

County Council Meeting – 7 July 2020

REPORT OF THE CABINET

The Cabinet met on 31 March, 28 April, 26 May and 23 June 2020. The 31 March meeting met as Leader Decisions with Cabinet Members (Acting as Cabinet).

In accordance with the Constitution, Members can ask questions of the appropriate Cabinet Member, seek clarification or make a statement on any of these issues without giving notice.

The minutes containing the individual decisions for the meetings above have been included within the original agenda at item 16. Any Cabinet responses to Committee reports are included in or appended to the minutes. If any Member wishes to raise a question or make a statement on any of the matters in the minutes, notice must be given to Democratic Services by 12 noon on the last working day before the County Council meeting (Monday 6 July 2020).

For members of the public all non-confidential reports are available on the web site (www.surreycc.gov.uk) or on request from Democratic Services.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON POLICY FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS

There were no reports with recommendations for Council.

REPORTS FOR INFORMATION / DISCUSSION

At its meeting on 31 March 2020 Leader Decisions with Cabinet Members (Acting as Cabinet) considered:

A. RETURNING THE COUNTRYSIDE TO RESIDENTS

This report set out a proposed new delivery model for Surrey County Council's Countryside Estate which returned the responsibility for property management, visitor services and access to the Council. Conservation and Habitat Management would still be managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust under a Deed of Variation to the current contract.

Cabinet AGREED:

1. That the variation of the agreement with Surrey Wildlife Trust (SWT) for the management of the Countryside Estate in accordance with the proposals detailed in the report, noting the cost implications outline in paragraphs 34-38 of the submitted report be agreed.
2. That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Environment, Transport and Infrastructure and the Executive Director for Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Safety, Fire & Resilience and the Cabinet Member for Finance to:
 - a) enter into final negotiations with Surrey Wildlife Trust and complete the variation to the agreement, including the surrender of Phase 1 and 2 leases and re-grant of lease.

- b) agree the implementation of transitional arrangements with Surrey Wildlife Trust for the management of Countryside Visitor Services and property management responsibilities pending completion of the variation.
- c) transfer the responsibilities for visitor services to Surrey County Council on the 1 April 2020 subject to 'call-in' arrangements.

Reasons for decision

Approval of the recommendations to implement changes to the agreement with SWT, improves its effectiveness and efficiency. SWT are fully supportive of the proposed changes as set out in this report. The countryside is a natural resource offering significant opportunities to support and benefit the health and wellbeing of residents.

B. DIGITAL STRATEGY 2025

This report set out the Council's ambition for digital over the next five years and the direction of the Digital Transformation Programme, including the prioritisation of activity and resource deployment. It formed part of a suite of strategies that directed the Council service design and delivery to achieve the objectives of the Organisation Strategy 2025. The Cabinet Member gave an update on the effects of COVID-19 in that the strategy was being accelerated, that the rollout of Windows 10 devices had been reprioritised to those in most urgent need.

Cabinet AGREED:

- 1. That the Digital Strategy 2025 be approved.
- 2. That the Digital Strategy 2025 sets the direction for the Digital Transformation Programme, ensuring that resources deployed on the programme are core contributors to the delivery of the strategy was noted.

Reasons for decision

To enable the Council to adopt a consistent approach and level of ambition to the use of digital technology, and to ensure that the Digital Transformation Programme contributes directly to the outcomes described in the Organisation Strategy 2025.

At its meeting on 28 April 2020 Cabinet considered:

C. SURREY CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

This report introduced the proposed Surrey's Climate Change Strategy that set out the intended approach to delivering its climate change ambitions over the next thirty years. It provided a joint framework for collaborative action across Surrey's 12 local authorities to reduce emissions to net zero between now and 2050. The Strategy specifically committed Surrey County Council to reducing carbon emissions from its own corporate estate to net zero by 2030. This target, although challenging, could be achieved as these emissions fall completely within the Council's control. Work on the delivery plan was underway. The strategy would have an impact on everyone who worked or travelled within the county and a major cultural shift was needed.

Cabinet AGREED:

1. That the Surrey's Climate Change Strategy be endorsed, and its associated actions approved.
2. That the continued development of the actions contained within the strategy to identify clear ownership, appropriate levels of funding and a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) by 2021 that can provide for robust monitoring be supported. Where required any respective projects and programmes will be brought back to Cabinet with costed delivery plans for approval.
3. That the continued engagement of the Council with boroughs and districts, with the intention of achieving joint endorsement across the 12 authorities be supported.
4. That further engagement of residents and key stakeholders with the Strategy and actions, so that collective action may be taken to achieve the outlined ambition be supported.
5. That the publication of our progress annually against our targets, with a complete review of the Strategy every five years be supported. Any minor changes outside this time frame will be approved by the leader in consultation with the borough and district authorities.
6. That the Select Committee recommendation to investigate mechanisms for joint oversight and monitoring of the Climate Change Strategy impact and delivery be supported.

Reasons for decision

Surrey's Climate Change Strategy enables us to deliver on Surrey's net zero carbon emissions ambition and build the resilience of our communities to the impacts of climate change.

The potential implications if we do nothing to address climate change in Surrey include increased risk of flooding and extreme heat, disruption to our critical infrastructure, networks and businesses, and increased risk to our health and wellbeing.

Not only will the implementation of the actions contained within the strategy help to reduce the potentially negative and far-ranging impacts of climate change, it will also have substantial co-benefits including improved health and wellbeing, e.g. from reductions in air pollution, the potential for job creation and investment in Surrey's green economy, and more local, sustainably produced food.

Further, baseline emissions research for Surrey, produced by researchers at Leeds University, has identified that there are a number of proven cost-effective and technically viable carbon reduction options that Surrey's local authorities could deliver in addition to the County Council's existing capital programme to reduce carbon emissions. These savings will be achieved across a range of stakeholders, from residents to businesses and public sector partners and could total £1.32 billion per annum by 2050 in savings on energy bills against a Business as Usual scenario (BAU).

Whilst the impacts of COVID19 on the County and the Government's response, including the facilitation of social distancing, will not change the ambition of the strategy, they will need to be considered against the actions identified to deliver the strategy.

D. NEW TREE STRATEGY

Cabinet considered the Council's New Tree Strategy which included the vision that 'by 2030 Surrey would benefit from 1.2 million new trees, with the right trees planted in the right places, including both urban and rural locations, and supported to grow to maturity'. This equated to one tree planted for each resident of Surrey. The first of the new trees in Surrey was planted on 5 October 2019 at the Surrey Hills Wood Fair. Many community organisations and borough & district councils had got involved and were identifying site for planting.

Cabinet AGREED:

1. That the New Tree Strategy be approved.
2. That the continued engagement with partners in order to develop a delivery plan which will support the strategy and our ambition to facilitate the planting of 1.2 million trees by 2030 be supported. This will be completed by September 2020 to align with the start of the tree planting period.
3. That engagement with partners to develop a wider Land Use Framework, to be completed by March 2021 be supported.

Reasons for decision

Implementation of the Strategy will result not only in reductions in carbon emissions, thereby helping to mitigate climate change, but it will also have numerous co-benefits for residents' health and wellbeing. Trees and woodland have been proven to be good for both our mental health by minimising anxiety and stress for those able to enjoy green spaces, and our physical health by improving air quality through the same carbon capture that makes them so beneficial to the mitigation of climate change.

In addition, trees play an important role in climate change adaptation by providing areas of shade in built up urban areas during heatwaves as well as providing a source of natural flood risk management. Increasing tree cover in the county will create biodiversity benefits and increased habitats, provided that the right trees are planted in the right places.

Finally, it is important to note that other types of natural capital also play an important role in sequestering CO2 and minimising the impacts of climate change. The proposed Land Use Framework will provide a mechanism that enables the Council and our partners to understand the condition and full potential and value of our natural environment, as well as how we can best support that environment.

At its meeting on 26 May 2020 Cabinet considered:

E. PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT (PRU) CAPITAL STRATEGY

Cabinet were informed how existing Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) provision within Surrey was made up of eight providers (across Primary and Secondary phase and including hospital-based provision) delivered across 14 different sites within Surrey. All providers are rated Good or Outstanding as at March 2020. PRU was an integral part of education. The PRU estate in Surrey was no longer fit for purpose and did not meet the Department for Education minimum standards or best practice guidance for alternative provision. The proposed capital strategy underpinned the development of a revised delivery model for the education provision for pupils attending PRUs, enabling the Local Authority to meet the current need and projected future demand of some of our most vulnerable learners.

Cabinet AGREED:

1. That the approach set out in the submitted report to provide appropriate Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) provision that adhered to the statutory requirements and accommodation guidelines for alternative provision to support our ambition for children and young people be noted.
2. That £1m to support the relocation of the Pewley Hill PRU be approved.
3. That £1m to carry out a feasibility study for long term accommodation requirements and inform a business case to be considered at Cabinet in the Autumn 2020 be approved.

Reasons for decision

The existing PRU estate was not fit for purpose and did not meet the needs of our most vulnerable learners. The recommendations sought to ensure that the PRU settings met the minimum Department for Education space standards, were informed by national guidance on alternative provision and were suitably located within communities to appropriately meet the needs of our vulnerable learners.

The recommendations would ensure urgent relocation of the Pewley Hill provision in the short term, (mitigating the poor condition of the current estate on the site), inform a business case to ensure that there were appropriate educational facilities in the long term, and address the wide range of pupil needs and flexibility required to manage fluctuations in pupil numbers throughout the year - including early intervention programmes to reduce exclusions.

At its meeting on 23 June 2020 Cabinet considered:

F. HOUSING INFRASTRUCTURE FUND FORWARD FUNDING - FUNDING ALLOCATION OF £41.8 MILLION TO THE A320 NORTH OF WOKING

Cabinet considered a report that explained how Surrey County Council (SCC) in conjunction with Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) submitted a bid to the HIF in March 2019 to facilitate the provision of 3,687 additional homes currently included within the Runnymede Local Plan. There were several risks currently with the project

that needed to be mitigated and which officers were working to resolve before SCC signed the Funding Agreement.

However, in the interim, there was a need to commence work on the project as early as possible, to ensure the project could be delivered to the required timetable. Approval was sought to incorporate the Scheme within the Council's capital delivery programme to allow preliminary design to be undertaken in the development of the scheme. A further report would be brought to Cabinet in September 2020 with recommendations on the signing of the Funding Agreement.

Cabinet AGREED:

1. That an appropriate and suitable design consultancy be appointed to undertake the preliminary design work, with an estimated cost of £0.73m incurred by Surrey County Council, in advance of a full funding agreement being entered into with the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.
2. That a further report be brought to Cabinet in September 2020 regarding progress with the terms and conditions of the funding agreement and to seek full approval for the scheme.
3. That authority be given to officers to commence early discussions with landowners with respect to the acquisition of third-party land, it being understood that this may need to progress to compulsory purchase where necessary, which would be subject to both the signing of the Funding Agreement by the Council and a further Cabinet Member resolution.

Reasons for decision

The decisions recommended will enable the early work to develop the project to commence in a way that will ensure that the project has the best opportunity to meet the challenging HIF spend timetable of March 2024. It will also enable some of the currently identifiable risks to be better understood and mitigated before Cabinet are asked for a decision for SCC to give full approval for the scheme and to sign the proposed funding agreement.

[The decisions on this item can be called in by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee]

G. RETHINKING WASTE - SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S WASTE COMMISSIONING STRATEGY

Cabinet considered a report that explained how the current Waste PFI contract with Suez provided for the treatment and disposal of all local authority collected waste arising within the county. That contract expired in September 2024, and Surrey County Council (SCC) needed to commission new service arrangements. In order to ensure that SCC commissioned an effective approach to the treatment of waste moving forward, it was proposed that a Waste Commissioning Strategy be developed to identify how to minimise the amount of residual waste treated, the infrastructure required, and options for delivering waste management system efficiencies with district and borough councils, to deliver the desired outcomes, the procurement process, and a timeframe.

Cabinet AGREED:

1. That the development of a Waste Commissioning Strategy be approved;
2. That the proposed outcomes for the Waste Commissioning Strategy be approved, to:
 - a) Meet Surrey County Council's Waste Disposal Authority (WDA) statutory duties.
 - b) Maximise the financial sustainability of waste management in Surrey.
 - c) Reduce the carbon impact of waste collection and disposal.
 - d) Maximise the integration of waste management in the county.
3. That the programme proposed for the development of the strategy and re-procurement of the waste disposal contract be approved; and
4. That the review of the variable elements of the funding mechanism through which the county council funds the Surrey Environment Partnership and the Waste Collection Authorities, within this programme, be approved.

Reasons for decision

The development of a Waste Commissioning Strategy as set out will enable the Council to fulfil its statutory obligations as a Waste Disposal Authority more effectively and will set a framework in which to work with partners and districts and boroughs in achieving a more efficient and financially sustainable approach to the management of waste in the county. Further, it will enable the Council to properly assess and identify ways of achieving the carbon reduction targets set out in the Council's recently adopted Climate Change Strategy.

[The decisions on this item can be called in by the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee]

H. QUARTERLY REPORT ON DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER SPECIAL URGENCY ARRANGEMENTS: 1 MARCH – 23 JUNE 2020

The Cabinet is required under the Constitution to report to Council on a quarterly basis the details of decisions taken by the Cabinet and Cabinet Members under the special urgency arrangements set out in Standing Order 57 of the Constitution. This occurs where a decision is required on a matter that is not contained within the Leader's Forward Plan (Notice of Decisions), nor available 5 clear days before the meeting. Where a decision on such matters could not reasonably be delayed, the agreement of the Chairman of the appropriate Select Committee, or in his/her absence the Chairman of the Council, must be sought to enable the decision to be made.

At its meeting on 31 March 2020 Cabinet considered:

a) URGENT ITEM - COVID-19 SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL RESPONSE TO COVID

This paper was presented under the General Exception Standing Order as it has not been possible to give 28 days' notice of decisions to be taken.

The Leader gave an overview of council's response to the Covid-19 situation and how the council with key organisations had come together to provide a co-ordinated effort to protect vulnerable residents and give reassurance to all residents. This update is now a standing item on Cabinet forward plan. Cabinet are also informed of officer delegated decisions in relation to COVID-19.

Cabinet AGREED:

1. That the latest public health situation with regard to COVID-19 and Surrey's response and the impact on Surrey's residents and the Council be noted.
2. That the changes to Local Authority powers and duties introduced by the Coronavirus Act be noted and that authority be delegated to the relevant Executive Director in consultation with the relevant Cabinet member to amend service provision in accordance with the Council's statutory duties as these may be varied by the Act, regulations and guidance made thereunder be noted.
3. That the initial assessment of the impact on Surrey County Council's short and medium-term financial position be noted.
4. That the development of a COVID-19 package of support for key suppliers and service providers and the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector in Surrey, delegating authority to the Executive Director of Resources and Executive Director of Transformation, Prosperity and Partnerships in consultation with the Leader to determine the detail of the scheme was approved.
5. That the reprioritisation of services and transformation programmes due to the impact of COVID-19, acknowledging it was a fast-changing situation that would require regular review of priorities be agreed.
6. That the establishment of economic stimulus measures for businesses to support their survival and recovery from COVID-19, delegating authority to the Executive Director of Resources and Executive Director of Transformation, Prosperity and Partnerships in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance to determine the detail of the scheme be agreed.

Reason for decision:

We are facing unprecedented challenges due to the COVID-19 emergency and therefore need to supplement our established goals and ambitions for Surrey and its communities, as outlined in the Community Vision 2030, with very clear immediate priority objectives, to: delay the spread of the virus in Surrey and save lives, protect our most vulnerable residents and communities and support colleagues in health to ensure that we reduce pressure on the health system.

These will guide our decisions, both at a strategic level as we regularly re-prioritise services and redirect our staff and resources, and at an individual level as we make important choices day-by-day. The recommendations set out in this report will enable us to do this and provide the best services and support to our communities through the emergency and recovery phases.

B) COMMERCIAL PROGRAMME (WASTE) UPDATE

This Part 2 paper was presented under the General Exception Standing Order as it has not been possible to give 28 days' notice of decisions to be taken. The Chairman of the Communities, Environment & Highways Select Committee was notified as this did not appear on the Leader's Forward Plan.

Cabinet AGREED:

That this Part 2 report contained information which was exempt from Access to Information requirements by virtue of paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including commercially sensitive information to the bidding companies).

See [Exempt Minute E-2-20].

Reason for decision:

See [Exempt Minute E-2-20].

The Cabinet RECOMMENDS that the County Council notes that there has been TWO urgent decisions in the last four months.

**Mr Tim Oliver, Leader of the Council
7 July 2020**

This page is intentionally left blank