

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

TUESDAY 9 OCTOBER 2018

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

COLIN KEMP, CABINET LEAD MEMBER FOR PLACE

1. MRS HAZEL WATSON (DORKING HILLS) TO ASK:

The Department for Transport (DFT) Circular 01/2013 entitled "Setting Local Speed Limits" states at section 7: "The speed limits on single carriageway rural roads should take into account the history of collisions, the road's function, mean traffic speed, use by vulnerable road users, the road geometry and engineering and the road environment including level of road-side development. It is government policy that a 30 mph speed limit should be the norm in villages. It may also be appropriate to consider 20 mph zones and limits in built-up village streets."

The County Council is not following this DFT Circular as a number of village centres including Abinger Common, Coldharbour, Walliswood and Okewood Hill do not have 30 mph speed limits as recommended by Government as the norm for village centres.

Will the Cabinet Member commit to implementing DFT guidance and government policy by reducing speed limits to 30 mph or 20 mph as appropriate in all village centres?

Reply:

Our policy "Setting Local Speed Limits" was approved by Cabinet in July 2014. It was developed with reference to the national policy issued by central government (Department for Transport Circular 01/2013). If road conditions and traffic speeds conform to our policy, Local or Joint committees can introduce 30 mph speed limits in villages and 20 mph zones and limits in village centres. Each committee determines local priorities for use of their discretionary funding. Our policy follows the established principle that changing to a lower speed limit on its own will not necessarily be successful in reducing the speed of traffic by very much if the prevailing mean speeds are much higher than the proposed lower speed limit. Speed limits should therefore be considered as part of a package of measures to manage vehicle speeds and improve road safety.

The policy will be reviewed upon central government issuing new guidance.

DAVID HODGE, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

2. MR ROBERT EVANS (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK:

What lessons has the leader and his team learnt from the problems that have beset Northamptonshire and other counties?

Reply:

It is well documented that Local Government and County Councils in particular are under significant financial strain given rising demands and constrained funding. The

County Councils Network recently published information setting out a collective savings requirement of £1 billion in 2019/20.

My team and I have paid close attention to events unfolding in Northamptonshire and other counties and the actions we have undertaken to date, and will take next, incorporate key lessons. In particular we have:

- Commissioned an independent review and challenge of our finances by CIPFA and communicated clearly both internally and externally the seriousness of the council's financial position
- Agreed actions at Cabinet on 25 September 2018 to target the delivery of an additional £40m of in-year cost avoidance in order to stabilise the council's financial position, avoiding unplanned use of balances due to an overspend – these actions also aim to avoid drawing down the full planned £21m from reserves originally agreed in the budget for 2018/19
- Developed a whole scale transformation programme to deliver service improvements and savings in 2019/20 and beyond
- Engaged extensively with residents and partners to develop a Community Vision for Surrey in 2030, so we have a shared long term set of priorities for the county and can focus the collective resources we do have on these
- Appointed a new Chief Executive who has put in place a team of experienced Executive Directors

Crucially we will be reviewing a Preliminary Financial Strategy at Cabinet (30 October) and Council (13 November) so we are fully sighted on the financial scenario we face, have a viable and realistic set of preliminary proposals to secure a balanced and sustainable budget, and can prepare for the inevitably difficult final decisions we will need to make in setting the 2019/20 budget in February 2019. Importantly this will also allow for meaningful consultation, engagement and refinement both internally and externally ahead of setting the budget.

DAVID HODGE, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

3. MR CHRIS BOTTEN (CATERHAM HILL) TO ASK:

What is the cost in this financial year of the staff, including Interim Directors and Consultants, who are retained to lead and manage the Transformation Programme?

Reply:

Since 2010 the Council has faced year-on-year reductions in its funding from Central Government while at the same time managing unprecedented growth in demand and costs to its services.

Faced with these challenges the Council has developed a programme of transformational change to manage service demands and deliver savings to ensure the sustainability of services to Surrey residents and the Council's finances. At its meeting in May 2018, Council approved the use of up to an initial £5m to fund additional leadership capacity to accelerate and support the Council's programme of transformation. At the same meeting, up to a further £15m of transformation funding was agreed to be released to realise future savings arising from individual business cases.

In the financial year 2018/19 to date, £662,000 has been spent on securing the services of interim managers and consultants to support the transformation work. When projected to the end of March 2019 to give a figure for this financial year, this sum is forecast to be approximately £5.6m.

The total £20m to support transformation work will be funded by applying flexible use of capital receipts as allowed by MHCLG. As a consequence, this expenditure does not create an additional revenue budget pressure.

HELYN CLACK, CABINET LEAD FOR CORPORATE SUPPORT

4. MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:

Please can you confirm the number of youth worker posts that there currently are across Surrey and how this compares to two years ago, and how many of these posts currently have full-time permanent staff in position.

Reply:

Please find below the requested data of how many youth worker posts there are currently within Surrey, how this compares to 2016 and how many of these posts currently have full time permanent staff in position.

	No. of employments (no of contracts issued)	No. of employees (actual headcount *)	Full Time Equivalent (FTE)	No. of full time employees on permanent contract (**)
30-Sep-18	106	98	23.88	13
30-Sep-16	227	208	62.38	33

*some staff have more than one contract which results in the number of contracts issued being higher than the headcount

** actual headcount of employees on a full-time and permanent contract (excluding part-time contracts)

In April this year, the following information was provided to Cabinet in relation to how the £9.7m savings which were proposed in the Early Help Service by 2020 in the Medium Term Financial Plan, affected youth and community workers and the level of youth provision across Surrey:

The county council's youth work provision is delivered by Family Services. The Family Services staffing re-structure which is currently under way has delivered savings of £2.46m savings largely through an extended period of freezing vacancies and integrating functions within the service. There is no requirement for compulsory redundancies as a result of this re-structure. The current youth work staffing which is dedicated to the open access youth centre delivery is 794 hours across Surrey each week. Following the restructure this will be 618 hours per week; a difference of 176 hours. Each district and borough will have a dedicated neighbourhood youth and community worker who, supported by part time workers, will deliver the open access offer, as well as facilitating targeted group work. The impact of the overall staffing reduction is being mitigated by more flexible delivery alongside partner organisations

under new borough and district youth work delivery groups. The objective of these delivery groups is to enhance the partnership offer of youth activities and youth work available to young people within each of Surrey's districts and boroughs.

The above savings of £2.46m have been achieved and although it is true that youth worker posts have reduced by 20 since 2016, we have strengthened our partnership work with youth providers within Surrey. For example in Epsom Downs and Banstead GLL, YMCA, R+B, Surrey Police, Councillors, Raven and Surrey Family Services have come together to bid for funding and share staffing resources to enable high quality provision to continue. This has had a particular focus on sporting activities, which makes use of the local resource and has helped overcome a barrier where disadvantaged young people may have felt disconnected from the facilities.

Any further restructure work within youth service will be part of the Children's Transformation Programme.

MIKE GOODMAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

5. MRS HAZEL WATSON (DORKING HILLS) TO ASK: (2nd question)

Since the introduction of car park charges in most of the car parks in the County Council owned Norbury Park, these car parks are now virtually empty as local people are now parking in nearby roads or in other car parks which are free of charge.

In view of this outcome, will the Cabinet member withdraw the car park charges at Norbury Park?

Reply:

Introduction of charging at the County Council's countryside car parks was approved by Cabinet on 30 January 2018. It also received cross party support at the Environment and Infrastructure Select Committee meeting. It forms an essential part of the Countryside Estate Business Plan, which aims to enable the estate to be self-financing by the year 2021.

The Business Plan sets out the rationale for introducing car park charges and the expected implications. These include: possible displacement parking and the expectation that vehicle numbers would drop initially following charges being introduced. In other similar areas where charges have been introduced, vehicle numbers drop initially and then have shown to steadily build back up to a comparable level prior to charging.

Free parking nearby provides the public with an alternative, if they do not wish to pay at a County Council owned car park.

Vehicle numbers have been lower than expected in some of the car parks where charging has been introduced, but average spend per visit and take up of annual parking passes has been higher than expected. These are early days and this revenue stream is essential to support our countryside now and in the future.

The Cabinet Member for Environment does not propose to withdraw car park charges.

MIKE GOODMAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

**6. MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:
(2nd question)**

The Vision for Surrey 2030 Evidence base (agenda item 11 of this council meeting) notes that less household waste is being disposed of in Community Recycling Centres and more in household bins, which have a lower recycling rate. How do we propose to offer residents the opportunity to reuse and recycle more, more easily in the future and what else can be done to reverse this trend?

Reply:

Firstly I would point out that, since 2013/14, the trend is for a reduction in the overall volume of waste collected. This is against an increasing population. Preventing the occurrence of waste in the first place is by far the best outcome we could hope to achieve.

With regards to recycling, it is important to note the distinct roles played by kerbside collections and the community recycling centres. Every district and borough provides kerbside recycling collections for food waste, paper and card, plastics, glass and a chargeable green waste collection. Most districts and boroughs provide kerbside collections for textiles and small electricals and some provide collections for household batteries. Community recycling Centres on the other hand provide for the collection of more bulky items that generally can't be placed in the kerbside recycling bin. The two services are set up to complement each other but not necessarily to duplicate each other. In 2017/18 recycling rates of individual districts and boroughs recycled between 44.1% and 61.7% of the waste they collected and at our community recycling centres we recycled 56.5% of waste excluding rubble and plasterboard.

All councils in Surrey promote recycling through the Surrey Waste Partnership (SWP). SWP undertake regular communication campaigns to encourage greater participation in existing recycling schemes and have a team dedicated to increasing recycling rates at tackling hard to reach flatted properties.

MIKE GOODMAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT

**7. MRS HAZEL WATSON (DORKING HILLS) TO ASK:
(3rd question)**

Chalara ash dieback is a disease which has infected many ash trees. The Forestry Commission strongly recommends that all owners of woodland containing ash prepare or amend management plans to describe how ash will be managed. Given that the County Council owns land including Highways land adjacent to roads and footways with a risk of people being killed or injured by fallen dead trees, what plans do the County Council have in place to manage risk and to keep the public safe from diseased ash trees?

Reply:

The presence and significance of Ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) to the County's tree portfolio are clearly understood by the embedded internal and external tree risk management services in place. Furthermore the underlying legal duties related to tree risk at large, as owed by the County Council and its partners and how these are

effectively discharged are recognised and documented within the Council's "2018-Tree Risk Management Policy" as part of the Health and Safety Manual.

This corporate policy is currently being reviewed by external legal counsel, with the purpose of testing the reasonableness of the council's approach in the event of challenge; with any revisions and approval of policy finalised by 31 December 2018.

Consistent with the recommendations of the Forestry Commission's (FC) Operations Note 046

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741800/ON046.pdf and upon release by the FC on the management advice of the disease in non-woodland situations, the existing arrangements will be reviewed and modified as necessary and collaboratively with stakeholders to include the FC, DEFRA and The Tree Council.

COLIN KEMP, CABINET LEAD MEMBER FOR PLACE

8. MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK: (3rd question)

Surrey's Low Emission Strategy

(https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/166579/Low-Emissions-Transport-Strategy-Draft-for-Public-Consultation.pdf, Figure 2.2) shows that carbon emissions from transport in Surrey are rising for the last two years – after reducing from 2005, while across the rest of the UK they are falling. The Vision for Surrey appears to gloss over this reality and rather than report the current trend in its own report, describes Surrey's roads as getting Greener. In light of this, please confirm the amount of money that Surrey County Council spent last year to reduce emissions on Surrey's roads through a) spending to enhance Surrey's cycling infrastructure and b) additional investment to shift journeys from private to public transport.

Reply:

Surrey isn't bucking a national trend. Emissions from transport in both Surrey and nationally have increased in recent years referencing information from the *Committee on Climate Change – Reducing UK Emissions 2018 Progress Report to Parliament June 2018*.

Some of the information included within the draft Low Emissions Transport Strategy was referenced from this document and as set out in paragraphs 2.21 – 2.24 of the draft Low Emissions Transport Strategy, but none say the national trend is an overall reduction.

<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/reducing-uk-emissions-2018-progress-report-to-parliament/>

However, the county council recognises the pressing need to reduce emissions from the transport sector in order to support and tackle the health problems of poor air quality and to support sustainable economic development.

In considering the investment made to enhance Surrey's cycling infrastructure and the additional investment to shift journeys from private to public transport, it is important to understand that most projects will typically span more than one financial year. With that in mind, I can confirm that the investment made to enhance Surrey's cycling infrastructure amounts to £2.05m between 2017 and 2018, whilst the additional

investment to shift journeys from private to public transport amounts to £1.49m between 2017 and 2018.

DAVID HODGE, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

**9. MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:
(4th question)**

The Vision for Surrey 2030 Evidence base (agenda item 11 of this council meeting) shows a 33% increase in temporary accommodation use across Surrey over the past four years, and 111% increase in food bank use over the same period. This has corresponded to a strong increase in Surrey's average weekly earnings and disposable income. Together these demonstrate that there is a strong trend in increasing inequality in Surrey. In light of this please confirm what Surrey County Council is doing to address this increasing inequality and how this will be reflected in the level of resources allocated to support the 2030 Vision.

Reply:

The Community Vision for Surrey 2030 evidence base shows that Surrey remains a great place to live and work; with high and increasing earnings, a strong local economy, a growing and highly skilled population, falling unemployment, high performing schools, healthy living and long life expectancies. However, we know that some residents experience a poorer quality of life than their neighbours, and this isn't good enough. Inequality exists within Surrey and not everyone is able to share in the prosperity of the county. I would like to see this changed.

The evidence base demonstrates why Surrey needs a Vision for the future – to inspire people to work towards a common goal and address the inequality of opportunity that exists. Our council has an important role in achieving the ambitions within the vision, but the council cannot deliver this alone. This is a whole system challenge and the commitment and involvement of all partners and residents will be key to addressing it successfully.

We want to work with people and their communities to help break down the barriers they face and support them to access opportunities that will improve their quality of life. This means supporting the most vulnerable people in our communities, and those who do not have the means or resources to help themselves. Working with families and NHS partners, we will help children from disadvantaged backgrounds get the best start in life, and care for and protect vulnerable older people and people with a disability. Working with schools we will help equip young people with the skills and confidence to achieve their potential. Working with the Police and other agencies we will safeguard vulnerable children and young people and provide early help to identify and address problems for children before they escalate. Alongside district and borough councils we will have a role in the provision of housing for vulnerable and deprived residents, such as supported accommodation and social housing. And working with the voluntary, community and faith sector we will encourage communities to be inclusive and give them the help they need to support the vulnerable or those at risk of being left behind.

Positively through the engagement work on the Vision our partners have confirmed their commitment to address the inequality of opportunity that exists, be it in relation to health, education, employment or other aspects of life. It is especially important that our partnership work for Surrey's children is now being improved, with the Children and Young People's Partnership working to ensure children and young people have the best start to life.

As we take a greater focus on supporting the most vulnerable people and those who lack the means to help themselves, we will change as a council. We will allocate our resources with a greater focus on prevention and early intervention, improving organisational performance so that we are focused on achieving the outcomes that contribute towards the Vision. We will work more collaboratively in new and creative ways to meet the county's challenges, and support communities to take more responsibility for themselves.

Members of this council will see a new Organisation Strategy and a Preliminary Financial Strategy, at the next full council on Tuesday 13 November, where you will see how Surrey County Council intends to contribute towards achieving the Community Vision for Surrey.