is a pool of twenty Members and four officers who hear the appeals and attend the panels. The usual combination on each panel is two Members and one officer, although the Home to School Travel Assistance Policy does allow for differing combinations if this is required to expedite a decision.

CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING**2. CATHERINE POWELL (FARNHAM NORTH) TO ASK:**

There is an increasingly confrontational situation between Surrey County Council (SCC), schools and parents / guardians regarding needs assessments, Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) placements and Home to School Transport which is undoubtedly impacting on the retention of staff within SCC and schools and increasing the stress for all those involved as well as impacting on the children's education and increasing numbers of complaints, appeals and tribunals (4.1% in Surrey vs 1.8% nationally) with a high percentage lost by SCC.

Children's Social Care Social Workers are also under pressure due to unmet special educational needs impacting on the Family. The 'Children's Social Care Workforce Strategy / Recruitment and Retention Update' included in the agenda for the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee on 4 October does not seem to mention the confrontational situation or the stress that it causes. There is also no consideration of the need to simplify the system to not only make it more accessible to parents and guardians from more disadvantaged backgrounds but also to those that have challenges of their own that are also trying to deal with the cost-of-living crisis. Reducing the confrontational nature of the current system, will in turn reduce the stress that Social Workers and others in the services and in schools are operating under.

Streamlining and simplifying processes will reduce the time required to undertake assessments, reducing the workload on Social Workers, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) and others and should allow more cases to be processed more quickly reducing waiting times and ensuring that No One is Left Behind.

- a) Can there be a system of fast tracking EHCPs for the children with the highest needs to address the COVID backlog?
- b) Can the SEND Strategy, Policies and Guidance be simplified / streamlined?
- c) Can we ask the SWs to identify where systems could be simplified and streamlined?
- d) Can we ask SENCOs to identify where systems could be simplified and streamlined?
- e) With No One left Behind in mind, can the SEND Strategy, Policies and Guidance be modified to place some priority on those in most need whether due to severity of need, other circumstances such as being a Looked After Child or previously Looked after Child or having challenging family circumstances meaning that the family has an allocated social worker?

RESPONSE:

- a) We recognise the pressures that staff and schools are under as more children are being identified with Special Educational Needs (SEN). The rise in requests for Education, Health and Care plans following Covid has created a backlog which has been exacerbated by a high number of vacancies in some of the quadrant SEN teams. There is a range of measures in place both to support staff through training and supervision and to provide support to schools to strengthen their ability to meet need. SEN and social care managers regularly liaise to review children whose needs are complex, and a joined-up approach is needed. Alongside this, recruitment to SEN teams has been concluded to secure full staffing from November. This will help alleviate pressure on existing colleagues as well as ensure continuity of support for families and schools. Greater engagement is underway with local families in areas that may have lost confidence in the local authority, through for instance a SEN surgery with families.

The SEND Code of Practice sets out the statutory process that health, social care and education partners must follow to identify, assess and meet the needs of children with additional needs and/or disabilities. It sets expectations that mainstream schools will be able to meet the needs of the vast majority of children with additional needs. Only children with the highest levels of additional needs will be receiving support through an Education, Health and Care plan. As a result, the Code of Practice requires significant input into the assessment of a child's needs across health, social care and education professionals to determine what provision is appropriate. The Code of Practice determines that this is a twenty-week process.

In terms of children who are most vulnerable, SEN currently operate a risk-based approach whereby partner agencies are informed of the children who are a priority for an assessment so that wherever possible delays are avoided for

these children. These include children in care and children who are missing education and account for approximately 70 children per month across the county.

- b) It is also recognised that the rise in SEN is linked with broader issues and a whole system approach is required. The Inclusion and Additional Needs partnership aims to fulfil this function. Work is currently underway to refresh the SEND partnership strategy for 2023-2026 and this will help to strengthen a systemic approach to meeting needs, in line with the SEND Code of Practice.
- c) We have a new role of Designated Social Worker who liaises between SEN and social care to make system improvements. Recent improvements include a refined needs assessment process whereby more children are now having their care needs assessed when not currently known by social care teams and there has been an improvement in the quality of social care advice in EHCPs which better reflects a child's needs and the provision required. There is also a strategic education, health and social care liaison meeting where senior leaders across the system work together to identify any issues and oversee system changes. An example of this is the new EHCP format training being rolled out across the sectors. This more operational meeting feeds into the partnership board.
- d) We meet regularly with SENCOs through the SENCO networks and individual school visits. This enables the local authority to listen to the issues and concerns that schools may have. SENCOs are then invited to co-produce initiatives which aim to improve and streamline SEN processes, for example SENCOs helped to design the new annual review paperwork which they report will reduce bureaucracy and better reflect the needs of the child. This new format will be rolled out in the second half of this academic term.
- e) Children who are looked after (CLA) are a priority group for the SEN team. There is a SEN Virtual School action plan which has identified actions to strengthen the work around CLA and previously CLA. As part of this work a CLA champion has been established where a senior case manager has oversight of all CLA casework in their quadrant. CLA are also a priority group for annual review attendance. In addition, every request for a statutory education health and care assessment is considered in line with the SEN legislation and SEN Code of Practice. This consideration must include the legal test: whether the child or young person has or may have special educational needs and whether they may need special educational provision to be made through an EHCP. The multi-agency assessment includes an assessment of the child/young person's care needs and any vulnerabilities.

**CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING /
MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE
AND GROWTH**

3. CHRIS TOWNSEND (ASHTEAD) TO ASK:

Given the current challenges with Home to School Transport can anything be done to look at how improvements can be made to the public transport system, particularly mapping high demand routes between residential areas (in and out of county) and schools / colleges to increase use and reduce the need for Home to School transport and the use of private vehicles / taxis, potentially including the introduction of pilots of school buses, perhaps linked to the reduced children's and young people's bus passes previously announced by the Leader of the Council? This would also support the move towards more sustainable transport and remove private vehicles from the school transport system.

RESPONSE:

When considering children and young people who have been assessed as being entitled to travel assistance, to support them to travel to and from their place of learning, the use of public transport is always the first option considered. Where high demand exists between residential areas and places of learning, local bus services and coaches are already provided to meet the needs of entitled pupils, thus reducing the need for bespoke home to school transport to be organised. However, where high demand flows do not exist, often as a result of the complex patterns of movement between home and places of learning, local bus services are not necessarily the most cost-effective solution. A range of options are then considered, with bespoke transport only organised when other alternatives have been exhausted.

The exciting proposal to introduce a half fare bus scheme for people aged twenty and under will support the move towards more sustainable transport and independence for all residents in that cohort, including children and young people travelling to and from school and college.

There is active work and collaboration between Children Families and Lifelong Learning, Environment Transport and Infrastructure, and Adult Social Care to ensure future plans and decision making is considered across the whole Surrey transport system.

CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING

4. MICHAELA MARTIN (FARNHAM SOUTH) TO ASK:

There are increasingly significant challenges for schools with cross border (e.g., Surrey / Hampshire) populations having to use two or more systems for everything including SEND assessments, support and funding, particularly when they are in areas of high deprivation.

What will this Council do to support schools in areas of high deprivation, particularly those that have cross county boundary populations during this very challenging

period, especially those with backlogs associated with EHCPs and agreement of SEND support to ensure No One is Left Behind? Of the 15 most deprived Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) in Surrey more than 50% have cross county boundary school challenges meaning that they are not just dealing with the SCC systems but also those of neighbouring authorities. Many are also not operating at their Published Admission Numbers (PAN) and therefore struggle more with the overhead costs, including fuel.

RESPONSE:

Schools with children who live in two local authorities do have to navigate two systems. The Government's SEND Green Paper is proposing alignment in some key areas to avoid this in the future. Surrey County Council participates in a number of cross border agreements that are in place, for example cross border specialist consultation agreements which help to streamline systems for special school consultation where these are received from other local authorities. The cross border agreements are coordinated through a regional group – the South East 19.

Core funding for mainstream schools is provided through the National Funding Formula (NFF), which specifies the factors we may use to fund deprivation in schools. The NFF sets funding rates for each deprivation factor, and Local Authorities are encouraged to use those rates (and Surrey is expected to converge, and in practice Surrey's rates are already close to the NFF rates).

Funding for schools must be based largely on pupil numbers and Surrey is not allowed to provide additional funding for schools with high levels of vacancies, except in a very limited range of circumstances, for example, growing schools funding which is approved at the Surrey Schools Forum.

KEVIN DEANUS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

5. NICK HARRISON (NORK & TATTENHAMS) TO ASK:

First magazine in October 2022 reports that “road maintenance costs are up 22%”, in relation to pothole repairs, relaying road surfaces, other maintenance costs and capital projects.

- a) What is the experience in Surrey?
- b) As a consequence does this mean that fewer works and projects are being completed, or are budgets/ forecasts being adjusted upwards to deliver the original programme of works?

RESPONSE:

- a) Prices have been affected with increases in some highway sectors as high as 20% or more since January. This is particularly prevalent in surfacing activities where the oil prices and availability of bitumen have a significant impact on the end products in the form of asphalt. The Council has taken a pragmatic approach to how it manages these increases by paying the actual

price each month as work is carried out rather than agreeing an inflated rate for the whole year which could result in overpaying when prices start to stabilise and reduce. By implementing an “actual price” approach the Council has been able to secure the resource and supply chain to continue to deliver the programme of work without the risk of overpaying as a result of the hyperinflation being experienced in the sector.

- b) With all our highways programmes of work, officers carefully review and consider the works programmes and costs provided at the planning stage and work with our contractors to challenge material choices and design options to ensure the best value for money is achieved for all highway activities. Officers are currently working to deliver schemes within the budget levels agreed at Cabinet earlier in the year, and with the ongoing operational conversations and managed approach to paying inflation, it is not possible to determine at this point whether the full programme of works will be delivered within the agreed budget levels. We consider we are in a good position to be able to mitigate the impacts as far as possible however, with the approaches we are taking to manage the programme delivery risk.

CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING

6. ROBERT EVANS (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK:

It has been reported that in some areas of Surrey over 50% of parents did not get their first choice of school for their children.

Overall, what is the picture for Surrey in respect of parental preferences and how does this compare with other similar authorities?

RESPONSE:

For normal round admission in September 2022, the following statistics applied for first preference offers in Surrey compared with national average figures and the situation across London:

Admissions round	Surrey first preference offers	National first preference offers	London first preference offers
Primary	88.7%	92.2%	88%
Secondary	81.4%	83.3%	69.95%

Surrey has a high number of good and outstanding schools and this increases the level of first preference demand for these schools, often meaning they are oversubscribed. In such cases, places are offered in accordance with each school’s oversubscription criteria and without regard to the rank order named on a parent’s application form. This is referred to as an equal preference system. As places are often allocated on distance, this may mean that children living further away from their first preference school may not be allocated a place; in most cases they will be offered a place at one of their other preferred schools. In this way, a truer reflection

of the success of Surrey's equal preference system is to consider the percentage of parents who have been offered a place at one of their preferred schools, as follows:

Admissions round	Surrey preference offers	National preference offers	London preference offers
Primary	98.2%	98.4%	98%
Secondary	95.2%	95.8%	94%

MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH

7. CARLA MORSON (ASH) TO ASK:

- a) What amount of developer funding contributions have been collected for use by Surrey County Council in the last ten years? How much of it has been spent on the key County Council areas of responsibility, for example on new schools and highways infrastructure?
- b) The County Council is able to bid for Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding from the Borough/District Councils. Please can the Council confirm how many bids have been submitted to Surrey's Borough/District Councils for CIL spending?

RESPONSE:

- a) Surrey County Council (SCC) currently holds £22,114,849.97 in s106 contributions collected to date.

This sum is allocated towards a large number of nominated projects for the following services:

- Education - £13,665,309.11
- Highways & Transport - £8,062,378.65
- Rights Of Way & Countryside - £242,604.18
- Libraries - £144,558.03

- b) SCC is keen to secure CIL funding and improve strategic infrastructure for Surrey communities. In 2022, SCC has made four bids to Elmbridge Borough Council for its annual strategic CIL programme totalling £4,382,000. In addition, SCC has made fifteen CIL bids to Reigate and Banstead Borough Council for its five-year strategic CIL programme totalling £14,279,000. These bids are currently in consideration.

SCC is likely to make four bids to Waverley Borough Council for its annual strategic CIL programme in mid-October. A SEND bid is currently being prepared for submission to Spelthorne Borough Council.

Mole Valley District Council, Runnymede Borough Council and Woking Borough Council do not currently have Strategic CIL bidding processes in place, and Guildford Borough Council is not a CIL charging authority.

**CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING /
AYESHA AZAD, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES**

8. WILL FORSTER (WOKING SOUTH) TO ASK:

The Government's energy price cap for schools is welcome and will help limit some of the damage caused by spiralling energy costs. However, the fact that the cap is only in place for six months and that school budgets are already struggling with the general rise in the cost of living means that there are serious concerns that a school's educational offer will be adversely impacted by these exorbitant costs and anxiety about how they will balance the budget in the medium to long term.

- a) Is the Council providing any additional financial support to its schools to help them through this challenging period and can the Cabinet Member(s) reassure pupils that there will be no interruption to their education due to a cut back on energy usage?
- b) Are the Cabinet Member(s) concerned that some schools may have to use historic budget surpluses to make up the difference in energy costs and that in turn this could be detrimental to the safety valve agreement which relies on contributions from surpluses from previous years?

RESPONSE:

- a) Outside of the price cap, the majority of maintained schools buy energy via the SCC CCS (Crown Commercial Services) route. This provides a fixed price from April 2022 through to March 2023, with the energy purchase price secured six months in advance, though it is correct to say costs had started to increase at that point (October 2021) when prices were fixed. However, as a result of this fixed price, schools had prior knowledge of prices prior to submitting their budgets in April 2022. Therefore, there are not expected to be schools going above budget for these costs. There are likely to be a few schools outside of this agreement who may be more susceptible to price increases but these will still have been factored into budget plans.

2023/24 prices are yet to be determined so there are likely to be increased cost pressures on next year's budgets as a result of energy costs. Should the cap not be in place, this could therefore increase that pressure.

- b) The safety valve agreement does not rely on surplus balances of individual schools so there is no direct link between the potential for their use for energy costs and the successful delivery of the agreement. As part of the agreement, the surplus balances refer to historic surpluses on the Dedicated Schools Grant as a whole, which sit within the Council's balance sheet and are not part of schools' estimated individual balances.

NATALIE BRAMHALL, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY AND WASTE

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

Community Recycling Centres (CRCs) at Dorking, Cranleigh and Warlingham remain closed for four days each week and at Bagshot for three days each week despite promises to review opening times.

Would the Cabinet Member for Property and Waste please indicate what progress has been made in seeking extended hours of opening for these CRCs?

RESPONSE:

Tonnages of waste and recycling handled at our community recycling centres have decreased from around 140,000 tonnes in 2015/16 to just over 85,000 tonnes in 2021/22 and consequently our Community Recycling Centres (CRCs) have become considerably less busy over time.

Now that the additional controls required due to the COVID pandemic have been removed, our CRCs are well able to cope with the level of customer demand within their current opening hours.

However, we have made a commitment to review these as part of post-2024 arrangements, and this will be done alongside work to confirm how these services will be delivered following the expiry of the current contract. Given the need to prioritise spending to ensure that we are able to focus on our most vulnerable residents, there does not appear to be a justification for increasing opening hours at our CRCs before that time, but we will keep the situation under review and consider any necessary changes should the current situation change.

CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING

10. LANCE SPENCER (GOLDSWORTH EAST AND HORSELL VILLAGE) TO ASK:

The new policy for Home to School Transport means that solo transport is no longer an option provided for SEND children where there is a statutory need to provide Home to School Transport and no other alternatives are available. The parents are offered an Independent Travel Allowance (ITA) as the alternative. A recent example where the costs of the solo transport was £145 per day, or approximately £22,000 per year, the parents were offered £500 per month ITA. The parents had no car, public transport was not viable for the child and the parents had to go through a full stage 2 Appeals Panel to get the solo transport re-instated.

Can the Cabinet Member explain how this new policy ensures “No-one is left behind”? How many SEND Children have had their solo transport removed since the new policy was implemented, and how many cases are there where the parents have accepted the alternative offering of ITA?

RESPONSE:

The Council's Home to School Travel Assistance Policy does not remove the option for individual transport. The policy states the following on solo arrangements: -

In developing a travel assistance policy with a focus on enabling independence and preparing for adulthood such as employment or shared living away from home, individual transport will only be agreed in extenuating circumstances. This would normally be linked to other medical needs or where the child or young person is receiving funded one-to-one support at their educational placement.

This means that where children's needs require this solution it will be offered. An independent travel allowance is offered to all families as an option, especially where taxi routes are unable to be tendered, where there is one child travelling to one education setting or for other reasons associated with a child's needs. This provides another option for those families who can take it up.

No SEND Children have had their solo transport removed since the new policy was implemented, but fourteen families have accepted an Independent Travel Allowance who were previously on solo transport.

KEVIN DEANUS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

11. CATHERINE BAART (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK:

The hot weather this summer caused more longitudinal cracks to open up in our roads, pavements and cycle paths. Elsewhere these cracks have been seen filled with bitumen of some kind.

- a) What percentage increase in this type of damage is being seen in Surrey and what is the maintenance treatment used by Highways to address longitudinal cracks in roads and pavements?
- b) How is the impact of hotter summers on our roads, pavements and cycle paths being reflected in the council's road maintenance policies?

RESPONSE:

- a) All roads in Surrey have condition surveys for the purpose of national reporting and to assist in the asset management of our network. We conduct these surveys in accordance with national standards measuring a variety of defects to create a Road Condition Index (RCI). It is the RCI which Surrey uses to determine deterioration rates of our network and plan maintenance. We do not specifically measure longitudinal cracking as an individual metric.

An Engineer can then assess roads in poor condition on their individual merits and propose effective treatments. This process will consider the severity of defects but also the mode of failure. Longitudinal cracking can occur due to various issues caused by structural loading and reflective cracking as well as environmental factors such as heat and drought.

The treatments proposed by officers consider sustainable solutions. Introducing foreign materials into the structural layers of roads and pavements must take account of whole life strategies and future maintenance which may include suitability for recycling.

- b) Surrey County Council is reviewing its policy to develop a resilient network and is currently mapping areas of vulnerability from exposure to high temperatures. This will allow officers to specify robust materials with properties which make them last longer in extreme conditions.

CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING

12. JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:

Please confirm how much the High Needs Block in Surrey (additional Government funding for pupils with special needs) has risen since 2015/16 and how this compares to:

- a) the increase in the number of Surrey children in special needs schools; and
- b) the increase in the number of Surrey children with EHCPs?

RESPONSE:

The table below shows the High Needs Block allocations for Surrey from 2015/16 to 2021/22. Please note, in order to provide a like for like basis of comparison, this excludes £2.6m of teachers pay and pensions grant which from 2021/22 was included within the overall allocation. The reason for showing the funding up until 2021/22 is that we cannot accurately compare current funding with incomplete data on the number of EHCPs and children in specialist schools for 2022/23 as the year is not complete. Figures are submitted in the January of each academic year.

	2015/16	2021/22	Difference	% Change
SCC HNB £'m	122.6	173.9	51.3	42%
SCC children in specialist schools	2,419	3,313	894	37%
SCC EHCPs	5,694	9,247	3,553	62%

The data demonstrates that in the period 2015/16 to 2021/22 High Needs Block funding in Surrey went up by 42%. In the same period the number of Surrey EHCPs went up by 62% and the number of Surrey children in specialist schools went up by 37%.

It is important to note however, that this increase in funding was not spread evenly and during this period a disapplication of £11.5m was required (reducing the schools block) in order to increase funding in the High Needs Block. The timing of funding increases is also weighted so, during a period of growth, funding increases are received in April where increased EHCPs will have taken effect from the previous September with no backdating of funding. These things added to build the

cumulative deficit in previous years as well as the overall funding rates being behind growth in EHCPs.

KEVIN DEANUS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

13. MARK SUGDEN (HINCHLEY WOOD, CLAYGATE AND OXSHOTT) TO ASK:

The Royal Borough of Kingston (RBK) has recently replaced the existing physical width restriction on Clayton Road, RBK with a signed weight restriction enforced by camera, to cover vehicles over 3.5 tonnes.

Clayton Road adjoins Claygate and Claygate residents have significant concerns that this change will direct an increase in large Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) through the Village, increase air and noise pollution and create road safety issues. It may also adversely impact the Surrey County Council road network locally, with the potential need for more road maintenance.

What action can Surrey County Council take to address and mitigate these concerns?

RESPONSE:

The County Council is aware that the restriction on Clayton Road (in the Royal Borough of Kingston (RBK)) has been amended from a width restriction to a 3.5 tonne weight limit. RBK has committed to monitor traffic types and offer further mitigation measures (such as advanced warning signs) should they be proven necessary. Due to how the network operates in the local area with Woodstock Lane South only connecting to the A309 / A3 via a southbound slip road arrangement, officers expect the impact on Claygate to be low. However, if any problems develop, options for mitigating those impacts will then be explored.

TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

**14. NICK DARBY (THE DITTONS) TO ASK:
(2nd Question)**

How many Chiefs of Staff does Surrey County Council have, in which Directorates, and in each case with what specific role within that Directorate?

Also, when was each role created, and were any such appointments of Chiefs of Staff new i.e. an extra role?

RESPONSE:

Surrey County Council (SCC) has five Chiefs of Staff. They are all full time posts. There is a Chief of Staff in Resources, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, Children's Families and Lifelong Learning, Environment Transport and Infrastructure and Adult Social Care.

The Resources and Children's Families and Lifelong Learning Chiefs of Staff are both newly created roles from within the existing establishment budget.

The Surrey Fire and Rescue and the Environment Transport and Infrastructure posts has been in their establishment budget for several years.

The Adult Social Care Chief of Staff is an existing post that was renamed for consistency purposes and is also within the existing establishment budget.

All of the role profiles have been through the SCC job evaluation process. They provide broadly similar functions: working as members of the respective leadership teams leading and delivering complex programmes of work such as business planning, assurance and performance and also various programmes of transformation as well as providing leadership support.

CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING

15. CATHERINE POWELL (FARNHAM NORTH) TO ASK: (2nd Question)

The increase in school population is creating significant challenges in the allocation of appropriate school places close to home due:

- to movement of families from London into Surrey.
- the need to support refugees with children coming into Surrey.
- Significant housing building in Surrey and the surround Counties, for example I have 8,000 homes built or being built with North Farnham or a 3km radius of the boundary, these are in Hampshire (Hart and Rushmoor) and in Surrey (Waverley and Guildford). The new primary school in the largest developed has already been labelled as the most difficult to get into in Hampshire, there is no new secondary school and estate is less that 50% built.

The number of school places required and where is forecast two years out and clearly a lot has happened in the last two years and change is highly likely to continue.

- a) What is this Council doing to address these issues particularly with the complications of academy schools and their ability to set their own Published Admission Numbers (PANs) coupled with cross border issues and population movements?
- b) What is the Council doing to address changes in the school population during the two-year planning period?

RESPONSE:

In general terms, the local authority works closely with the borough and district planning authorities to ensure accurate housing data is shared and reflected in pupil place forecasts on a bi-annual basis.

In reference to the third bullet of the question, for primary education, Farnham is divided into two planning areas: Hale and Weybourne, and Farnham. Pupil place forecasts predict a surplus of places in the medium-term in both planning areas. Schools within the Hale and Weybourne planning area have the accommodation to provide additional places, should they be required moving forward, which may require discussions with local academy trusts.

For secondary education, the relevant planning area is Farnham and Ash, which includes the secondary schools within Farnham and Ash Manor School, Ash. The forecasts indicate a deficit of school places moving forward, likely to be as a result of additional local housing both in Surrey and across the border in Hampshire. We are aware of the forecasted growth in demand and are working with schools to provide additional local places for pupils from September 2023 onwards.

The Wellesley development in Aldershot falls under the county of Hampshire and they would be the responsible local authority for education place planning in this area. Surrey County Council's Education Place Planning team liaises with neighbouring authorities in order to manage the demands presented by cross-border pupil movement. The council will continue engaging with Hampshire County Council and other neighbouring local authorities to manage the demand for school places.

The specific questions raised are responded to as follows:

- a) Surrey County Council is a consultee in all academy proposals and provides responses to any published consultation based on local need. All responses will be considered by the Regional Director (formerly the Regional Schools Commissioner) before the proposal is finalised.

Every Surrey school, including academies, is signed up to Surrey's Fair Access Protocol which ensures unplaced and vulnerable children who have not been able to secure a school place through the in-year process, can be placed in school quickly, above their Published Admissions Number (PAN) if necessary. This includes children who are newly arrived in the area and refugees arriving in Surrey.

- b) The local authority works closely with the boroughs and district planning authorities to ensure accurate housing data is shared and reflected in pupil place forecasts on a bi-annual basis. Surrey County Council also engages with neighbouring local authorities to manage the demand created from additional housing and cross-border movements.

Surrey County Council utilises a forecasting tool called Edge-u-cate, which forecasts up to ten years in advance. Each year, the Education Place Planning team works with schools to analyse the forecast pupil numbers and determine what is required to maintain a sustainable education landscape. The forecasts include births and birth projections, housing data for the next ten years from the borough and district councils, and cross-border migration data both within and in and out of the county of Surrey.

Surrey County Council Education Place Planning will continue to work with schools to manage the changing landscape and amend the number of places available to ensure sustainability across the county in the long-term.

MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH

**16. ROBERT EVANS (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK:
(2nd Question)**

What progress has been made with regards to Surrey's plans for low traffic areas with priority for pedestrian and cycle friendly routes?

RESPONSE:

The Council is developing its countywide Liveable Neighbourhood (LNs) plans to complement the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) by extending the benefits of sustainable movement to a wider area, in particular around town and village centres. Low traffic areas/zones that prioritise pedestrian movements and cycling will be an integral part of the LNs programme. As the LN plans are developed, bids to funding sources such as Active Travel England, local funding sources, and the like, will be made. Successful bids will facilitate delivery plans for the LN roll-out across the county. More detail on the LNs programme will be made available once the full (or a sufficient part of the) programme is sufficiently funded.

It is noteworthy to state that earlier in the year, there was a successful Active Travel England funding bid for a Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme in the Ashford area - the scheme is currently in its design stage, before moving into delivery. In addition, the £3m planned Council investment to improve road safety outside schools from 2022/23 to 2024/25 through a prioritised programme of interventions will contribute to the delivery of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods as well.

**NATALIE BRAMHALL, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY AND WASTE /
AYESHA AZAD, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES**

**17. WILL FORSTER (WOKING SOUTH) TO ASK:
(2nd Question)**

- a) Please can the Council confirm how higher energy prices are impacting the County Council? Namely, what are the current energy bills for key Council buildings (such as Woodhatch Place and Quadrant Court) and services like streetlighting, what is the increase from last year and what will the bills be this time next year?
- b) Does the Council have plans to cut back on energy usage in its own buildings and in service delivery in order to mitigate soaring costs in particular over the winter period?

RESPONSE:

The impact of inflation on the Council's energy costs this year is a likely overspend of £0.6m. This is less than anticipated due to the Council agreeing the price of 80% of its energy usage before April 2022, through our procurement with the Crown Commercial Services. For the next financial year (2023/24), the Council is assuming a revenue pressure of £2.2m.

The Council is actively exploring a number of avenues to reduce energy consumption as well as further mitigate against inflation risks and higher energy costs, including:

1. Change ventilation/fresh air strategies and practices back to pre-COVID measures, where it is safe and appropriate to do so.
2. Review operational times and temperature set points on heating systems across the Council's estate, so that heating to be set to maintain a reasonable temperature and only operate during the hours a building is expected to be occupied.
3. Use of Grid Edge Artificial Intelligence to analyse performance data for heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems in larger buildings to monitor and modify systems as appropriate for optimum performance.
4. Installation of remote smart meters/sub-meters across the estate to monitor energy consumption in real-time, and identify spikes in use which could indicate a fault/loss of energy.
5. Establishing Energy Management Task Force, a cross-Service initiative which will continue working on energy and cost reduction measures and opportunities.

Regarding streetlighting, for 2022/23 there is a forecast overspend of £0.5m relating to current year prices, which is offset by other unrelated underspends and income within Highways and Transport. For the financial year 2023/34, budget planning currently assumes further inflation of £0.7m, which is being kept under review.

The Council is implementing several measures to reduce energy consumption and mitigate price rises, including a programme to convert streetlights to LED (due to be complete by the end of 2022) and identifying minor and residential roads where lights can be switched off after 1am (location is taken into consideration, for example, roads near railway stations remain lit until the last train has departed).

TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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

Is the Council considering putting forward any areas in Surrey as possible 'investment zones' under the Government's new plans?

RESPONSE:

The Government's Growth Plan sets out an intention to establish Investment Zones (IZ) to drive economic growth and ensure the benefits of this are felt by people and businesses across the UK. IZs will be specific sites, put forward and agreed to by local areas. Key planning policies to ensure developments are well designed, maintain national policy on the Green Belt, protect heritage, and address flood risk, highway and other public safety matters - along with building regulations - will continue to apply to sites identified as IZs.

The Government has launched an Expression of Interest (EOI) process for IZs, open to all upper tier local authorities and Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) in England. It has made clear that the support of the Local Planning Authority for any proposal for an IZ as part of the EOI process, is critical. Lower tier local authority leaders and Chief Executives are also encouraged by the Government to engage with their upper tier local authority and MCA to make sure that any proposal is right for that area.

The County Council has until 14 October to develop and submit one IZ proposal for Surrey and has contacted all 11 Surrey District and Borough Councils to seek views on, support for and as appropriate, jointly identify potential IZ areas or sites, that can be the subject of an EOI in the timescale. Whilst only one IZ proposal can be submitted by the County Council, it could include several sites.

Government guidance confirms that submitted EOIs will be subject to an assessment of:

- **Economic Opportunity:** where places will need to set out what type of site(s) they intend to bring forward within their Investment Zones proposal, including the estimated impact of these over 10 years against a set of core metrics.
- **Pace of Delivery:** setting out what is needed to accelerate the delivery of existing plans or drive the delivery of new ones. This will include specific information regarding the size, location and make up of potential sites.
- **Wider Strategic Considerations:** including the live and potential private and public investments proposed Investment Zones can align with to drive additional growth.

Proposals that meet the minimum standard will be confirmed shortly after the bidding period. The Government will enter detailed delivery discussions with those places to determine the exact tax incentives and planning liberalisation measures that will apply.

At the time of preparing this response, potential sites are under active consideration and subject to further discussions.

DENISE TURNER-STEWART, DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY / MARK NUTI, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS AND HEALTH

**19. CATHERINE BAART (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK:
(2nd Question)**

Now energy prices have increased and the weather is changing, please confirm where the proposed Warm Hubs will be across Surrey and when these will be announced to the public?

RESPONSE:

We are currently working with the District and Borough Councils and other partners to establish a network of warm hubs across the county. Once we have worked through detailed requirements and confirmed funding, a list of locations will be shared with all Members. Where there may be opportunities for members to invest their Members Community Allocation to support local hubs in their area, they will be contacted over the coming weeks to discuss this opportunity. Our aim is to have the list publicly available on our website by 31 October to coincide with a wider cost of living mail out that Council is sending to all households, and on the assumption that venues can start operating from 1 November. A Member seminar is being scheduled for 27 October to provide further details and a finalised programme will be shared.

SINEAD MOONEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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

Last week the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee heard that, of 423 social worker positions in Surrey County Council, 149 are not filled with permanent staff. 90 positions are covered by agency staff and there are 59 positions vacant.

- a) Please provide the total cost to the council of the agency social workers in Children's Services.
- b) The above figures show a 14% vacancy rate in Surrey. The equivalent nationally is 9%. Please share the communication we have with the Local Government Association (LGA), County Councils Network (CCN) and the Government regarding the national social worker shortage such that we can address this nationally as well as locally, to increase the overall number of social workers, not just compete with our neighbouring counties for a limited resource.

RESPONSE:

- a) The Council as a whole, does not split its agency cost forecasts by social worker and non-social worker posts in reporting. However, as of month 5 across Corporate Parenting, Family Resilience and Quality & Assurance teams in the Children, Families and Lifelong Learning (CFLL) directorate

(where social workers are most likely to be in post) the forecast agency spend is £12.9m for the full financial year 2022-3. The Year to date spend on social workers (which is available from Connect 2 Surrey) up to the end of September was £4.5m.

- b) The senior leadership team continues to address the challenges related to social work recruitment and retention both on a local and national basis. Within the Southeast region there is a Director of Children Services Forum which meets to discuss the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) related to agency staff recruitment and agency fees, this forum also provides the space to discuss regional challenges related to workforce and these issues are then fed into national forums which includes highlighting these concerns and issues with the Local Government Association (LGA) and national Government.

The Association of Directors for Children Services (ADCS) has a policy committee called the Workforce Development Policy Committee' ([Workforce Development Policy Committee | ADCS](#)) which is currently chaired by Surrey's DCS, Rachael Wardell. This is a national Board which looks at policy, process, and practice related to workforce recruitment and retention and draws upon learning and feedback from local authorities throughout the country.

This Board feeds directly into the current President of ADCS who provides the leadership voice for ADCS is representing the sector's challenges and opportunities within relevant central government forums who are looking at the issues facing local authorities and the workforce within Children Services. The policy committee also has extensive links with the Department for Education (DfE) and engages regularly with DfE on these matters.

The recently published Independent Review of Children's Social Care has focused significantly upon the workforce challenges the sector faces and recommendations within this review, including ways to reduce the reliance on agency social workers, are currently being considered by the relevant governmental departments. DfE has started to draw up an 'Early Career Framework' for social work professionals' and this working policy is being tested out within the sector, for example DfE attended the most recent meeting of the ADCS Workforce Development Policy Committee to seek feedback on the planning from senior leaders within the sector.

[Home - The Independent Review of Children's Social Care \(childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk\)](https://childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk)

AYESHA AZAD, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES

21. NICK DARBY (THE DITTONS) TO ASK: (3rd Question)

Has any acknowledgement yet been received to the former Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources' letter to HMRC requesting an increase in the 45p per mile mileage allowance?

If not, when will this be chased, and followed through?

RESPONSE:

I have confirmed with the previous Cabinet Member that no response has been received and I have therefore sent a follow up letter, I will share a response once available.

NATALIE BRAMHALL, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY AND WASTE

22. ROBERT EVANS (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK: (3rd Question)

- a) Will the Cabinet Member give an update on fly-tipping across the county?
- b) Has Surrey assessed by how much the situation has changed since charges and reduced opening hours were introduced?

RESPONSE:

The County Council is responsible for disposing of fly tipped waste collected by the district and borough councils. The table below shows the total quantity of fly tipped material delivered to the County Council for disposal between 2015/16 and 2021/22.

Year	Total tonnes of fly tipped material disposed of by SCC
2015/16	4442 T
2016/17	3376 T
2017/18	3415 T
2018/19	4163 T
2019/20	3430 T
2020/21	3857 T
2021/22	2942 T

Charges for disposal of construction waste were first introduced in April 2016 with most of the changes to operating days and hours being introduced during 2016/17 and 2017/18. Our data shows that there is no discernible correlation between changes at our Community Recycling Centres and increases in fly-tipping. This finding also aligns with [national research](#) undertaken by WRAP.

TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

23. WILL FORSTER (WOKING SOUTH) TO ASK:

(3rd Question)

- a) How many and what percentage of Surrey County Council staff use foodbanks?
- b) What more is the Council going to do to ensure its own employees do not count amongst those struggling the most with rising bills this winter?

RESPONSE:

- a) We do not collect this information. However a survey by Unison of their members in February 2022 which had 285 respondents indicated that just below 10% of those staff who responded had used a foodbank in the last 2 years. In addition, in a staff survey in July 2022, 57% of respondents stated that they worry frequently about the cost of living. We know we are in difficult times and we cannot underestimate the impacts that financial worry and difficulties will have on staff as well as communities. The Corporate Leadership Team is working to find ways to support those most in need and utilise our partnership relationships to best effect to help deliver support.
- b) We know that people all across Surrey, and our staff, are feeling the impact of increasing costs and pressure on household budgets. We have put in place a range of support for staff, and they can also access much of the financial, welfare and wellbeing support we're signposting residents to via our health and welfare hub on our website.

The recent pay award given to staff was targeted at the lowest earners. Those earning the least received a pay increase of over 7%. This was paid in July, backdated to April. In addition, a staff financial well-being hub has been set up which includes links to advice on managing money, ethical lending, and also promoting the council's My Benefits scheme which enables staff to save money on many purchases including in supermarkets and leisure activities. We are also developing online groups where staff can share good ideas and information.

The forthcoming staff roadshows with the Chief Executive and myself are also aimed at communicating this help. Officers are exploring what other options are available to support our staff whilst being mindful of the financial limitations that the Council itself faces.

KEVIN DEANUS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

**24. CATHERINE BAART (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK:
(3rd Question)**

Please provide average costs per mile, in 2021-2022, for surface treatments/reconstruction for:

- cycle paths;
- pavements;
- public rights of way; and
- roads in Surrey.

Please also provide the total length treated/reconstructed, for each type of asset, in 2021-2022.

RESPONSE:

The table below shows the total length and average cost per mile of the different pavement and road maintenance schemes that we delivered under capital planned maintenance in 2021/22, as commissioned by the Asset Planning Team in Highways & Transport, through the Prioritisation Process.

- **Resurfacing (Reconstruction)** - where we remove the top of the road and put a new road surface down. This is undertaken where there are problems in the underlying structure of the road.
- **Preventative maintenance (Surface Treatment and Surface Dressing)** - we carry out work to the top of the road to improve the skid resistance, increase the lifespan of roads and reduce the risk of potholes.
- Cycle paths on pavements and roads are treated as part of the reconstruction or surface treatment of those pavements and roads.

Please note the costs below include for the works, design, officer time and Overhead and Profit applied by the contractor.

Work Type	Total length treated mi (21/22)	Cost per mile (21/22)
Pavement Reconstruction	13.27	£268,961
Pavement Surface Treatment	23.45	£46,246
Roads Concrete Treatment	2.84	£512,778
Roads Reconstruction	19.47	£792,677
Roads Surface Dressing	39.15	£64,654

NATALIE BRAMHALL, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY AND WASTE

25. WILL FORSTER (WOKING SOUTH) TO ASK: (4th Question)

In July 2021 I asked the Cabinet Member for an update on the Council's legal proceedings with SUEZ, to resolve the outstanding issues relating to the Eco Park. I was advised that "The legal process will be resolved next year with an estimated time frame of around 12 months from now".

- a) As we are now 15 months down the line would the Cabinet Member please provide an update on those proceedings?
- b) Please also confirm to what extent the anaerobic digester and gasifier facilities are now in use.

RESPONSE:

- a) The legal process (Arbitration) is ongoing and is subject to legal privilege. You will understand the Council's position is subject to legal privilege and it would not be appropriate to comment further in public at this time.
- b) The gasifier was awarded its Acceptance Test Certificate on 9 March 2022 and is now fully operational. The Anaerobic Digester passed its Acceptance Tests on 23 September 2021 and has been fully operational since then. Both facilities are periodically shut down for maintenance which is part of their normal operations.

MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH

26. CATHERINE BAART (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK: (4th Question)

In a recent Member briefing it was noted that one of the biggest barriers to using public transport in Surrey is car ownership.

Please confirm how car ownership in Surrey benchmarks against other council areas in England and Wales. What is our strategy to reduce the car habit in Surrey, including through Surrey County Council's procurement contracts?

RESPONSE:

Car ownership in Surrey is around 86% compared to the national average of 73%, with the trend continuing to rise.

Based on 2021 census data for the number of households per local authority, the average number of cars (privately owned) per household is:

Surrey	1.34
England	1.06
Wales	1.12

Equivalent figures for other local authorities include:

Essex	1.23
Hampshire	1.31
Kent	1.20

The recently adopted Surrey Transport Plan (LTP4) is based on the principles of **Avoid, Shift, Improve** approach to reduce carbon and car dependency by:

- Developing our Liveable Neighbourhoods programme and improving digital connectivity through the Surrey Broadband project to provide full fibre broadband to help avoid making some local trips by car.
- Investing a recent award of over £13m in more walking and cycling schemes through our 'Active Travel work' and through our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). This will accelerate the 'shift' away from car dependency. It is being supported by an additional £3m to improve road safety outside schools to make travel by alternative modes more attractive and accessible for local journeys, whilst also improving air quality and the health and wellbeing of our residents.
- Investing £49m in more zero emission buses, electric community transport minibuses and supporting infrastructure that will reduce carbon emission, improve air quality and help grow bus patronage post-pandemic.

These principles and transport schemes are being supported with behaviour change programmes and communications to help residents and businesses make informed choices of how and when they travel more sustainably and to reduce car dependency.

The Council's vehicle procurement aligns with our stated objective within the Climate Delivery Plan to operate a Zero Emission Fleet by 2030, and any vehicle procurement will align with that objective.