

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET
HELD ON 25 FEBRUARY 2025 AT 2.00 PM
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL, WOODHATCH
PLACE, 11 COCKSHOT HILL, REIGATE, SURREY ,RH2 8EF.**

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Cabinet at its next meeting.

Members: (*present)

- * Tim Oliver OBE (Chairman)
- * Natalie Bramhall
- * Clare Curran
- * Kevin Deanus
- * Matt Furniss
- * Marisa Heath
- * David Lewis
- * Sinead Mooney
- * Mark Nuti
- * Denise Turner-Stewart

Deputy Cabinet Members

- * Maureen Attewell
- * Steve Bax
- * Paul Deach
- * Jonathan Hulley

Members in attendance:

Cllr Catherine Powell, Leader of the Residents Association/Independent Group
Cllr Fiona Davidson, Chairman of the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee
Cllr Bob Hughes Chairman of the Resources and Performance Select Committee
Cllr Steven McCormick, Vice Chairman of the Resources and Performance Select Committee
Cllr Lesley Steeds, Vice Chairman of the Resources and Performance Select Committee

**PART ONE
IN PUBLIC**

27/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

There were none.

28/25 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING: 28 JANUARY 2025 [Item 2]

These were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

29/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were none.

PROCEDURAL MATTERS [Item 4]

The Leader made some comments regarding local government reorganisation. The Council had been placed on the accelerated programme for local government reorganisation and work was now underway at pace. The Council was working closely with district and borough leaders and partners. The Council had until 21 March to put in an informal submission for government review with a final proposal being submitted on 9 May. To comply with the current legislation around the creation of mayoral strategic authorities, there would be a requirement to have two authorities coming together to create a strategic authority with a directly elected mayor. Work was being undertaken to understand how existing services could be divided up. It was vital that sustainable unitary authorities were created which improved resident experience. The Leader explained that a paper with interim proposals would be going to Council and Cabinet on 18 March and a formal submission would be submitted in May. More information around local government reorganisation was available on the Surrey County Council website. Residents who wanted more information were asked to contact the Council.

30/25 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS [Item 4a]

There were eight member questions. A response from the Cabinet was published in the supplementary agenda.

Cllr McCormick asked if the Cabinet Member could give a commitment that she would bring forward a policy on Community asset transfer as a matter of urgency so the Council had the option available to secure transfer of land to local communities and secure valuable local improvements to social, economic and environmental well-being. The Cabinet Member for Environment thanked the Member for the supplementary question stating that she did not have the power to do this and that this would require a conversation with the land and property team. The land management framework set the remit on how the council would use its land going forward. The Cabinet Member agreed to have a conversation with the Member outside the meeting.

Before preparing any supplementary questions, Cllr Powell asked to be provided with access to the embedded documents within Annex 1. The Cabinet Member for Property, Waste and Infrastructure agreed to do this.

31/25 PUBLIC QUESTIONS [Item 4b]

There was one public question. A response from the Cabinet was published in the supplementary agenda.

The public questioner asked if the Cabinet Member could clarify what measures had been put in place to ensure that all risks of harm to a child identified in professional advice beyond self-harm were fully documented in EHCPs so they can be appropriately addressed in the educational establishment. The Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning agreed that there had been a misunderstanding in the response from the Cabinet and agreed to take the question away and get a updated response for the questioner.

32/25 PETITIONS [Item 4c]

There were none.

33/25 REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED ON REPORTS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE [Item 4d]

There were none.

34/25 REPORTS FROM SELECT COMMITTEES, TASK GROUPS AND OTHER COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL [Item 5]

The Chairman of the Children, Families, Lifelong and Culture Select Committee introduced the Alternative Provision report explaining that the Committee had scrutinised this area in February 2024 and was concerned that Surrey was not adequately fulfilling its responsibilities in this area. Concern was raised around the number of children missing school and the quality of alternative provision in place. Parents did not know what to expect from alternative provision and the committee was concerned about the safeguarding implications especially as children were receiving very little alternative provision hours. A number of recommendations were made by the Select Committee. The majority were accepted by the service however it had been disappointing that it had taken so long to implement these and in particular the parent handbook. The Select Committee recommend that the handbook should be produced by June. It was explained that it can take parents months to get alternative provision in place especially for children with EHCPs. The Select Committee reviewed Alternative Provision again in December 2024 and were pleased to note that progress had been made. The Cabinet response to the Select Committee report shows a plethora of work being undertaken to address the committees concerns.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning explained that she had taken it as a personal challenge to make significant improvements in the area of alternative provision. The Cabinet Member was pleased to see that the Select Committee could see progress being made. The Cabinet Member explained that the law did not actually define full time education as a number of hours and the council defined this as being between 15 and 18 hours. There had been a real focus on improving school attendance which had been taken up by the Education Partnership as a key priority. The Select Committee Chairman commented that she still could not understand why the parent handbook and list of alternative provision providers was taken so long to compile. The Leader agreed that a response to the points would be addressed and thanked the Select Committee for the report and the work they were doing.

The Chairman of the Resources and Performance Select Committee introduced the Customer Transformation Programme Update report and the Unit4/MySurrey Stabilisation Board report. With regards to the Customer Transformation Programme report the Chairman thanked the Deputy Leader for her response to the Select Committee recommendations. The Chairman stated that the Select Committee had some doubts about the financial and customer service returns of the project taking into account that the council would be abolished in two years. He commented that Members should be involved in any large scale expenditure proposals going forward.

The Deputy Leader welcomed the ongoing scrutiny provided by the Select Committee and explained that any financial decisions would be reviewed as part of the local government reorganisation review that was under way. The Deputy Leader appreciated the reservations around the scale and level of

expenditure. The Leader explained that business as usual would need to continue but that every major item of expenditure or change would be subject to review in light of local government reform. The customer transformation programme was an important piece of work which improved the experience for residents directly.

The Chairman of the Resources and Performance Select Committee introduced the Unit 4 stabilisation report thanking the Cabinet Member for accepting the Select Committee's recommendations. Tribute was paid to the Vice-Chairman Councillor Steve McCormick for the work he had done in leading the task and finish group which reviewed Unit 4. It was agreed that another review of Unit 4 would be undertaken in 3 months due to ongoing concerns. Expenditure on the system would also need to be carefully considered taking account of local government reorganisation. The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources recognised the work of the task and finish group stating that the system had been thoroughly scrutinised by the Select Committee and the Audit and Governance Committee. The Cabinet Member felt that real improvements were being made and implemented which was reflected in the audits. The Stabilisation Board was due to complete the first phase of its work at the end of March and would then move into the optimisation phase. The Leader stated that the Deputy Chief Executive had a keen interest in this area and was confident that matters would be progressed at pace.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Alternative Provision report be noted.
2. That the Customer Transformation Programme Update report be noted.
3. That the Unit4/MySurrey Stabilisation Board report be noted.

35/25 LEADER / DEPUTY LEADER / CABINET MEMBER/ STRATEGIC INVESTMENT BOARD DECISIONS TAKEN SINCE THE LAST CABINET MEETING [Item 6]

There were three decisions for noting.

RESOLVED:

That the decisions taken since the last Cabinet meeting are noted.

36/25 CABINET MEMBER OF THE MONTH [Item 7]

A Cabinet Member of the Month update was provided by the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities. The following key points were made:

- Your Fund Surrey (YFS) was now into its' fifth year. Through the Fund the Council had supported 48 large community-led projects in all areas of the County, equating to almost £20million in total. The initiative had given life to large and small scale projects across Surrey and highlights the Council's commitment to empowering a thriving, inclusive, and vibrant community for all residents.
- The two Member-led community funds were continuing to be very popular with both Members and Community Groups, and are providing real,

tangible benefits to communities using the local knowledge and understanding of hard working councillors on the ground.

- The Surrey Social Value Marketplace was an online platform where community groups, businesses and organisations from across the county could work together and share resources to help each other and, ultimately, the county. Charities, voluntary organisations and other community groups can post requests on the Marketplace, and businesses from across the county can fulfil those requests. Bidders for SCC contracts will be expected to use the marketplace when developing their commitments in tenders. Recent examples of community value generated via the Marketplace include tools for repair cafes, art suppliers for parent toddler groups and volunteers with pets to attend social support groups.
- Residents use of Surrey libraries was growing and the ambitious libraries capital investment programme was delivering modern multi use and flexible community hubs in the heart of towns and villages, ensuring residents and communities have modern and welcoming facilities fit for now and the future. This investment was transforming all of our libraries into vibrant community hubs, improving access to information.
- Our Surrey Heritage Service preserves and maintains Surrey's history records, supporting residents with their research on family history and other enquiries. The service regularly receives positive feedback on the support provided by the team. On 8th March the Centre is hosting an Open Day event that will provide an opportunity to explore the collections. On the day visitors can enjoy a range of events and tours allowing them to find out more about the resources available to help them research the history of their family, house or other aspect of the county's past.
- The Active Surrey team had been busy working with health professionals, police, schools and our districts and boroughs to benefit the health of Surrey's residents of all ages. The Health team had secured £112K of funding to support community organisations' older adults' physical activity projects as part of our Live Longer Better programme.
- The registration and nationality service was one of the busiest in the country, offering high quality, efficient and responsive services at key moments in people's lives. Customer satisfaction levels were high and many messages had been received praising staff.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet Member of the Month update be noted.

37/25 THE COUNCIL'S ECONOMIC GROWTH LEADERSHIP ROLE AND REFRESHING SURREY'S ECONOMIC STRATEGY [Item 8]

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth who explained that in April 2024 the delivery of economic growth functions previously held by Local Enterprise Partnerships transferred to Surrey County Council. Since taking on the responsibilities from the Local Enterprise Partnerships in April, the Council had been delivering effectively for residents and local businesses in several ways, including ongoing contractual agreements with responsibilities for Growth Hub services to SMEs, Careers Hub service linking schools and employers, the Innovation work programme with the three Surrey universities, and the upcoming Made Smarter Adoption programme for the South East. Some of the key successes for 2024/25 were described. The Economic Growth Strategy had been refreshed to be more

reflective of the current economic context and the enhanced leadership role the council had taken. The Cabinet Member gave more details around each of these priorities. The Council was becoming responsible for an increasing range of funding sources aimed at supporting local growth, this includes the LEP legacy funds and UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for transitional year 2025/26. It was proposed that by April 2026, the following funding pots would be launched: Capital funding (approximately £4 million) towards physical infrastructure and/or assets that act as a catalyst for the delivery of the three strategic priorities in the refreshed strategy, Revenue funding (approximately £2 million) towards innovative proposals from local partners, stakeholders, and businesses that are aligned to the economic growth strategy and funding framework and Grant Scheme for SME business growth (approximately £1 million) towards grants between £10k-£50k to cover 50% of project costs and used to fund costs that support growth through workforce development and job creation in local businesses.

The Leader queried if the Council's plans were aligned with the Local Skills Improvement Plan that had been agreed through the Surrey Chamber of Commerce. The Cabinet Member stated that this was correct and a Skills Leadership Forum had been set up just to review the skills agenda. The Cabinet Member also announced that 25% of the Council's apprenticeship levy was open to small and medium sized businesses across Surrey to help upskill staff.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet notes the progress made in establishing the Council as Surrey's strategic economic leader including the taking on of LEP functions and assets from Government.
2. That Cabinet notes the use of delegated officer powers to approve the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement with Hampshire County Council, which formally sets out how ongoing governance will be undertaken, and how assets and liabilities will be split between both local authorities.
3. That Cabinet approves the vision and priorities in the refreshed economic growth strategy following the endorsement by the One Surrey Growth Board and the Surrey Business Leaders Forum. These interconnected updated priorities are reinforced by the evidence review that has been carried out.
4. That Cabinet approves the creation of the Economic Growth Funding Framework and related funding rounds for 2025/26, through which investments will be made to realise initiatives that support the agreed priorities. This includes approximately £4 million towards capital initiatives, £2 million towards revenue initiatives and £1 million towards an SME business grant scheme.
5. That Cabinet approves funding thresholds for the Interim Executive Director for Environment, Property & Growth in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure, and Growth and the Section 151 Officer (up to £100,000), and the Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure, and Growth (between £100,000-£500,000), with Cabinet responsible for approving any investments over £500,000.

Reasons for Decisions:

To bring the significant strategic decision of approving the refreshed county-wide economic growth strategy and strategic funding framework to Cabinet, which will help give direction to local economic initiatives and enable greater coordination of local institutions with an ability to deliver.

(The decisions on this item can be called-in by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee)

38/25 SURREY MATERIALS RECYCLING FACILITY, TRUMPS FARM [Item 9]

The Cabinet Member for Property, Waste and Infrastructure introduced the report explaining that there was a lack of dry mixed recycling infrastructure available in Surrey and the use of third party sites to manage and separate recyclable materials was increasingly expensive. The Council had no control over costs and government waste changes would result in our infrastructure capability coming under increasing pressure. The infrastructure network in Surrey was operating at capacity with very little contingency. There were limited alternative local facilities within Surrey and in the surrounding region for bulking and sorting of recycled materials. The report proposed the development of a full business case and approval to start a procurement exercise for a new materials recycling facility at Trump's farm. An outline planning application had already been submitted.

The Leader explained that it was imperative to renew interest around increasing recycling rates which had seemed to stagnate at around 50-53%. This would require work with the district and boroughs and residents.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet approves a procurement exercise for a new Materials Recycling Facility ("MRF") initiating support from legal, financial and technical advisors, including developing the Full Business Case for the facility.
2. That Cabinet approves any legal agreements that are required to secure planning permission, approval is sought for the same, subject to the oversight of any such agreement by the Director of Law and Governance.
3. That Cabinet delegates authority to the Interim Executive Director for Environment, Property and Growth Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Property, Infrastructure and Waste and the Executive Director for Resources to approve the finalised Procurement Strategy and commence the procurement exercise once the planning application for the MRF has been approved.

Reasons for Decisions:

- In 2023, the Resources and Circular Economy Team ("RCE") had a Strategic Waste Infrastructure Plan approved by Cabinet. This plan highlighted the lack of dry mixed recycling ("DMR") treatment infrastructure available locally and noted the strain on the existing

infrastructure. Since then, the team has been working on the recommendations within that report.

- Surrey County Council's ("SCC") current waste infrastructure capacity is under significant pressure. Use of third-party sites to manage and separate recyclable materials collected by the District and Boroughs on SCC's behalf has shown to be increasingly expensive and the service has no control over costs or the separation processes (Appendix 1).
- Imminent waste legislative changes will dramatically alter the risk profile of SCC (as the Waste Disposal Authority ("WDA")) and requires whole system thinking. The changes will result in SCC's infrastructure capacity coming under greater pressure as will third-party Materials Recycling Facilities ("MRF") which will further increase potential SCC costs. Liability for additional costs will fall to SCC, of which SCC would have no control. SCC will need greater control over its supply chain and associated infrastructure.
- SCC are proposing the development of a MRF on SCC owned land at Trumps Farm, Chertsey. An outline planning permission application has been submitted and an Outline Business Case ("OBC"), presented herein has been developed. Determination is anticipated for May 2025.
- The OBC outlined the key drivers for the development, which are:
 - Legislative changes in the waste sector will dramatically alter the risk profile of SCC as the WDA. The amount and type of recycling materials collected will both increase and change over time.
 - The need to be able to adapt and respond accordingly to this changing legislation.
 - The need to build resilience and self-sufficiency within SCC's waste infrastructure network.
 - Limited infrastructure capacity within the existing SCC network and the region as detailed in Strategic Waste Infrastructure Plan (Cabinet April 2023)¹.
 - Budgetary pressures and the need to extract greater value for money from our services.
 - The need for whole system and frictionless working with the District and Borough ("D&B") Waste Collection Authorities ("WCA") to drive efficiencies and improve performance.
 - Reducing the carbon impact of the service, by managing Surrey's dry recycling where it is generated, rather than sending it to treatment outlets across the country.
- Supported by pre-market engagement SCC proposes the development of a MRF that will:

- process all dry recycling SCC is currently responsible for (c.90,000 tonnes), with the ability to take additional districts' material;
 - not require any changes to the current District and Borough collection regimes, unless stipulated by legislative changes;
 - use greater technological processes, including Artificial Intelligence (AI) to increase the quality of material and recycle more, as well as futureproofing the facility by giving it greater flexibility in its operations;
 - likely seek a Design, Build, Finance, Operate, (DBFO) and Collaborate/Partner delivery mechanism, to provide SCC with the control needed to mitigate the changing waste landscape. Interface risks will be the responsibility of the supplier;
 - reduce SCC's revenue costs as compared to the third-party offtake contracts.
 - be coterminous and available from the end date of the existing contracts.
- A full procurement strategy will be developed once approval to go ahead with the project has been granted. This will be supported by further market engagement including interviews with interested parties to ensure a full understanding of what the market can offer. Delegation is requested to approve this strategy prior to commencing the procurement exercise.
 - Therefore, the recommendation to Members is to approve the procurement exercise for a Surrey MRF, including the development of the Full Business Case ("FBC").
 - Further, it is important for SCC, to secure planning permission as soon as possible to inform the costs and liability consequences to be assessed in the FBC and as such Cabinet is asked to approve SCC entering into any legal agreement which may be needed to secure that permission subject to oversight by the Director of Law and Governance.
 - Following completion of the procurement exercise, the Full Business Case will be required to return to Cabinet, for a decision to progress the project further.

(The decisions on this item can be called-in by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee)

39/25 A LAND MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK AND POLICY FOR SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL OWNED LAND [Item 10]

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Environment who explained that there were huge pressures on land in Surrey which were only going to increase. Therefore it was vital to have a mechanism in place to resolve the complex demands made on land. The purpose of the report was to gain Cabinet approval for the Land Management Framework approach and the Draft Land Management Policy. The framework and policy will support Surrey

County Council to make evidence-based decisions on the use and management of SCC land-based assets: to support environmental outcomes alongside financial, commercial, social and economic outcomes. The framework did not have huge detail around it but set out principles around nature, protection, water management, farming and housing. Surrey was one of the only councils who had started this piece of work. Members commented that this was a useful framework to have in place and recognised that this would evolve over time.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet notes the Land Management Framework approach.
2. That Cabinet approves the draft Land Management Policy.

Reasons for Decisions:

There is a pressing need to understand our land-based assets from an opportunity as well as risk and liability perspective which in some cases is considerable. This Framework and Policy will enable informed business cases to be developed so these assets can be effectively managed and decisions made about how they are used to maximise value and control costs and risks, and where appropriate disposed of.

(The decisions on this item can be called-in by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee)

40/25 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO PROCUREMENT AND CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS [Item 11]

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources who explained that the 2023 Procurement Act had become effective and as a result it was necessary for the Council to amend its procurement and contract standing orders to comply with legislation. These would then be taken to Full Council for approval. The report highlighted the Major changes that would be brought about by the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023. There were four key areas which included Transparency Notices, Contract Management, Procedures and Most Advantageous Tender.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet notes the proposed changes to the Procurement and Contract Standing Orders (PCSOs) and commends them to County Council for final approval.

Reasons for Decisions:

The current PCSOs require updating to reflect the impending legislative changes and improve the overall effectiveness of the PCSOs.

(The decisions on this item can be called-in by the Resources and Performance Select Committee)

41/25 2024/25 MONTH 9 (DECEMBER) FINANCIAL REPORT [Item 12]

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources started by saying that he was concerned that it had been suggested in some public forums by Council Members that the Council's finances were not robust and had generated record levels of debt. These accusations were misleading. Over the last 5-6 years the Council had adopted a prudent and cautious approach to its finances which had allowed it to rebuild levels of reserves. The manner in which the Council runs its finances had been recognised by our external auditors and any budget decisions taken had been supported by the Section 151 Officer. To suggest that Council finances were unstable or the levels of debt were unaffordable was both irresponsible and untrue.

At Month 9, the Council was forecasting an overspend of £19.4m against the 2024/25 revenue budget. This was still within the £20 contingency budget. The Cabinet Member highlighted that there was a time lag of when the reports were presented to Cabinet meaning that a lot of work had happened over the last two months to mitigate overspends. At the end of December there had been an increase to the Adults, Wellbeing & Health Partnerships Directorate Budget of £0.939m due to additional funding received from the Department of Health & Social Care to cover the cost impact of the 2024/25 NHS Agenda for Change pay awards on services commissioned by the Public Health service. The Place directorate forecast had deteriorated in December (£1.2m increase from the previous month) due to increased overspends in Land & Property, primarily due to the non-achievement of efficiencies assumed in relation to rate rebates and reduced rents and service charges. At Month 9, capital expenditure of £324.9m was forecast for 2024/25. This was £3.5m more than the re-phased budget but the Cabinet Member anticipated seeing a reduction in the forecast overspend in the capital budget at the end of the next reporting period.

The Leader stated that the Council had passed a robust budget for 2025-26 and had a healthy contingency fund. The budget report for next month would show a decrease in the overspend. Comments made about the budget in the public domain needed to be accurate.

RESOLVED:

1. That Cabinet notes the Council's forecast revenue budget and capital budget positions for the year.
2. That Cabinet approves an increase to the Adults, Wellbeing & Health Partnerships Directorate Budget of £0.939m due to additional funding received from the Department of Health & Social Care to cover the cost impact of the 2024/25 NHS Agenda for Change pay awards on services commissioned by the Public Health service.

Reasons for Decisions:

This report is to comply with the agreed policy of providing a monthly budget monitoring report to Cabinet for information and for approval of any necessary actions.

(The decisions on this item can be called-in by the Resources and Performance Select Committee)

42/25 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC [Item 13]

RESOLVED: That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information under the relevant paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

43/25 SURREY MATERIALS RECYCLING FACILITY, TRUMPS FARM [Item 14]

The Cabinet Member for Property, Waste and Infrastructure introduced a Part 2 report giving details of the financials included within the report.

RESOLVED:

See Minute 38/25.

Reasons for Decisions:

See Minute 38/25.

(The decisions on this item can be called-in by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee)

44/25 PUBLICITY FOR PART 2 ITEMS [Item 15]

It was agreed that non-exempt information may be made available to the press and public, where appropriate.

Meeting closed at 15:18

Chairman