

**Name:** Matthew Furniss, Cabinet Member **Portfolio:** Highways, Transport and Economic Growth

**Highways:** We were pleased to welcome the Secretary of State for Transport, Mark Harper, and several officers from the Department of Transport to our highways depot in Merrow on 13<sup>th</sup> October, where they were shown our new gritting fleet, including a fully electric gritter which is being trialled this winter. They were also taken on a site visit to see in action how we have started to carry out larger patches, rather than filling individual potholes in some circumstances, to improve the resilience of our road network.

Following our investment of nearly £300m in repairing and improving Surrey's roads over the five-year period (2023 – 2028), which is only partially covered by existing DfT grants, we were pleased by the government announcement on 17<sup>th</sup> October that [additional funding for highway maintenance](#) will be provided for the next 11 years. This additional funding over the next two years (£2.6m per annum) will help us to deliver our targeted investments.

We know that well-maintained road and pavement surfaces are highly important to our residents and as well as making journeys smoother and safer, can encourage more people to walk, cycle and rely less on their cars. We therefore will continue to ensure that every penny of available funding goes straight into delivering immediate improvements for our residents and others that travel through our county.

**Horizon Update:** Our teams are making good progress on the Road and Pavement Horizon programmes with around 70% of this years programmes now complete. Our other planned programmes of works on highway assets such as bridges, traffic signals and safety barriers are also progressing well.

The teams have started carrying out site visits for schemes on the provisional 2024/25 programmes so that they can be designed, planned, and programmed in advance of the new financial year.

When we include the other road and pavement programmes, such as the programmes determined in-year, we will be delivering between 800 and 1000 road and pavement schemes this year and the same volume again next year. This is a significant increase compared to the number of schemes carried out in previous years and both our staff and our contractors have been working very hard to deliver this significant volume of works.

We have trialled a number of new materials and systems this year including the [Pothole Pro](#) and [Roadmender](#) and are currently evaluating the outputs to determine their ongoing use on the Surrey network. We have also been evaluating more resilient and low carbon materials for infrastructure such as lining and street furniture.

**Transport:** On 28 November I approved £7.8m of Bus service Improvement Plan Plus funding that is being used to:

- Enhance specific bus services through improved frequency or greater hours/days of operation, including new or better evening and weekend services, which have been selected based on the highest chance of becoming commercially sustainable;
- Support the further expansion of Digital Demand Responsive Transport services across Surrey;
- Support the roll out of the Surrey LINK Card, which offers reduced price bus travel to all residents aged 20 and under; and
- Support some bus services to help them to continue to build back to pre-pandemic patronage levels, noting that the DfT's Covid Recovery funding has ended.

The Surrey LINK Card continues to be a success, offering half adult fares on single and return journeys to all residents aged 20 and under. The card remains free, with 5,580 young people already signed up (1,616 LINK Cards held by under 16s and 3,964 held by those aged 16 to 20). An email to promote the new £1 LINK fare on routes where the £2 national fare cap is available was sent to all LINK cardholders (or their parents) plus Surrey schools on Tuesday 28 November. This has generated an increase in applications that will lead to increased usage. LINK was also promoted at the Festival of Skills. During September and October, circa 25,000 journeys were made by LINK Card holders. This will increase during November with the £1 fare now available.

Five new Surrey Connect DDRT services started on 4 September, with more planned for 2024. DDRT was also promoted at the Festival of Skills. Over 32,000 journeys have been made across the Surrey Connect

DDRT network since May 2022. Also, 2,100 new digital users have registered since September this year when the new services started, with a total of 6,300 Surrey Connect digital subscribers across all the Surrey Connect schemes.

**Planning:** There have been recent consultations regarding the Gatwick Airport Northern Runway Development Consent Order application and the Farnborough Airport proposal to amend some of the operational constraints on their planning permission, including an increase in the maximum number of annual flights from 50,000 to 70,000.

I approved the County Council's Relevant Representation regarding the Gatwick application, and it was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 29<sup>th</sup> October. The key issues raised included the need for the development and control mechanisms; noise; traffic and transport; carbon and climate change; public health; and the environment. I have recently set up a member reference group for local members in the Tandridge, Reigate and Banstead and Mole Valley areas whose divisions will be impacted by the expansion with the aim of ensuring that local issues are included in the Local Impact Report to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. The first meeting is due to be held on 12<sup>th</sup> December prior to Council. The Gatwick proposal is currently in the pre-examination phase. The examination timetable has yet to be confirmed and there has been some slippage, but officers are currently expecting it to begin in late February/early March, following which there will be an intense 6-month period of hearings and scrutiny of the proposals.

There is significant local concern about the potential impact of the Farnborough Airport proposal. Officers notified affected local members to seek their views when we were formally consulted by Rushmoor Borough Council. The original closing date for comments was 4<sup>th</sup> December however this has now been extended and our representation has to be submitted by 17<sup>th</sup> December. Officers are drafting the representation for my approval.

**Economic Growth:** The government's decision to integrate LEP functions into county councils is a significant vote of confidence in our ability to deliver for local businesses. Crucially, it formally recognises the important role county councils play in understanding their local economies and in providing leadership on the priorities that will help support sustainable local economic growth. Significant progress continues to be made to plan for the integration of LEP functions through engagement with Enterprise M3, Coast to Capital, and the other relevant upper tier local authorities. A further cabinet report on LEP integration is planned for February, by which time we expect to be able to share more specific details on funding, assets, and staffing.

The council successfully held the inaugural Festival of Skills on 23 November jointly with the Association of Learning Providers in Surrey (ALPS) and other partners. It saw 80 exhibitors showcasing their opportunities to around 1500 students from Surrey schools. This builds on success of previous skills events (inc. Horley jobs fair, Green Skills summit, Camberley careers fair). Planning has already started for the 2024 Festival of Skills. Surrey Careers Hub is now fully operational and was formally launched at the Festival of Skills. The Careers Hub puts the council in an important position to support schools with careers strategies and programmes, as well as facilitate and coordinate collaborative working across education and business through a lens of future skills demand.

Through the (economic) town partnerships approach, we have now been able to establish a robust delivery programme for 2024 with RBBC and other local partners, which will include delivery of public realm improvements, wayfinding and signage, and a localised communications strategy led by local partners. The E&G team continues to seek funding opportunities to attract investment into Surrey targeted at supporting our key sectoral clusters. For example, Cabinet approved £3m capital investment to part fund a new CoSTAR satellite studio and incubator space on RHUL's campus. There has been a successful bid for £1.5m GAIN funding (with Uni of Surrey and UCA) to establish a Games Innovation Hub on University of Surrey campus. Finally, we are waiting to hear back from the Department for Education for the council's bid for £2.3m for Skills Bootcamp funding, which is focused on digital, green, engineering, and health and social care sectors. If successful, delivery starts in April 2024.