

CABINET – 31 JANUARY 2023**PROCEDURAL MATTERS****Public Questions:****Question (1): Elizabeth Daly**

Having recently qualified for a state pension (6 years later than women like me were promised!), I went onto the Surrey County Council website to apply for a free bus pass, and found there is a free service, by appointment, at many libraries to obtain a photograph for bus passes. Unfortunately, according to the website, no such facility is available at Bookham Library, even though it serves a population of well over 10,000 residents, many disabled or at or above retirement age.

Please can you explain: (a) why there is no bus pass photograph service at Bookham Library, and (b) why Surrey residents cannot qualify for free bus (and train and tube) passes from 60 like London residents? Isn't it time we started levelling up for a change?

Reply:

Surrey residents may apply for their English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) 'free bus pass' at any time via our online portal, or alternatively by visiting a Surrey library. In summer 2021 a booking system was introduced for residents wishing to make a library appointment to complete their bus pass application. The booking system enables the Library Service to effectively manage staff resources, whilst giving residents confidence that they will not have to wait in a long queue when they arrive. Each appointment allows the bus pass application to be completed, inclusive of library staff checking proof of eligibility, taking a photograph for the bus pass and uploading the documents.

Bookham Library is available for appointments on Saturdays. On weekdays Bookham Library is staffed by one member of staff and as such, the Library Service is unable to commit to ENCTS appointments. As an alternative, Leatherhead Library which is close by offers appointments throughout the week.

As a scheme ENCTS is available across England. It is a statutory scheme and provides free bus travel for eligible pass holders between 9.30am and 11.00pm Monday to Friday, and at any time on weekends and public holidays. Government has set the parameters of the England wide scheme, with residents who are 66 years or older eligible for an Older Person's ENCTS pass.

In London the Freedom Pass provides additional travel benefits for London residents over and above the statutory ENCTS offer, including free travel on buses, trams and trains. The Freedom Pass is funded by the London Councils and by the Mayor of London as part of the overall public transport strategy for a 'world city', although the Freedom Pass offer has recently been reduced. This Council has previously

considered enhancing our ENCTS offer; however, doing so is not financially affordable.

Denise Turner-Stewart
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Safety
31 January 2023

Question (2): Paul Kennedy

What are Surrey County Council's latest plans and timetable for the Keswick Care Home in Bookham?

Reply:

The residents of Keswick were our focus during this closure ensuring they were found suitable locations to move to, and to call their new home.

In total 16 residents were supported to move to new homes from Keswick. Seven of them being offered their first choice of home, and 15 of them signed off and happy after their first review. Only one person did not settle in their first placement, however they too are now settled in their second placement.

There were 29 staff at Keswick on the day of closure who were also a high priority. 11 of the 29 staff members redeployed to roles within the Council. They are settled and happy in their roles. A further nine have remained within adult social care outside of Surrey County Council, and the remaining nine were looking to take a break or planning retirement.

With regards to the building and future site management, Land and Property services within the Council have taken the lead in looking at alternative uses for the site and exploring the potential for alternative use of the sites for Adult Social Care services or developing services in collaboration with the NHS or community partners. It is anticipated that a proposal paper will go to Cabinet sometime in the summer of 2023 to ask Cabinet to support feasibility funding to progress the development of this and other sites.

Mark Nuti
Cabinet Member for Adults and Health
31 January 2023