

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

TUESDAY 7 FEBRUARY 2023

**QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED UNDER THE PROVISIONS
OF STANDING ORDER 10.1**

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

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

Can the Cabinet Member confirm the number of staff currently employed in the Council's planning enforcement team and also outline any intention to recruit additional staff to the Council's planning enforcement team?

RESPONSE:

There are currently six staff members in the planning enforcement team, with an additional member due to start later this month. The team has grown in the last year and now consists of the Team Leader, Principal Enforcement Officer, Senior Enforcement Officer, 2 x Monitoring Officers and Enforcement Technician. The Principal Enforcement Planning Officer will be starting shortly. Unfortunately, despite several rounds of recruitment, the Enforcement Legal Support role remains unfilled. This is the only position outstanding. It is hoped that it will be filled in due course. The additional roles will ultimately enable better responsiveness in terms of unauthorised waste development and the monitoring of authorised sites. The team will attempt to resolve issues without recourse to formal action in the first instance.

**KEVIN DEANUS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITY
RESILIENCE**

2. EBER KINGTON (EWELL COURT, AURIOL & CUDDINGTON) TO ASK:

Surrey County Council's (SCC) Local Committees ceased operating at the end of October 2022. Since then, SCC has adopted a new approach to engagement, where petitions regarding highway works go to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience. The change was implemented "to be a more connected and more effective local partner, working with and alongside local people." However, this change not only centralises decision making but requires local residents to travel to Woodhatch to make their case, which is quite the opposite of more connected and closer as a local partner.

The new scheme also requires 100 signatories to a petition, as opposed to 30 under the previous model. However, many highways petitions are related to individual roads, which do not contain 100+ residents.

If the Cabinet Member continues to operate this centralised control of the petition process, will he at least introduce a change to the numbers by allowing a petition to be presented with less than 100 signatures where the number of signatories comprise at least 70% of the residents affected?

RESPONSE:

Petitions with 100 signatures can be dealt with by a few routes, one of which is at Cabinet or by an individual Cabinet Member meeting. A number of other routes are set out in the [Petition Scheme](#) that can be used for highway issues where petitions have less than 100 signatures.

However, the changes implemented reflect the fact that many petitions received previously through committees could have been handled in a faster and more efficient way. When the Council carried out a review of the petitions that Local and Joint Committees received between 2018 and 2021, the majority of those that were considered at committee meetings were service requests that would have been best served by reporting the issue through the online reporting system. This would have meant that their concern would have been considered in a quicker timeframe.

In April 2022, the County Council adopted a new approach to how Members could prioritise local highways issues within their divisions. A major part of this was for each County Councillor to have more influence over divisional based budgets to best address concerns raised by local residents and local partners.

Members, who are the elected representatives for highway matters within their division, make decisions on how the highway budgets available to them are allocated. This brings those highway decisions into the heart of each community.

As part of this approach, local community groups or individual residents can contact their Member (County Councillor) to request that the highway issue that is being raised is considered by their Member as a local priority. Alternatively, highway issues can be reported on the SCC website or emailed to Highways@surreycc.gov.uk. In this way, there is no need for petitions for local highway requests.

The newly formed Highway Engagement & Commissioning team is able to support Members with local engagement on highway issues and requests. This can either be accessibly online or local to the issue or request that has been made.

More strategic highway issues can still be raised through a petition to be considered by the Cabinet Member in accordance with the process as described on the SCC website here: [Petitions - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#).

MARK NUTI, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS AND HEALTH / SINEAD MOONEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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

- a) How much is Surrey County Council’s social care (Adult Social Care and Children’s Service) budget today compared with 2010?
- b) What would the comparable figure be if the funding had kept pace with inflation?

RESPONSE:

Service	2010/11	2023/24	% change in agreed budgets	2023/24	% CPI increase in the period	Change in agreed budgets vs CPI increase
	agreed budget	agreed budget		budget if based on CPI increase since 2010/11		
	£m	£m		£m		£m
Corporate Parenting, Family Resilience and Quality & Performance	91.3	158.9	74%	133.6	46%	25.3
Adult Social Care gross expenditure*	376	607.1	61%	549.9	46%	57.2

** The total amount spent on Adult Social Care excluding all service income and grant funding*

Budget classifications in Children’s services have changed significantly since 2010/11 to 2023/24 and providing a like for like comparison for Children’s Social Care spending is very difficult.

However, in the 2023/24 budget the best categorisation to use is the budgets within Corporate Parenting, Family Resilience and Quality and Performance which can broadly be compared back to budgeted expenditure in 2010/11. These equate to a net budget of £158.9m in 2023/24.

The 2010/11 budget included budgets for similar areas of £91.3m, inflating this by average CPI (Consumer Price Index) rates over this time would provide a budget of £133.6m in 2023/24. The difference of £25.3m (£158.9m - £133.6m) is likely a reflection of the demand in growth which would have also impacted on costs over this period in addition to price inflation.

It is easier to do a like for like comparison for Adult Social Care spending in this period.

The table above sets out the agreed budgets in 2010/11 compared to 2023/24 for Corporate Parenting, Family Resilience and Quality & Performance in Children, Families and Lifelong Learning and Adult Social Care. This is then compared to what the budget would have been had it been inflated based purely on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation in the period.

For Corporate Parenting, Family Resilience and Quality & Performance budgeted expenditure will increase by £67.6m (74%) between 2010/11 – 2023/24. This is £25.3m higher than what the budget would have been by 2023/24 if based purely on the 45% increase in CPI inflation in the period.

For Adult Social Care budgeted expenditure increased by £231.1m (61%) between 2010/11 – 2023/24. This is £57.2m higher than what the budget would have been by 2023/24 if based purely on the 45% increase in CPI inflation in the period.

The increases in expenditure above the base level of inflation across both services reflect the significant demand growth in terms of the number of people supported and increased costs of care above inflation in the period.

KEVIN DEANUS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

4. JOANNE SEXTON (ASHFORD) TO ASK:

Following recent snow, ice and heavy rain we have seen an increase in the number of potholes, making Surrey's roads look more and more like the surface of the moon. Residents are experiencing bent wheels, snapped suspension springs and worn shock absorbers as Ringway, Surrey's contractor for pothole repairs is scrambling to fix the county's roads.

We appreciate the £1.2 billion contract that Surrey signed with Ringway to sort out the county's potholes for potentially the next two decades, and that Councillor Matt Furniss, cabinet member for transport and infrastructure, promised that the new contract meant "potholes being repaired first time". However, given our residents' recent experiences practice does not match up with theory.

Therefore, we would like to understand:

- a) Did Surrey County Council consider procuring other, innovative pothole filling tools, such as JCB's 'PotholePro' that other councils such as Northumberland County Council and Stoke-on-Trent City Council are already utilising to great success?
- b) How does the number of pothole repairs compare to previous years' volumes?
- c) Is Ringway delivering the promised larger-scale, high quality fixes to avoid repeat visits to defects or is the current practice better described as 'firefighting'?
- d) What efforts are being made to tackle the pothole situation in the future, as extreme weather conditions are becoming more and more frequent?

RESPONSE:

- a) Under our previous Highways contract we carried out a trial with similar equipment to the PotholePro. We had a number of concerns around the use of the tool as it only cuts and clears the surface, additional teams are needed to repair the pothole and remove the waste from site. As the maximum speed of the vehicle is 25mph another vehicle would also be needed to move the machine any distances around the county.

Given the 3000 miles of roads that we maintain, it was not determined to be a value for money solution or one that would provide improvements in the timeliness with which we are able to respond to potholes. However, we regularly trial and test new materials, equipment and processes to ensure we are providing the best service possible.

- b) Whilst there has been a significant increase in the volume of potholes for the month of January 2023 compared to November and December 2022, the volumes for this period are not unusual when compared to previous years. This can be seen from the data in the table below showing pothole numbers for January over the past four years.

Year	Number of Potholes
19/20	14, 549
20/21	10, 988
21/22	10, 319
22/23	12, 382

- c) Ringway are delivering the larger-scale, high quality fixes to avoid repeat visits where they are needed. This process started around three months ago and since then over 1,000 repairs have been carried out using large-scale fixes.
- d) The Council is investing £188m on improving and maintaining our roads and pavements over the next five years. In conjunction with Ringway we are constantly investigating new technologies and treatment solutions that will provide us with a more resilient highway network.

MARK NUTI, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS AND HEALTH

5. CATHERINE POWELL (FARNHAM NORTH) TO ASK:

In 2020 Surrey launched its 'Home equipment finder' page as part of the adult social care and support service. The website contains some basic information about equipment and technology that can help people stay independent longer. The website also has links to various private businesses that retail such equipment. The website has recently been relaunched with a big push on social media.

a) Please can you explain why this website does not include links to the support services available through the districts and boroughs?; for example

- [Careline - Guildford Borough Council](#)
- [Waverley Borough Council - Careline personal alarms](#)

These are relatively low cost and provide access to support and in some cases equipment to support independent living such as handrails and bath lifts.

b) Please can you please explain, why Surrey County Council is directing older, vulnerable individuals to private companies to acquire their own equipment instead of directing them to a local assessment and support service?

c) Can you please explain the criteria upon which these private businesses were selected?

- Are these businesses located in Surrey, or are they otherwise more accessible than others? (e.g.: Is their website user friendly / accessible for those less technologically enabled?)
- Have these businesses and their products been tested by SCC for quality and reliability?
- Are these businesses' prices competitive?

RESPONSE:

To clarify the origins, the information has been hosted on our adult social care webpages on the county council website since 2020 under the heading “Equipment and Technology” with sub sections for the types of equipment and technology. During this time, we have had no negative feedback. We also sought legal advice before publishing.

We were advised recently by the Web and Digital Services Team that the information should be presented in a much more user-friendly format for people visiting the website. It previously had long list of examples of products on a long web page.

During the Home Equipment Finder development, we carried out user testing with people with disabilities who found it extremely valuable. We also had input from Occupational Therapists.

In order to promote the information easily we decided to call the tool something and, therefore, branded it the Home Equipment Finder. The Council's Communications and Engagement team has been providing communication support to launch this since January 2023.

a) These Careline services are included on the website along with the other district and borough services via a link through to our “Personal care alarms, smoke alarms and sensors webpage” which can be found at - [Personal care alarms, smoke alarms and sensors - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#). The reason these are linked to the page with the eleven

borough and district council websites is that not all the services provide the same products or show the items available. Mole Valley Life has a broader range of services and products than some of the other councils and the Home Equipment Finder includes 23 products from Mole Valley Life.

We have already had some very positive feedback from some local councils who are keen to work more closely with us in developing the information contained on the resource. Yesterday at the Surrey Heartlands EXPO we had a lot of interest from professionals and stakeholders.

- b) As part of our universal information and advice offer about care and support, we want to raise awareness of the wide range of equipment and technology that is available to help people stay independent. So many people are not aware of how helpful equipment and technology is for practical help at home.

With all the information we suggest we are trying to offer people choice and use a mix of local district and borough services, specialist equipment services, high street retailers and popular websites.

In our development of the website content we have validated the information of each service and deemed it suitable to be included. However, there will be an ongoing review process.

Many of the people we will be reaching will be self-funders and not eligible for adult social care support, however, we do make it clear on the Home Equipment Finder webpage that people may be eligible for support through Adult Social Care, and provide a link to more information about eligibility criteria.

Please see the information on the main page, which is copied here for easy reference:

If you struggle with daily tasks like remembering to take medication, preparing a meal or moving around your home, use the home equipment finder below to buy things that can help you stay well and independent at home.

There are lots of suggestions and examples you can find from local retailers or specialist providers.

We provide the links for information and don't endorse the products or services. We advise you to do your own research before you buy anything. Please read our [Disclaimer](#).

Depending on your situation, you may qualify for support from the council instead of buying products yourself. Find out more about [Adult social care assessments and eligibility](#).

- c) The links to trusted retailers such as Boots, John Lewis, Amazon are included as they offer additional innovative equipment and smart technology which users cannot buy or hire from providers in Surrey. We include all the local community

equipment providers, local council services, Surrey Fire and Rescue, Surrey Libraries, and specialist providers, local and national, that we have researched.

We are simply providing information about services and products and signpost residents to this support with a wide range of suggestions to suit people's lifestyle and budget. We do validate the information, and this happens with many directories and signposting tools that the council manages.

The council has clear disclaimers about links to external websites and service providers. The standard disclaimer can be found here - [Disclaimer - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/disclaimer)

TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

6. FIONA WHITE (GUILDFORD WEST) TO ASK:

Please can you confirm how much the Council has so far spent on agency and temporary staff in 2022/23 across the organisation?

RESPONSE:

At the end of December 2022 (Q3), the Council has spent £22m on off payroll workers. This compares to a spend of £22.6m in Q3 2021. Circa 55% of the spend represents the agency spend on locum social workers in the Children, Families and Lifelong Learning (CFLL) Directorate. Other areas of agency spend are used to cover vacancies in specific areas of expertise, such as IT, Project work and Legal, where we know there are national challenges in recruiting permanent roles.

TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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

Please can you confirm how much the Council has spent so far on consultants in 2022/23?

RESPONSE:

The Council commissions consultants to undertake specific activities and projects, bringing specialist capacity and capability to defined pieces of work. The cost of consultancy spend needs to be met within existing Directorate budget envelopes and is monitored by budget holders as part of the overall Directorate spend. Any appointments where fees exceed £50,000 a year need to be approved by the Leader before the contract starts and all consultant engagements are subject to procurement rules and governance.

MARK NUTI, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS AND HEALTH

8. CARLA MORSON (ASH) TO ASK:

- a) Please can the Council confirm how much funding the 1% increase in Council Tax will raise for investing in mental health in 2022/23?
- b) How much of that funding has been spent and on what services?
- c) Has it been match funded by Surrey Heartlands?

RESPONSE:

- a) The 1% of Council Tax increase in 2022/23 purposed for mental health service provision raised £7.9m for investment in mental health services.

£1.4m of this funded increased spending on mental health services in SCC service budgets across Adult Social Care, Children, Families and Lifelong Learning, and Public Health.

The remaining £6.5m was set aside in a Mental Health Investment Fund (MHIF) to enable transformation focused investment on early intervention and prevention mental health interventions across Surrey.

The Council then successfully secured match funding of £4m from Surrey Heartlands ICB bringing the total MHIF to £10.5m.

£1m of the investment fund was awarded to Community Foundation Surrey who were able to match fund which resulted in an additional £1m being added to the total value of funding (i.e. £11.5m total) from the 1% increase in Council Tax.

- b) In September 2022 just under £1m of the MHIF was awarded to the Community Foundation for Surrey (CFS). The charity agreed to match fund £1m to create a Mental Health Scale Up Fund focused on mental interventions for young people aged 0-30. CFS are managing the deployment of the funding against an agreed set of criteria with quarterly reporting back to Surrey County Council.

This fund has so far awarded the following two grants:

- **Surrey Care Trust** - funding to expand a Mental Health intervention called "Nurture through Nature" totalling £249,921 over five years.
- **Be Me** - funding to expand delivery of courses to young people addressing mental health challenges, totalling £253,746 over five years.

Applications are now open for phase two of funding and the next round of assessment is due to take place in early February.

In September 2022, the Surrey-Wide Commissioning Committees in Common delegated the decision-making and budget accountability for the Mental Health Investment Fund to the Joint Director for Public Service Reform, in line with

delegation levels. The fund opened to bidders shortly afterwards, running until mid-December. When applications closed, a total of 55 applications had been received, approximately one third of the bids focused on support for Children and Young People (CYP) and the remainder for either adults or both CYP and adults.

The bids received varied in theme but included interventions relating to counselling, local support groups, community-based activities, nature-based interventions (farms/gardens/animals), targeted cost of living support and information resources.

An assessment panel was convened, which included members of the Cabinet, VSCE colleagues, Commissioners, the NHS and Public Health, to assess the bids against the agreed criteria. Subject to legal and procurement due diligence being completed, the panel has provisionally agreed to support 13 bids which total approximately £1.7m delivered across three years. Using the learning from this first round and working with the Mental Health Improvement Programme to ensure resources are being targeted most effectively in the areas we know more early intervention and preventative services are needed, the fund will re-open for further bids shortly.

c) As above, Surrey Heartlands has contributed £4m to the MHIF.

DAVID LEWIS (COBHAM), CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES

9. HAZEL WATSON (DORKING HILLS) TO ASK:

Please can the Council confirm how much extra it has had to spend due to the delays in implementing the IT system to replace SAP?

RESPONSE

Having recognised that the original timescale was unrealistic due to the complex nature of moving from a deeply embedded SAP system to Unit4, the timescales for the programme have been amended and subject to revisions via two Cabinet decisions. The data cleansing, process mapping and change management have all been much greater than expected and this led to a thorough replan. These are very complex projects and the current timeline is more reflective of industry standards. The additional cost is £3.2m from December 2021 and £8.1m from December 2022. Within that, we have identified additional benefits that are now being calculated. We are now on track to deliver the programme in June 2023.

TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

10. GEORGE POTTER (GUILDFORD EAST) TO ASK:

- a) Please can the Council confirm how many staff it has in the legal department?
- b) How many vacancies are there?

RESPONSE:

- a) There are 97 posts in the legal team, made up of 79 lawyers and 18 support staff.
- b) Currently, 14 of the lawyer posts and 4 support posts are not permanently filled. There are 10 locum lawyers employed to cover the vacancies. Half of the legal team supports children's safeguarding work, and there is currently 1 unfilled vacant post in the Children's Legal team. 10 of the vacancies are hard to fill roles in property, contracts, adults, highways and planning work. All lawyer roles were regraded in summer 2022 and recruitment of permanent staff has improved. There is an ongoing recruitment campaign and an internal development scheme to "grow our own". Two of our trainee solicitors will qualify in May. The Council has a panel of external solicitors firms who are instructed on an ongoing basis to support with property, highways and planning matters.

CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND LEARNING

11. LIZ TOWNSEND (CRANLEIGH & EWHURST) TO ASK:

This administration has slashed funding by over half for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) short breaks across Waverley and Guildford boroughs from Easter this year. Disability Challengers are now only able to provide a maximum of 11,500 hours of critical support for families and care and activities for some of our most vulnerable children and young people, as opposed to the 24,000 hours previously funded. And as the contract can be rolled over this could be the situation for residents of Waverley and Guildford for a further seven years. I know that this is a lifeline for families and the impact of not having this service available over holidays and weekends will significantly affect them.

Waverley and Guildford together cover a wide geographical area of some 238 mi² which is over a third of the total Surrey area and the expectation seems to be that families will have to travel significant distances to access services in other parts of the county, without any thought to whether families already under stress with the cost of living crisis can afford this, or have the ability to do this. It is clear many will have to go without. Vulnerable children will suffer and families will suffer.

- a) What justification is there for cutting off families, who already face many challenges, from this valuable support?
- b) And what justification is there for cutting off access to this service for such a large adjoining area of the county?

RESPONSE:

Surrey County Council has not cut funding for short breaks services across the County and continues to commission a range of short breaks services across Surrey, in line with our statutory duties. At a time of intense pressure on public finances, we have maintained the budget for these important services, but we have also not been able to increase the funding available, due to the challenging context and our

statutory duty to deliver a balanced budget. As all our providers, alongside Surrey County Council, are facing rising costs, this does mean the money we have available is able to fund less provision overall.

In line with our statutory duties, SCC has commissioned a range of Short Breaks services in Surrey that are open to children with disabilities from across the County. These services are valued by children and families and make a real difference. Our current contracts for short breaks services are coming to an end on 31 March 2023 and we have recently completed the required procurement process to award new funding to local short breaks providers, ahead of a 1 April start. This is something we are legally required to do. It is positive that, as part of this, we have been able to award funding to all organisations who put forward high-quality and compliant proposals to continue providing short breaks, offering continuity of service provision to many children and families.

In responding to this, we have increased funding for overnight respite for children with the greatest needs who are assessed as requiring this support. This strengthens families and prevents the need for residential provision, which can mean a move out of Surrey, away from their families. Due to the cost of these services increasing, we have been able to initially secure around two thirds of the currently available capacity in our play and youth schemes in local communities.

Looking specifically at the position for Guildford and Waverley, it is complex. We have, to date, allocated £2.3 million of funding for short breaks to local providers. Of this total, £823k or 35.7% has been allocated to services that are based in Guildford and Waverley. This is a high-proportion relative to the level of need in this part of Surrey, supporting access for families in this area. In terms of the community-based play and youth schemes, it is positive that short breaks services will continue to be delivered by the same providers from the same venues as is currently the case, but, as highlighted in the question, there is a bigger reduction in available capacity for services located in Guildford and Waverley than in some other parts of the county. This is a result of balancing the cost and quality of the proposals set out by different providers with the known level of need in different parts of the county – as part of the legally required procurement process.

Since confirming funding amounts to local providers, we have been encouraged by the positive way they have worked in partnership with SCC to make the most of the funding that is available. We are confident that this will generate more provision for local children and families than we first anticipated. Alongside this, SCC and our provider partners continue to seek additional funding to enhance the offer that is available in the County. As a specific example, SCC expects to be able to shortly confirm that it has secured some further funding to support short breaks in 2023/24. Whilst we are not in a position to confirm the details of this as part of this response, this will help to strengthen the offer for families.

Going forward, SCC remains committed to working with providers, partners and families to continuously evaluate and improve our short breaks services in Surrey, within the available resources, to support the best possible outcomes for children, young people and families. Areas for development we already plan to explore during

2023/24 include the reach and performance of services, access to and eligibility for Short Breaks, identifying and responding to complex needs, and supporting effective transitions to adulthood.

We will be publishing information about new services through the [SCC website](#) and [Surrey Local Offer](#), and a dedicated email inbox has been set-up to manage questions relating to the planned changes (shortbreaks.info@surreycc.gov.uk).

SINEAD MOONEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

12. JEREMY WEBSTER (CATERHAM HILL) TO ASK:

Recent visits by members of the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee to a Social Care Team in the county made us aware that the salaries paid to social workers in West Sussex have been adjusted upwards to help them attract qualified and experienced workers in a very tight market. We are already aware of the issues which exist between Surrey salary scales and those of neighbouring London Boroughs.

Has account been taken in the 2023-24 budget to implement salary scale changes in Surrey if the Directors of Social Care Teams feel this is appropriate?

RESPONSE:

Salary increases in the 23/24 budget for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning (CFLL) are based on a 5% increase on current levels across the board. This equates to £6m across the whole Executive Directorate of CFLL. Whilst no other specific increase has been included for social workers in terms of basic pay, additional funding of £1.3m has been included to support the apprenticeship and ASYE trainee schemes. There also continues to be £500k of existing budget to fund retention payments for social workers in the same way as has been done in 22/23.

The work of the Recruitment, Retention and Culture group continues to look at all existing schemes within SCC and explores future initiatives which could be implemented. We are currently working on a business case which looks at a range of options including market forces for hard to recruit areas within children social care and this business case is due to be presented at CFLL Assurance and Performance Board in March 2023.

KEVIN DEANUS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

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

It was a most welcome decision last year to provide a highways capital maintenance allocation to each County Councillor. In my Division, in the upcoming 2023/24 financial year this will contribute to the major resurfacing, including full reconstruction where necessary, of Woodstock Lane South in Claygate from the A309 to Clayton Road. This road is highly travelled, is in extremely poor condition and of great concern to local residents such that many of them avoid it.

While awaiting this much anticipated major resurfacing, can the Cabinet Member assure me that Surrey Highways, as I have requested, will undertake repairs to the numerous potholes that currently exist to ensure that the road is safe to travel on until such time as the major resurfacing work is undertaken?

RESPONSE:

Temporary repairs on Woodstock Lane South were due to take place during the week commencing 23 January, however for operational reasons they had to be deferred. The temporary repairs have been re-programmed and are due to take place between 15 and 17 February. The major resurfacing works are being programmed for early on in the new financial year.

MARK NUTI, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS AND HEALTH

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

Can the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health give this Council an update on the progress towards delivering new Extra Care Housing on the site of the former Brockhurst Care Home in Ottershaw?

RESPONSE:

Thank you for your question in relation to the delivery of affordable Extra Care Housing on the site of the former Brockhurst Care Home, Ottershaw, Runnymede. We are pleased to provide you with an update.

Following the completion of local community engagement, we are currently finalising the Outline Planning application and, due to design changes needed to improve the proposals taking on board suggestions made by local residents during the public engagement, we anticipate that the submission will take place towards the end of February 2023.

The development is currently out to tender, as one of five sites across Surrey, and we plan to award the contract to deliver the construction and housing management function for the affordable Extra Care Housing in the Summer 2023, subject to outline planning consent. The procurement will identify an external delivery partner, who will complete the detailed design and secure Full Planning permission; undertake the construction phase and operate the settings for residents.

Our planned affordable Extra Care Housing in Runnymede and in other areas of Surrey will deliver much needed, affordable, specialist accommodation, which helps residents to maintain their independence for longer and ensures they receive the right care, at the right time, in the right place, leaving nobody behind.

KEVIN DEANUS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

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

My residents are constantly complaining about potholes and the general state of the roads.

Apart from the weather, whom should I say is at fault, Surrey County Council or the Government?

RESPONSE:

Roads suffering during the winter period is not anything new and it is not something unique to Surrey. When there are small cracks in the surface of a road water will get in. When this water freezes it expands and then contracts again when it thaws, damaging the structural integrity of the road. Added to the traffic of vehicles, this can cause potholes. With the weather we have had over the past few months with a wet Autumn, snow and freezing weather in December and significant rainfall and more freezing weather in January, it has been a perfect storm in terms of the conditions that exacerbate pothole problems.

We know that this happens during these kinds of periods, so our contractor has steadily been building up our resource levels since the Autumn and currently have nearly 30 gangs on the network working night and day to fix potholes, which compares to around 12 during the low season.

However, it is not cost effective to have additional teams on standby all the time and weather forecasting is not an exact science so we can never know with certainty very far in advance when significant increases in resource will be needed. For example, in 2021 there was a period of very high pothole numbers, but that year it happened in March rather than January. This means it can take time to get to a point when we have sufficient teams available to deal with a situation like we have currently.

We will get on top of the current issues on the Surrey network, but it will take us some time, so we would urge all users of the road to take extra care and be aware of the road conditions.

In addition to treating potholes when they happen, the Council is investing £188m on improving and maintaining our roads and pavements over the next five years. This includes significant levels of Council funding in addition to the grant received from the Department for Transport.

SINEAD MOONEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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

Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII) is a rare form of child abuse. It happens when a parent or carer exaggerates or deliberately causes symptoms of illness in the child.

Please can you advise the status of the review and roll out of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) Guidance issued in May 2022?

Background information:

Actual cases of Fabricated or Induced Illness (FII) are extremely rare, this has been recognised in the document issued in May 2022 by the BASW - [Layout 1 \(basw.co.uk\)](https://www.basw.co.uk), which challenges the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) published guidance in 2021 which was incorporated into the Surrey Guidance in October this year.

The job of Social Workers is extremely challenging, and this is recognised by the BASW guidance issued in May 2022 therefore keeping up with current guidance and policies is absolutely critical to support both our staff and residents.

Page 11 of this BASW May 2022 guidance states:

“The RCPCH guide says that one source of harm is that the “child undergoes repeated (unnecessary) medical appointments, examinations, investigations, procedures & treatments” (RCPCH 2021, p. 16). Concern that a parent was directly responsible for the child having unnecessary invasive treatments may have caused harm and this would need to be assessed. However, we can find no evidence base in the literature to support the stance that presenting a child to multiple professionals for assessment, or querying the possible existence of undiagnosed conditions, is harmful to the child. In cases of some diseases, the World Health Organisation acknowledges the problems in diagnosis, with children needing to see many specialists over several years to gain an accurate diagnosis of their condition”.

There are lots of other examples in the BASW May 2022 document where concerns are raised regarding the RCPCH document issued in 2021, most importantly from the Council and Social Workers perspective is this statement on page 4:

“If social workers were to follow the RCPCH guidance, the proposed assessment criterion for FII is likely to cast suspicion on many families who are not harming their children, including children and young people with disabilities and illnesses that are undiagnosed, or where their presentations have been misunderstood and subsequently misdiagnosed. Therefore, within this guidance we are seeking to work with the knowledge we do have: that the prevalence of FII/FDIA continues to be extremely rare, although we do not discount its existence. The authors acknowledge that the Medical and Social

Models of each offer their own unique interpretation of the systemic context of a specific situation.”

I have asked officers why this new guidance (BASW May 2022) has not been rolled out in Surrey and why there has not been an alert of some form issued as the RCPCH guidance (2021) was only rolled out in Surrey in October 2022 after the BASW document was issued.

The BASW guidance was released because of the increase in the prevalence of FII referrals made to social care, which has created a need to ensure social workers have the relevant information to support how they screen referrals and, when necessary, to undertake unbiased, holistic assessments which do not immediately discriminate against and disempower children in need of social care support. I completely understand that social workers to be fully committed to responsibly safeguard all children from any harm, however, they also have a duty to ensure parents/caregivers are appropriately supported, rather than them being subjected to unnecessary child protection proceedings, when inappropriate and wrongful accusations of FII are made.

RESPONSE:

The BASW guidelines were presented, discussed and considered on a multi-agency level within the Emerging Issues and Policy Group (subgroup of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership) following their release. As part of this work the Safeguarding Partnership in Surrey have followed up with the RCPCH (Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health) and they are currently working on a joint agreed statement with BASW, but at the current time there are no timescales.

It is true that the policy that was sent out to practitioners in October 2022 did not adopt the BASW guidelines from May 2022. This was largely due to our Health colleagues concern and view of the BASW guidelines being contentious within the health profession with no plans to fully adopt BASW guidelines within the health context. The view taken at a partnership level is to wait for a joint statement from BASW and RCPCH or reviewed guidance from the Department for Education to ensure we develop future policy in line with agreed best practice.

Operational working in this area continues and we work very closely with our colleagues in health when considering any referral into Children’s Services where Fabricated or Induced Illness is a concern within a family.

NATALIE BRAMHALL, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY AND WASTE

17. LANCE SPENCER (GOLDSWORTH EAST AND HORSELL VILLAGE) TO

**ASK:
(2nd Question)**

Lakers Youth Centre in Woking was badly damaged by a fire in January 2018.

- a) Please can the Council confirm how much has been spent on the site itself, including security and demolition, since that time?

In response to a question to Cabinet in September 2022 the Cabinet Member for Property and Waste advised that The Lakers Centre site had been identified as a potential development site for Short Breaks (respite care).

- b) How much has been spent on considering the options for the site and preparing the planned respite centre?

The Cabinet Member also previously advised that a Stakeholder Community Involvement exercise would take place as part of the overall planning process, to make residents aware of the plans and give them the opportunity to comment and raise questions.

- c) Can the Cabinet Member please give an update on the timing for this project?

RESPONSE:

- a) The Demolition project commenced on 18 October 2021 and all site work finished on 10 December 2021. Costs associated with this work as well as hoardings to the site, all initial surveys and due diligence amounted to **£135,017.00**, which also includes staff capitalisation costs.

Regarding security arrangements, there was a remote CCTV service for 20 months from February 2020 - November 2021, at an average cost of £212.98 per month, total £4259.67. From May 2021 - October 2021 there was a monthly patrol service, total cost £1,395.00 (£232.50 per month).

Total security costs: **£5,654.67**.

- b) The Lakers site was originally considered for Supported Independent Living (SIL). The SIL generic design was placed onto the site to enable the Adult Social Care (ASC) SIL commissioning team to determine the site's suitability for SIL. No costs were associated for this piece of work.

The Short Breaks design, surveys and services works are ongoing to bring it to the standard required for Cabinet approval and then for the full planning application. To date total invoiced/actual costs are **£167,967.52**.

- c) A report is being submitted to Cabinet in March 2023 for approval of the capital funding required. Subject to Cabinet's decision, the Community Engagement exercise will commence in April 2023 and a Statement of Community Involvement will be produced for inclusion in a planning application in May 2023.

MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND GROWTH

**18. CATHERINE POWELL (FARNHAM NORTH) TO ASK:
(3rd Question)**

Surrey County Council has purchased a number of new Hydrogen Buses as part of its strategy to address climate change and has announced that these will be powered by Green hydrogen, working with Metrobus.

There is currently no green hydrogen produced in the UK, there is one project in the pipeline but it will be several years before that passes through the various planning and permitting milestones to support the start of construction. The promotional material for this project states:

“The UK Government has plans for 10GW of low-carbon hydrogen to be in production or construction by 2030. Currently there is no significant domestic production of such hydrogen in the UK.”

My understanding is that any “green hydrogen” that Metrobus may use in the short term (e.g. up to 2030) is likely to be imported from either Rotterdam and / or Saudi Arabia creating a carbon impact from its transportation.

- a) What will be the Carbon footprint for the hydrogen for the buses purchased by SCC, that will be used between now and when domestic green hydrogen is available including all phases of transport?
- b) How many years will the hydrogen buses being purchased now be in operation?

My current understanding is that the carbon footprint of the “none Green” is likely to be higher than if the buses had been run on fossils fuels, particularly if the carbon footprint associated with the manufacture of each of the buses is also accounted for.

- c) So, the zero emissions from the full supply chain will not be achieved until the green hydrogen is generated in the UK and even then only if the transportation is with EV or hydrogen vehicles. Is this correct?

RESPONSE:

The supplier of green hydrogen to Metrobus, the operator of the hydrogen fuel cell buses, will supply green hydrogen from Rotterdam and/or Saudi Arabia in the short to medium term, noting a shared desire to move to a domestic supply when available. Therefore, looking at the ‘well to wheel’ supply chain, the carbon emissions of the green hydrogen required for the new hydrogen fuel cell buses (renewable energy, production, shipping, processing, transport to the point of use) will be three times lower than the carbon emissions for the diesel required for diesel buses (drilling, production, shipping, refining, transport to the point of use). The working life of a diesel bus is typically around fifteen years. We expect the new hydrogen fuel cell buses to have a similar working life.

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