

CABINET – 27 SEPTEMBER 2022**PROCEDURAL MATTERS****Members Questions****Question (1) Hazel Watson- Dorking Hills**

The Surrey County Council website section on Adult Education has details of courses in Camberley, Esher, Farnham, Guildford, Molesey, Sunbury and Woking – all of which are in the west and north of the County. There is no mention of any courses in the east of the county where, in around 2010, the County Council gave the funding, operational and strategic responsibility for adult learning to East Surrey College.

Furthermore, there has been a higher focus on core skills (English and Maths), Digital, Employability skills, Personal development and Wellbeing including courses to promote good mental health and ESOL in the courses provided by East Surrey College whilst these courses are provided alongside the more traditional courses such as foreign languages and art related courses by the County Council in West Surrey.

As the courses provided by East Surrey College are run on behalf of the County Council, can an explanation be given as to why East Surrey College is only listed on the website as one of a number of “colleges and universities” in Surrey, why the Adult Education courses that they provide are not detailed on the County Council website, and why places on these courses cannot be booked via the County Council website when the courses in West and North Surrey can be booked via the County Council website?

In addition, will a commitment be made to list all the Adult Education courses at East Surrey College that are provided for on behalf of the County Council on the County Council website by December 2022 with links from the County Council website to facilitate the easy booking of these courses?

The need to “Level Up” applies across Surrey as well as the Regions of the United Kingdom as the Leader of the County Council has stated when making the County Council’s submission for a unitary Surrey. It is never too early to start levelling up across the County and will a further commitment be given to enable all residents in Surrey to have equal access to all courses, including language and art related courses, close to where they live by the Spring Term 2023?

Reply:

Surrey County Council through Surrey Adult Learning works in close partnership with East Surrey College to ensure our adult learning funding and curriculum offer meets the needs of Surrey adult learners.

Adult learning is funded through the Adult Education Budget which is administered and accessed from the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) who are part of the

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Department for Education. The ESFA provide funding to Surrey Adult Learning for the west and north of the county and to East Surrey College for the rest of the county. The adult learning provision at East Surrey College is not directly or indirectly delivered on Surrey County Council's behalf nor are we involved in East Surrey College's marketing or communication operations; that is evaluated and monitored by the ESFA as the funding body.

However, we have recognised that we do need to provide a link on our website to the East Surrey College curriculum offer to support all learners in the County. We meet regularly with the senior team at East Surrey College and collaborate on programmes or projects to assist learners across the county. For instance, we have supported each other's English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision to meet the immediate and short term needs of Ukrainian refugees who want to learn English to access work. We appreciate this is a confusing picture and are working with East Surrey College to make it clearer and more cohesive.

We view adult learning as a vital component of the levelling up agenda. It is often the first step of learning for many adults as they progress towards improving their mental health, achieving the job of their dreams, developing their community involvement, and simply learning to improve their knowledge and wisdom. It has a primary role in the levelling up agenda for the Surrey community and it aims to provide high quality, inclusive and inspirational learning.

The focus on core skills is driven by DfE policy and legislation. The Post 16 and Skills Act 2021 and recent changes to the Adult Education Budget funding criteria give extra weight to job outcomes and further training that leads to a more sustainable job. It is imperative in Surrey to ensure we have the right mix and balance of community learning provision such as modern foreign languages and arts and crafts with adult skills provision such as English and Maths GCSEs, digital entitlement and learning English as another language.

Clare Curran
Cabinet Member for Education and Learning
27 September 2022

Question (2) Angela Goodwin – Guildford South West

Recent reports suggest that the war in Ukraine has led to a shortage of essential materials, pushing up costs and delaying highway repairs.

Would the Cabinet Member confirm the extent to which works in Surrey are being affected and explain what the council is doing to mitigate the resulting impact on highway budgets and work schedules.

Reply:

Whilst there may be some isolated examples over recent months relating to particular specialist products, for example those related to activities such as Traffic Signals or Structures, the Council has not generally experienced any shortages of materials in delivering highway maintenance activities. In order to mitigate impacts on our programmes, officers have been working with our key contractors to ensure that we

have robust and varied supply chains in place for specialist activities. Furthermore, officers are ensuring that they take a long term view when planning schemes so that any schemes that have items with longer than usual lead in times for delivery are programmed to give sufficient time for materials and equipment to be available.

Prices have however been affected with increases in some highway sectors as high as 20% or more since January and this is particularly prevalent in surfacing activities where the oil prices and availability of bitumen have a significant impact on the end products in the form of asphalt. The Council has taken a pragmatic approach to how it manages these increases by paying the actual price each month as work is carried out rather than agreeing an inflated rate for the whole year which could result in overpaying when prices start to stabilise and reduce.

By implementing an “actual price” approach the Council has been able to secure the resource and supply chain to continue to deliver the programme of work without the risk of overpaying as a result of the hyperinflation being experienced in the sector.

With all of our highways programmes of work, officers carefully review and consider the works programmes and costs provided at the planning stage and work with our contractors to challenge material choices and design options to ensure the best value for money is achieved for all highway activities.

Kevin Deanus
Cabinet Member for Highways and Community Resilience
27 September 2022

Question (3) Catherine Baart – Earlswood and Reigate South

- a) Please can you confirm how many Surrey children are either waiting for a decision on transport provision or organisation of agreed transport from the Home School transport team?

How many children are currently not attending school as a result?

- b) Please can you confirm what the latest situation is with regard to provision of school places for this current academic year. Have all children now been awarded school places, and if not how many of these are Ukrainian refugees?

Reply:

- a) There are 525 applications waiting to hear the outcome of their application for transport provision, the longest outstanding application was received in the 2nd week in August. As of 23 September, 149 are awaiting transport provision, but these figures are currently changing on a daily basis as applications are assessed and travel assistance provision is assigned to those waiting for their arrangements. A small number of these are those who have been successful in their appeal, but the majority are new approved applications.

No child should be missing their education while they wait for a decision on transport provision or agreed transport to be organised. It is the school's responsibility to ensure that the child continues to receive education. We

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expect the school to work with a family on the best means of delivering education, which could include remotely, during this interval. Schools are well-practised in delivering remote education as a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

- b) Surrey has one of the largest school-aged populations in the country at 199,000 children. In the state-funded sector, there are 298 primary schools, 57 secondary schools, 25 specialist schools and 13 colleges. Approximately half of our schools are academies, with the remaining half maintained by the local authority. Data released by the Department for Education in August also confirmed that Surrey has the largest number of children in the country who have arrived from Ukraine. Between 1 March and 31 August, 935 Ukrainian children and young people aged between 2 and 18 years have been accommodated in Surrey.

Within this context, our School Admissions team coordinated just over 29,000 applications for children who started in Reception, Junior or Secondary school in September 2022, known as Key Stage Transfers (KST); all received an offer on the primary and secondary national offer days in the spring. We also processed a further 1,500 late KST up to the end of August 2022.

Added to this, since the start of July, our School Admissions Team have processed in excess of 1,600 in-year applications. This is an unprecedented demand, due largely to new arrivals in Surrey, many from abroad not only from Ukraine, but also Hong Kong and Afghanistan. All applications received to the end of August 2022 have now been processed.

Our School Admissions team are currently processing the 140 children who have applications outstanding that were submitted during September 2022, and we expect to have achieved this within the 15 school days recommended by the Department for Education. All applications from vulnerable learners, including children recently arrived from Ukraine, are escalated to ensure these are processed as quickly as possible.

Clare Curran
Cabinet Member for Education and Learning
27 September 2022

Question (4) Catherine Baart – Earlswood and Reigate South

Southdown Buses has suspended parts of its service in Reigate and Horley because the road surface on a number of roads is of such a poor quality it is causing damage to its buses. Given the new priorities of road users introduced by the new Local Transport Plan (LTP4), please can you advise the frequency of monitoring of road surfaces on bus routes, and whether this is changing with the introduction of the LTP4. Is there a specific central fund to ensure roads are bus routes are maintained to the required standard? What more is being done to avoid suspension/re-routing of other bus routes in Surrey due to road maintenance defects?

Reply:

The current Highway [hierarchy](#) includes consideration of regular/busy bus routes and the roads in question are categorised as 4a according to our Surrey Priority Network rating. 4a category roads are subject to [safety inspections](#) every 3 months and any safety defects identified during the inspection will then be scheduled for repair. Officers have confirmed that the inspection and repair of any safety defects has been carried out on these roads as expected.

Officers are reviewing a range of highway policies following the introduction of LTP4 to determine any changes that should be made to align them with the aspirations of LTP4. This review is ongoing and will include how public transport and active travel assets are inspected and maintained.

There is no specific central fund to ensure that bus routes are maintained, however the Surrey Priority Network rating is included as a prioritisation category within the Highway [Prioritisation Criteria](#) and therefore when determining our Horizon programme of road maintenance, a bus route would receive a higher score than a road of similar condition and priority which was not part of a bus route.

All of the roads on the bus routes that have been affected have been reviewed and where required maintenance works are being planned. Resurfacing of Holly Road is planned for October 2022, Hornbeam Road and Blackthorne Road will receive patching works where needed in the coming months and Upfield and Cheyne Walk are being assessed for any required patching works.

The course of action from the bus operator to alter routes is highly irregular and unfortunately has negatively impacted on the service provided to residents on this occasion. Officers continue to have regular engagement with bus operators and encourage the reporting of road maintenance issues as early as possible to enable further assessment and remedial works to be planned where this is considered necessary.

Matt Furniss

Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth

27 September 2022

Question (5) Catherine Baart – Earlswood and Reigate South

Felling of trees at the former Friends Provident site at Pixham Lane, Dorking, may have increased the value of this site, which is part of the Surrey County Council's property investment vehicle. As this site is being disposed of by Surrey County Council, please provide details of the latest site valuation and confirm what increase in value is anticipated for the site?

Reply:

Unconditional contracts have already been exchanged to sell the whole campus, therefore any increase or decrease in the value of the site after exchange is not a consideration in relation to the disposal. The trees which were removed did not

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have Tree Protection Orders at the exchange date, therefore the purchaser is likely to have considered this to be developable area, therefore the full value for the site has already been secured.

The sale price of the site is commercially sensitive (Part 2 exempt) but this can be provided to Cllr Baart separately and in confidence.

Natalie Bramhall
Cabinet Member for Property and Waste
27 September 2022

Question (6) Jonathan Essex – Redhill East

How has the transport modelling required by Surrey County Council changed as a result of the approval of the new Local Transport Plan (LTP4), including that commissioned to inform the design of road infrastructure improvements? In particular, how is the carbon impact of investments in the road transport now modelled? To what extent is transport modelling now required to quantify how investments prioritise public transport, in accordance with the changed hierarchy of road users, detailed in LTP4?

Reply:

Transport modelling methodology is governed by the Transport Analysis Guidance (TAG) issued by the Department for Transport, which includes how carbon impacts are measured: therefore, the modelling approach remains unchanged by LTP4. SCC's county transport model conforms to this guidance and allows us to quantify the effects of implementing measures and deliberate different scenarios. Consequently, the modelling is an informative tool to help consider which interventions may be best to achieve SCC's LTP4 ambitions, including changes in carbon emissions and choice of travel.

Matt Furniss
Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth
27 September 2022

Question (7) Lance Spencer – Goldsworth East and Horsell Village

The Lakers Centre site in Goldsworth Park, Woking had been empty for a number of years after a fire, before being demolished earlier this year. Can the Cabinet Member give an update on what the site is going to be used for, when a decision will be made, and whether there will be any community consultation before final decisions are implemented on its eventual use.

Reply:

The Lakers Centre site has been identified by the Council's Adult Social Care service for potential development as a site for Short Breaks (respite care). A business case is being prepared which is expected to go to Cabinet by the end of 2022. A Stakeholder Community Involvement exercise will take place as part of the

overall planning process to make residents aware of the plans and give them the opportunity to comment and raise questions.

Natalie Bramhall
Cabinet Member for Property and Waste
27 September 2022

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Question (8) Lance Spencer – Goldsworth East and Horsell Village

Part of the Greener Futures Delivery Plan it was envisaged that a number of solar farms would be deployed across Surrey to meet the needs of the council in reducing the energy costs, and potentially generating income for sales of spare capacity.

As the cost of energy has risen dramatically since these plans were envisaged, and hence the business case must have improved dramatically what plans does the council have to expedite the roll out of the solar farms and further solar panel installations on council owned land and properties.

Reply:

Councillor Spencer is correct that the business case for the installation of solar has improved due to the increase in the cost of electricity, despite the additional significant increases in materials and labour for solar PV as well as other measures.

The Council remains committed to installing solar PV on council owned land and properties in order to meet our 2030 net zero carbon target, reduce the Council's corporate electricity expenditure and to generate income where possible which can be used to fund more costly decarbonisation measures and provide additional income for the Council.

The Council recently installed PV on 5 buildings with funding from Governments Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS), this included the installation of a 100kWp solar canopy at Quadrant Court and 4 solar rooftops with a total installed capacity of 176kWp. A second 100kWp solar canopy has been granted planning permission for Woodhatch and will be installed before the end of the year.

The Council has been working with consultants to identify the Council owned land most suited for solar farms. Initially 64 suitable sites were identified, these sites have been shortlisted and are being assessed for suitability by the District Network Operator (DNO) and Planning. Once this exercise has been completed the three most suitable sites will be taken forward for design and the development of a business case. Other potential sites will be considered in later phases. The Council plans to install a minimum of 30MWp of solar capacity in solar farms by 2030.

In addition to the ground mounted solar arrays the Council is also moving forward will roof mounted solar. We are currently working on the procurement of solar rooftops or carports in 13 SCC buildings and 5 schools, with the expectation that

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installation will be completed in mid-2023. Additionally, we are currently developing a specification for a turnkey solar installer to design and install solar PV on a 30 further rooftops. Additional solar installation will be incorporated into the scope of Project Indigo, the outsourcing of FM services, which will enable future tranches of buildings and schools to receive solar PV.

In addition to council owned land, the Council's recent Solar Together scheme resulted in the installation of 5.6MW solar on domestic rooftops across the county in just over a year, mobilising around £8m in private investment. This equates to approximately 50% of Surrey's total domestic installed PV capacity. The Council is preparing for future schemes to enable households to access subsidised solar PV.

The intention is to look at how we can expand our solar PV programme beyond what we have already factored in. This will include: a policy of all SCC buildings having solar PV where appropriate if we are not selling them; exploring at scale bulk schemes and financing for schools and potential joint investment or financing schemes for projects with other buildings/land owners including other local authorities/parishes, businesses, business parks, farms and community buildings.

Marisa Heath
Cabinet Member for Environment
27 September 2022

Question (9) Lance Spencer – Goldsworth East and Horsell Village

Can the Cabinet Member state how many cases are now waiting to be reviewed by the Home to School Appeals Panel, and how many were outstanding at the start of the new term. What is the average wait time from appeal request to appeal being heard by the Panel and how old is the oldest appeal request.

Reply:

There are currently 138 outstanding Stage 1 appeals (Pre 16 and Post 16 eligibility). 106 appeals had been submitted before the start of term. There are 14 outstanding stage two appeals. We aim to hear all outstanding stage one appeals by the 30 September with outcomes issued to parents and carers. All parents affected have been notified of this deadline.

Based on the 250+ appeals received in 2022 the average waiting time is between 15-60 working days. Some appeals have taken a lot longer to consider, whereas some have been considered within 5-10 working days. Factors impacting on timeframe include at what point during the academic year an appeal is submitted, as we receive a higher number in the spring and summer terms.

The earliest appeal request is from June 2022. National Guidance advises that stage one appeals should be considered within 20 working days, although in some cases where a case is complex, this deadline may be extended. We also advise that appeal deadlines may be extended during very busy periods.

Clare Curran
Cabinet Member for Education and Learning

27 September 2022

Question (10) Lance Spencer – Goldsworth East and Horsell Village

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There are a number of children who should be attending school but who unfortunately are not able to because of Emotionally Based School Non Attendance. Can the Cabinet Member state how many children fall into this category across Surrey and whether the number of children has increased since the Covid issues.

Reply:

We know that the emotional and mental health needs among young people in Surrey have been exacerbated by both the pandemic and the impacts of social media. This is a national issue.

Our response in Surrey has been both proactive and multi-agency, reflecting the complexity of the factors that influence whether a child feels able to attend school. A recent Family Voice survey (our Parent Carer Forum) indicated that even highly anxious children can attend school with the right support. Mindworks, our mental health provider for children, has developed a specific school-based service which we have supplemented with Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) training for schools. Our Educational Psychology Service has developed a range of resources and tools to support children with anxiety and mental health needs who are or are at risk of avoiding school. These provide strategies that schools can use to re-engage children back into education.

We have also established an innovative multi-agency working group to lead our response to children experiencing EBSNA. It is made up of representatives from schools, support services, Third Sector organisations, Health, Early Help and Children Service. The group has mapped services against levels of need and provides schools with a Directory of services which can offer support to children experiencing EBSNA. It has provided good practice examples of interventions which have successfully supported children and young people experiencing EBSNA. It also ensures services regularly check in with parents and children who are experiencing EBSNA to know if we are making a difference.

There is no national definition of 'EBSNA' and DfE does not require schools to identify if a child is absent for emotionally based reasons. From our and our partners' experience, EBSNA can cover a range of behaviours and needs – from those who are on a Neuro-developmental pathway (this can mean the identification and assessment of additional needs linked to ASD or ADHD) to children who have suffered trauma. Defining whether a child or young person is experiencing EBSNA can often be subjective. One of the aims of the multi-agency group is developing a better definition of EBSNA and a recording mechanism across services to identify the numbers of children experiencing EBSNA.

We have experienced a 28% increase in referrals from schools for non-attendance since September 2021, over the last academic year. This is an addition of 500 referrals over the previous 2020/21 academic year. At the end of the Academic

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Year the Inclusion Service were actively working with 1805 families. We have also experienced an increase in referrals to our Access to Education service from schools citing 'child or young person being unfit to attend school.' Access to Education are working with 46 children who are currently medically unfit to attend school, the majority are CYP experiencing EBSNA.

Regardless of whether a child is identified as EBSNA, support such as that described above is available. We also provide support to the families of children who are electively home educated, which may be a consequence of EBSNA. Surrey, like many other areas, did experience an increase in the numbers of children and young people being withdrawn from school to be Electively Home Educated during the pandemic. This trend has now slowed down and there is evidence to suggest children are returning to school; 245 children returned to a school roll in academic year 2021/22.

Clare Curran
Cabinet Member for Education and Learning
27 September 2022