

CABINET – 23 JUNE 2020**PROCEDURAL MATTERS****Members Questions****Question (1) Kay Hammond (Horley West, Salfords & Sidlow):**

How has the Covid-19 pandemic affected the Home to School Transport budget; and what challenges has the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Directorate faced when supporting SEND pupils during the Covid-19 pandemic?

Reply:

I would like to thank Mrs Hammond for her question and for providing me with an opportunity to address some of the impacts that the Covid-19 pandemic has had on our home to school transport service, as well as the specific challenges it brought in supporting our children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families

From the outset of the pandemic, we were worried about the impact of Covid-19 on our school transport sector, and significant work has gone into securing its sustainability. We have funded our taxi firms, who have lost school transport income, at 50% of the usual route costs where journeys are not required. This enabled the sector to survive economically and we were then able to divert their capacity to carry out deliveries of essential items such as PPE, food and medicine to vulnerable families. This has meant some one-off cost reductions on home to school transport in this financial year, although it is uncertain at this stage how significant that will be given social distancing measures that may be required as more children return to school.

There is no doubt that these past 12 weeks have been particularly testing for our children and young people with SEND and their families. Changes in daily routines and more restricted access to the community resources that they rely on have caused greater stress and anxiety for these children and their families.

Last month in my update to Cabinet, I shared some of the very good work that we have been doing to support SEND pupils – including accessible and clear information on the Local Offer, online mental health support for parents, therapies delivered to children virtually, and multi-agency virtual ‘team around the family’ meetings. In the first two weeks of lockdown, our SEND teams identified and risk assessed 10,000 of our SEND pupils. This was an unprecedented exercise, which included bringing together information and decision-making across the council, our education sector and health colleagues. For those children who could stay at home, safety plans were developed with the families, and for those who needed to remain in specialist settings, contingency plans were put in place should the setting need to close.

We have used innovation and technology to reach out to very many children with SEND and their families, turning a challenge into an opportunity.

I am pleased to say that, with the support of the Council, more and more children with SEND are now returning to school. This is based on an individual assessment of each child’s needs which ensures that it is safe for them to return. We are supporting all of our educational settings with guidance and advice on how to maintain social distance and control infection, and where needed to acquire protective equipment, to provide an environment that is safe for more of our children with SEND.

Mrs Julie Iles
Cabinet Member for All Age Learning
23 June 2020

Question (2) Jonathan Essex (Redhill East):

In light of Surrey County Council's bid for the initial (phase 1) funding of £1.6 million pounds and forthcoming £6.8 million of phase 2 emergency walking and cycling improvements funding bid to government please can you provide:

- a) a detailed breakdown of what is proposed across the county and how much each of these elements has been supported by government funding;
- b) details of how the public will be consulted to provide input to phase 2;
- c) confirmation of whether this will include School Street pilots timed for the full reopening of schools in September; and
- d) the process and timescale for both phases of works to be delivered.

Reply:

The County Council is committed to making active travel work where possible. The County Council applied for the first tranche of government funding earlier this month. At time of preparing this reply, confirmation has not been received but we made a strong case to receive the full £1.696m. But this delay has not stopped active travel schemes from being implemented, with measures already in place in Farnham, Godalming and works planned for Reigate later this month. The measures introduced will be reflective of the evidenced need and location. For Farnham Town Centre the focus has been on increasing the space available to pedestrians using some of the shopping areas (photos included below). The County Council will also be applying for tranche two government funding and any other sources such as the LEPs.

Since you last asked a question on this subject at full Council in May, Officers have been engaging with their colleagues in the District and Boroughs and Divisional Members to determine what are the key priorities. There have been many ideas from the general public and interest groups – the current total of suggestions is approximately 700. Not all of these will be feasible or desirable, but you will appreciate the scale of the task to ensure all are reviewed. Officers are currently working on developing robust prioritisation criteria. At this time we do not have an agreed detailed breakdown across the County. This is being developed.

We will endeavour to undertake proportionate consultation for tranche 2 and make sure that stakeholders have the option to contribute. We are keen to hear the views of our residents so an online tool is being introduced shortly that will enable residents to engage with us on developing proposals and ideas. School streets proposals will be considered as part of the wider range of options.

The timescale for tranche 1 is that works should start within 4 weeks of the government confirming funding and be completed in 8 weeks. The details for tranche 2 are yet to be confirmed. The County Council is committed to delivering these schemes as quickly as possible, but it is important to take the time needed to get the right solution.



Matt Furniss
Cabinet Member for Transport
23 June 2020

Question (3) Jonathan Essex (Redhill East):

Please can you provide an update of the work of youth workers during the Covid-19 lockdown, including detached youth work, and plans for reopening of youth centres and full support to young people as part of Surrey's recovery plan?

Reply:

Some youth workers have also been supporting the delivery of vital support for vulnerable young people at risk of family breakdown alongside the emergency duty team.

Support provided by the Targeted Youth Support Service and Safeguarding Adolescents Teams has continued during restrictions although in most cases this has been virtual using a variety of methods to engage young people both 1:1 and in virtual groups. The engagement methods have included use of telephone and video calls: young people have been very positive about the use of video calls and this is something we may continue where appropriate in the future. All requests for support made through the single point of access for young people have continued to be allocated to services throughout the restrictions.

The work to address the issues that contribute towards serious youth violence and exploitation has continued during the restrictions including how the use of technology can assist with ensuring progress continues to be made against the councils strategy regardless of Covid-19 restrictions.

The youth centres that also act as a location to support vulnerable learners are starting to return for that use only. The next phase of recovery will then enable provision that supports people to return to work such as breakfast and after school clubs. One of the youth centres is currently being used as foodbank for the local community.

All of the youth centres are being risk assessed using the current social distancing guidelines. The current guidelines would not enable multiple user groups, groups of people coming together (other than for education or childcare) or hot desking. As restrictions are eased this will be reviewed and where appropriate other services will resume.

We are also aware that the voluntary sector has where ever possible continued to support young people virtually and there are also examples of the voluntary sector working alongside the police to engage young people in the community.

The Universal Youth Offer consultation was extended until the end of June with a public webinar planned for the 24th June to replace the engagement events that had to be cancelled. To date more than 400 online questionnaires have been completed, 262 people attended engagement events and more 1200 young people took part in the 'Our Voice Matters' survey.

Whilst we are still operating in uncertain times and having to adapt to new ways of working, it is likely that the numbers of young people in need of support may increase in the coming months. We will continue to work with partners to identify potential trends and needs and adapt our approaches where necessary.

Mrs Mary Lewis
Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families
23 June 2020

Question (4) Jonathan Essex (Redhill East):

In line with government guidance I understand that the intention is for weekly testing of care workers working in care homes. Please can you confirm whether we also propose to carry out weekly testing of all care home residents (as previously proposed by government) and for care workers and residents in receipt of regular care visits in their own homes, including retirement complexes.

Reply:

Whole care home testing (including asymptomatic residents and staff) is accessed via the National Testing Portal and any adult care home is eligible to request testing through this route. The Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (SAGE) have advised that all care homes should be re-tested on a weekly basis. The national team are currently exploring testing capacity and developing the national re-testing policy, informed by the SAGE guidance. In instances of a new outbreak in a care home, Public Health England will request testing of symptomatic residents and further whole care home testing can be requested through the national portal.

Locally, we can support care homes to access the national testing offer through referral of priority care homes via the Director of Public Health, directly to the National Testing Portal and have been using local intelligence and data (both quantitative and qualitative) in order to prioritise care homes. As soon as we have a national steer on the policy for retesting, we will support care homes locally to access this via the national testing programme, as appropriate.

Mrs Sinead Mooney
Cabinet Member for Adults & Health
23 June 2020

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