

County Council Meeting – 6 February 2024

REPORT OF THE CABINET

The Cabinet met on 11 December 2023, 19 December 2023 and 30 January 2024.

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 12. 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 5 February 2024).

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
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**A. 2024/25 FINAL BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO 2028/29 (as set out in the Cabinet report from 30 January 2024)
[Item 5 on this agenda]**

It was AGREED:

That Cabinet makes the following recommendations to Council on 6 February 2024.

Cabinet recommends that County Council:

1. Approves the net revenue budget requirement be set at **£1,197.1 million** (net cost of services after service specific government grants) for 2024/25 (Annex B), subject to confirmation of the Final Local Government Financial Settlement.
2. Approves the total Council Tax Funding Requirement be set at **£914.9 million** for 2024/25. This is based on a council tax increase of 4.99%, made up of an increase in the level of core council tax of 2.99% and an increase of 2% in the precept proposed by Central Government to cover the growing cost of Adult Social Care (Annex E).
3. Notes that for the purpose of section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council formally determines that the increase in core council tax is not such as to trigger a referendum (i.e. not greater than 3%).
4. Sets the Surrey County Council precept for Band D Council Tax at £1,758.60, which represents a 4.99% uplift. This is a rise of £1.61 a week from the 2023/24 precept of £1,675.08. This includes £251.44 for the Adult Social Care precept, which has increased by £33.50. A full list of bands is as follows:

Valuation band	Core precept	ASC precept	Overall precept
A	£ 1,004.77	£ 167.63	£ 1,172.40
B	£ 1,172.24	£ 195.56	£ 1,367.80
C	£ 1,339.70	£ 223.50	£ 1,563.20
D	£ 1,507.16	£ 251.44	£ 1,758.60
E	£ 1,842.08	£ 307.32	£ 2,149.40
F	£ 2,177.01	£ 363.19	£ 2,540.20
G	£ 2,511.93	£ 419.07	£ 2,931.00
H	£ 3,014.32	£ 502.88	£ 3,517.20

5. Approves the use of £5m of earmarked reserves, to enable additional targeted preventative and early intervention investment in the event that the Final Local Government Finance Settlement does not provide any additional funding to that contained in the provisional settlement (paragraph 6).
6. Notes that underlying General Fund Balances are projected to remain at £49 million as of 1 April 2024.
7. Approves the Total Schools Budget of £656.7 million to meet the Council's statutory requirement on schools funding (as set out in Section 9 of the 2024/25 Final Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2028/29).
8. Approves the overall indicative Budget Envelopes for Directorates and individual services for the 2024/25 budget (Annex B).
9. Approves the total £1,902.4 million proposed five-year Capital Programme (comprising £1,291.3 million of budget and £611.1 million pipeline) and approves the £404.9 million Capital Budget in 2024/25 (Annex C).
10. Approves the Capital and Investment Strategy (Annex F - Sections 1 to 3), which provides an overview of how risks associated with capital expenditure, financing and treasury will be managed as well as how they contribute towards the delivery of services.
11. Approves the policy for making a prudent level of revenue provision for the repayment of debt - the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy (Annex G).
12. Notes that the investment in Transformation required to deliver improved outcomes and financial benefits is built into the proposed Medium-Term Financial Strategy (as set out in section 3 of 2024/25 Final Budget Report and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2028/29).
13. Cabinet notes that the Audit & Governance Committee has approved the following at its meeting on the 17 January 2024: Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators (Annex F – Section 4) which set a framework for the Council's treasury function to manage risks, source borrowing and invest surplus cash.

Reasons for Decisions:

Council will meet on 6 February 2024 to agree a budget and to set the Council Tax Precept for 2024/25. Cabinet is required to recommend a budget to Council for consideration at this meeting. The budget directs available resources to support the

achievement of the Council's ambitions and priorities in the 2030 Vision and the Refreshed Organisation Strategy.

The budget will also support the delivery of the continuing transformational changes that are required to ensure that the Council can improve priority outcomes for residents, while managing growing demand for services and ensuring future financial sustainability.

B. ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR SURREY'S COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS FOR SEPTEMBER 2025 (as set out in the Cabinet report from 30 January 2024)

It was AGREED:

That Cabinet makes the following recommendations to Council on 6 February 2024.

Cabinet recommends that Council approves:

1. The admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools, including the Published Admission Numbers (PANs), for September 2025 as set out in Annex 1 and its appendices.

Reasons for Decisions:

- The local authority has a duty to determine the admission arrangements for all community and voluntary controlled schools by 28 February 2024
- The admission arrangements are working well
- The arrangements enable the majority of pupils to attend a local school and in doing so reduce travel and support Surrey's sustainability policies
- The changes highlighted in bold red text in Sections 10, 11, 14 and 19 of Annex 1 have been made to add clarity to the arrangements and reflect existing practice
- The arrangements remain as they were determined for 2024, which enables parents to have some historical benchmark by which to make informed decisions about their school preferences for 2025 admission
- The arrangements are compliant with the School Admissions Code

REPORTS FOR INFORMATION / DISCUSSION

At its meeting on 11 December 2023 Cabinet considered:

C. LOCAL AREA SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND/OR DISABILITIES (SEND) INSPECTION OUTCOME AND ACTIONS

The purpose of this report was to share the outcome of the Local Area SEND Inspection and to outline the actions to be taken by the Additional Needs and Disabilities (AND) Partnership in response to the inspection recommendations.

It was AGREED:

1. That Cabinet notes the outcome of the Local Area SEND Inspection.
2. That Cabinet supports the actions that are being taken by the Additional Needs and Disabilities Partnership in response to the inspection recommendations.
3. That Cabinet oversees the Council's work as part of the AND Partnership and its delivery of the Inclusion and Additional Needs Strategy.

Reasons for decisions:

The Local Area arrangements to support children with additional needs and disabilities were inspected by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) from 11 to 29 September 2023. [The outcome of the inspection](#) was published on 24 November 2023.

The inspection outcome is that the local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Ofsted and CQC require the local area partnership to work jointly to update its existing strategic plan based on the recommendations set out in the [inspection report](#). The recommendations and proposed responses are set out in this report.

At its meeting on 19 December 2023 Cabinet considered:

D. SPECIAL GUARDIAN AND FOSTER CARE REMUNERATION

Cabinet was asked to agree increased remuneration to Special Guardians who are caring for children under a Special Guardianship Order and are eligible for financial support under Surrey County Council's policy.

It was AGREED:

1. That Cabinet agrees, as per statutory guidance, to match Special Guardian allowances to those of foster carers, subject to the means test and Surrey County Council Allowance policy.
2. That Cabinet considers the request to back-date the improved remuneration package to 1 April 2023.

Reasons for decisions:

To bring the current Special Guardianship allowances in line with statutory guidance.

E. A NEW DRAFT VISION ZERO ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY AND 20 MPH SPEED LIMIT POLICY

A new Surrey RoadSafe Partnership Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy had been drafted with the aim to help reduce death and injury on our roads in collaboration with Surrey Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service and National Highways. Cabinet was asked to endorse the new Surrey RoadSafe Partnership Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy.

It was AGREED:

1. That Cabinet welcome the new draft Surrey RoadSafe Partnership Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy and the collaborative work of Council Officers, Surrey Police, The Police and Crime Commissioner, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, and National Highways that has produced the draft document.
2. That Cabinet agree that a public and stakeholder consultation on the draft strategy, inclusive of a new 20 mph speed limit policy, be held commencing in January 2024 and running for 10 weeks to mid-March 2024.
3. That Cabinet agree that the results of the public and stakeholder consultation, along with any proposed changes to the strategy and 20 mph speed limit policy, be brought back to Cabinet in Spring 2024 for final approval.

Reasons for decisions:

A new Surrey RoadSafe Partnership Vision Zero Road Safety Strategy, incorporating a new 20mph policy, based on best practice is crucial to reducing road death and injury throughout Surrey.

F. ACQUISITION OF CORPORATE OFFICE HUB IN NORTHWEST SURREY

This report was seeking Cabinet approval for Surrey County Council to acquire the freehold interest in a new corporate office building in Woking as the Hub for the north-west quadrant of Surrey.

It was AGREED:

1. That Cabinet approves the acquisition of the freehold interest in a corporate office building in Woking subject to the terms set out in the Part 2 report. The required capital investment to purchase the property and its details are commercially sensitive at this time and are set out in the Part 2 report.
2. That Cabinet approves procurement of appropriate supply chain partners to deliver design and fit out of the new corporate office space in accordance with the Council's Procurement and Contract Standing Orders.
3. That Cabinet grants delegated authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and the Director of Land and Property in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to (i) conclude the acquisition terms to purchase the corporate office building, (ii) undertake procurement and associated contract awards and (iii) provide approval to enter into required legal documentation as necessary to complete the purchase and fit out works.
4. That Cabinet notes that, regarding the procurement of supply chain partners, the Executive Director for Resources and the Director of Land and Property are authorised to award such contracts up to +10% of the budgetary tolerance level.

Reasons for decisions:

Following the continued success of the Council's Agile Office Estate (AOE) strategy over the last two years, the purchase of the recommended property is the next step in the AOE programme.

As outlined in the Agile Office Estate – North-West and South-West Corporate Office Workspace report (the December 2022 report), the medium to long term costs for the Council to remain in Quadrant Court represent a financial risk to the

Council. Quadrant Court would require a high level of investment to achieve desired standards for Services to be delivered in the best way for residents and meet our net zero targets by 2030.

Approving the recommendations in this report will allow the Council to continue its programme of rationalising its corporate estate, drive efficiencies, reduce the Council's carbon footprint, and deliver Services from a modern, agile environment which will better serve residents and employees. Services will be delivered from a central location in Woking, the preferred area in north-west Surrey. The property has good access to public transport and carparking.

At its meeting on 30 January 2024 Cabinet considered:

G. STRATEGIC INVESTMENT BOARD ANNUAL REPORT - FINANCIAL YEAR 2022/23

The Council has a statutory duty to set a balanced budget in advance of each financial year. The report and the 2024/25 Draft Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2028/29 set out progress towards delivering a balanced budget.

It was AGREED:

1. That Cabinet endorses the Annual Report of the Strategic Investment Board.

Reasons for decisions:

- To inform the Council about the activities of the Strategic Investment Board
- The Strategic Investment Board has been established in accordance with best practice governance to ensure effective oversight and alignment with the strategic objectives and values of the Council.

H. QUARTERLY REPORT ON DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER SPECIAL URGENCY ARRANGEMENTS: 5 December 2023 – 2 February 2024

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.

The Cabinet RECOMMENDS that the County Council notes that there have been NO urgent decisions since the last Cabinet report to Council.

**Tim Oliver, Leader of the Council
2 February 2024**