

**MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL****TUESDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2024****QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED UNDER THE PROVISIONS  
OF STANDING ORDER 10.1****MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND  
ECONOMIC GROWTH****1. JOANNE SEXTON (ASHFORD) TO ASK:**

I was contacted recently by the construction firm JCB with regard to a new machine, the JCB Pothole Pro, which the company claims can fix a pothole in just eight minutes at half the cost of current methods. JCB offers a pilot scheme which would enable Surrey County Council to test out the new technology. The company states that one local authority has been able to complete seven years' worth of road repairs in just one year. JCB will be holding a webinar on Thursday 29 February to demonstrate their new innovation. Although Surrey was allocated an extra £3.7m for potholes in the budget in March 2023, the costs of these repairs is enormous.

Is the Cabinet Member aware of this new technology, and are there any plans for Surrey County Council to take part in a JCB pilot scheme which may help to tackle the scourge of potholes blighting our roads?

**RESPONSE:**

Surrey County Council undertook a trial of the JCB Pothole Pro in 2023. This followed trials of other similar technologies such as RoadMender and Multihog. We trialled the technologies as "larger patch" fixes rather than using them for individual pothole fixes.

Each trial we undertake is evaluated by our Highways Laboratory who look at the quality of repairs and our contractor who reviews the productivity and cost benefit of new technologies. At this time, they felt that the machinery does not provide sufficient improvements in terms of quality, productivity or cost savings compared to the methods we are currently using. We do not believe that these types of technologies are suitable for general pothole repairs in Surrey due to the size of the county and the distances between repairs that the machinery would have to travel in order for us to fix potholes within our agreed timescales.

I am pleased to say that we are seeing a much lower number of potholes this winter compared to last year. We continue to look at new materials, equipment, and processes to enable us to improve our reactive highways service. Improvements that have been made in the past year include:

- implementing larger pothole fixes where appropriate.
- enabling pothole repair teams to “fix now” potholes that have not yet been reported or inspected, but which are in close proximity to potholes they have been sent to repair.
- operating from more depots across Surrey so our teams can get to defects more quickly.
- changing materials to ensure longevity of repairs in winter conditions.

**DENISE TURNER-STEWART, DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITIES**

**2. NICK DARBY (THE DITTONS) TO ASK:**

Can the Cabinet Member confirm how long it takes, on average, for a Blue Badge to be issued by Surrey County Council once an application has been received?

**RESPONSE:**

The Blue Badge Scheme helps thousands of people who have mobility issues, to access goods, services, activities and facilities by allowing them to park close to their destination, in many cases without charge or time limit, in places such as on-street disabled bays and at on-street parking meters and pay and display machines, either as drivers or passengers. For many, this can have a significant impact on their quality of life, mental health, well-being and social life and ensure and enhance levels of independence that would otherwise not be possible.

Some applicants automatically qualify for a Blue Badge on provision of the relevant evidence, although where this is not the case, applicants may still be eligible under one or more criteria set by the Department for Transport (DfT). In these cases, to ensure that decisions are made fairly and consistently, the team uses a robust assessment process and considers all supporting professional evidence submitted as part of the application.

Where applications do not provide sufficient professional evidence on which to base a decision, applicants are given an opportunity for to provide further evidence of how their disability, medical or mental health condition affects their mobility. Where evidence is not available, or a case is particularly complex the team may refer applicants to independent assessors for an expert opinion.

The time taken to process a Blue Badge is currently 9.5 weeks (47 working days), while our average processing time in 2023 was 5.4 weeks (27 working days). Both are well within the DfT guideline of 12 weeks.

The following factors beyond the Council’s control are contributing to the current time taken to process applications:

- Blue Badge applications have risen by 43% from 16,000 in 2020 to just under 23,000 in 2023, driven largely by an ageing population.

- An extension to the eligibility criteria to include non-visible and/or hidden disabilities, many cases of which are complicated and time consuming to process.
- A Department for Work and Pensions Personal Independence Payment (PIP) backlog, resulting in an increase in renewal volumes in these cases (20% of applications are currently issued under PIP eligibility).
- The small Blue Badge team have been impacted by vacancies and unanticipated long-term sickness.

In response to these pressures:

Staff from the Contact Centre team, who already take initial Blue Badge enquiries, have been trained to assess Blue Badge applications and at least one is currently deployed to the Blue Badge team each week.

Residents are being informed about the processing time via the website and e-mail correspondence, to ensure awareness and encourage applicants to renew in good time.

Consideration is being given to the resourcing of the team to better reflect the above factors.

**CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES,  
LIFELONG LEARNING**

**3. WILL FORSTER (WOKING SOUTH) TO ASK:**

At the start of this month, the High Court granted a judicial review into Surrey County Council's decision not to house a child in need, despite the child being known to the Council's social services team and being on the verge of being made homeless.

- a) When did the Cabinet Member become aware of the decision not to support this child?
- b) How much money and officer time was spent on trying to defend the Judicial Review?

**RESPONSE:**

- a) Reports indicate that these proceedings relate to a decision taken in 2019, predating the appointment of the current Cabinet. However, Cabinet Members are not routinely informed about legal proceedings. Individual issues are raised as relevant in one-to-one meetings with Cabinet Members and Directors.
- b) The legal cost so far (in terms of Surrey's legal officer time spent and the cost of counsel) is in the region of £19,000. As yet, there are no details of the costs being sought by the other side.

**MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

**4. HAZEL WATSON (DORKING HILLS) TO ASK:**

I have been contacted by residents who are not on-line and have struggled to obtain paper parking vouchers for visitors, complaining of a difficult process and significant delays.

- a) Please can the Cabinet Member confirm the process for visitors' vouchers and how long it is taking for residents to receive them?
- b) Please can the Council confirm whether an Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the new arrangements for applying for parking permits/visitor vouchers?

**RESPONSE:**

Paper visitor vouchers are now available and issued to residents who live in permit parking schemes and that are not able to apply for virtual permits using the Council's online system. They can be ordered and paid for over the phone, with copies of any proof documents required being sent in the post.

The paper visitor permits are delivered via the post to the resident, and they should arrive between 7 and 10 days after a successful application. This process is now in operation and so far, paper permits have been sent to 28 residents who have applied for them in this way.

Unfortunately, delays were experienced in the roll out of the paper permits due to (primarily) printing difficulties experienced by the permit suppliers used by NSL, our parking enforcement provider. We are sorry to all residents concerned for the inconvenience they experienced waiting for these permits and will be taking steps to ensure this does not happen again through our contract monitoring process with NSL.

During this time, we were able to maintain contact with the residents concerned and assist them when necessary to ensure their visitors vehicles were able to park when required.

An EIA checklist was completed that indicated that we should retain paper permits for some applications (such as the carers permit) and consequently the need for paper visitor permits was identified as part of a consultation process about the change to virtual permits. Again, it is disappointing that there were delays by our suppliers rolling out the paper permits, but this has now been rectified.

**MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

**5. STEPHEN COOKSEY (DORKING SOUTH AND THE HOLMWOODS) TO ASK:**

The last parking enforcement operational and financial report published by this Council was for 2018/19: [Parking enforcement operational and financial reports - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/parking-enforcement).

- a) Please can the Cabinet Member explain why these statutory reports for the last four years have not been made available on the Council's website?
- b) And confirm that they will be published with immediate effect?

**RESPONSE:**

- a) Prior to April 2023 (most) of the district and borough councils carried out parking enforcement in their respective areas under agency agreements with Surrey.

The annual parking reports that are on our website have been compiled using data provided by the district and borough councils during this time.

We have received financial returns from all of the districts and boroughs up to the 2021/22 financial year, but only around 50% for 2022/23. We also have incomplete data relating to penalty charge notices issued by the districts and boroughs between 2020 and 2023.

Consequently, we have chosen not to publish incomplete information on the website. We will however continue to evaluate what we can publish and what additional information can be obtained and do so as soon as possible.

- b) Since April 2023 we have been managing on street parking enforcement directly with our enforcement services supplier NSL. Consequently, we will be able to publish a full and comprehensive annual report for the 2023/24 financial year by the end of May, within two months of the end of the year financial year. Monthly reports are also now being sent to all County Council Members highlighting enforcement activity in their areas.

**MARK NUTI, CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING, AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

**6. JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:**

For the last five years please give the amount spent on public health by Surrey County Council and what areas it has been spent on?

Please include the amount specifically spent on sexual health services and how the level of spending compares to the level of demand for services in this area?

## RESPONSE:

The amount Surrey County Council spends on public health services is determined by the ringfenced Public Health grant the Council receives from the Government. The table below sets out the Public Health grant SCC has received over the last 5 years:

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
£35.6m	£38.0m	£38.6m	£39.6m	£40.9m

The Council has spent this grant allocation in full each year on a range of preventative services in line with the conditions of the ringfenced grant. The Council's public health service expenditure is aligned with Surrey's Health and Well-being Strategy, and key areas of expenditure include 0-19 healthy children services, substance misuses services, sexual health services, obesity, smoking prevention, health checks and mental health services.

Direct service expenditure on sexual health services in 2022/23 was £6.5m. Demand for sexual health services dropped significantly during the pandemic, but there has been a strong increase in demand since the start of 2023/24, as well as inflationary increases. As a result, direct service expenditure on sexual health services is forecast to be £7.3m in 2023/24. Public Health's 2024/25 budget includes provision to maintain this increased level of expenditure on sexual health services, and demand levels will continue to be closely monitored.

The delivery of all public health services will remain challenging with constrained funding. The Council's Public Health grant is set to increase by only 1.4% to £41.5m in 2024/25, well below the prevailing rate of inflation. The effective provision of sexual health services will though always be a key priority for the Council.

## MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

### 7. CATHERINE BAART (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK:

Surrey County Council's website describes what will be measured to track progress of the Surrey Transport Plan, which was approved in July 2022: [Delivering our transport plan and measuring its success - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/transport-plan-and-measuring-its-success).

Please confirm what baseline data has been collected and what data is being collected currently?

## RESPONSE:

The County Council adopted a new Surrey Transport Plan in July 2022, the fourth iteration of our Local Transport Plan, known as LTP4. This sets out a range of ambitious policies and measures that aim to tackle the 41% of carbon emissions in Surrey generated by road and other transport. It seeks to achieve this by providing safer, cleaner and greener ways to travel, helping residents to continue to access services and opportunities right across the county in more sustainable ways.

Implementing LTP4 will help us to decarbonise our transport networks, supporting a pathway toward net zero carbon by 2050. This is set out in our Climate Change Strategy and the Climate Change Delivery Programme, both of which were agreed by Cabinet in October 2021.

In terms of a baseline, 2019 is the agreed baseline for tracking progress on our pathway to 2030 and 2050 net zero targets. This is set out in the Climate Change Delivery Plan and the emerging LTP4 Delivery Plan.

Measuring the success of LTP4 is part of the agreed Climate Change Delivery Plan, where it forms part of the Whole Programme Assessment progress reporting activities, under the headings of Active Travel, Public Transport, Electric Vehicles and Planning, Place and Infrastructure. These are all aligned to the six implementation themes set out in the emerging LTP4 Delivery Plan.

Furthermore, the most recent Climate Change Progress Report was presented to the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee on 5 October 2023 for detailed scrutiny.

Work is ongoing to choose a range of appropriate metrics and measures to track progress for inclusion in the emerging LTP4 Delivery Plan. Metrics will include nationally available datasets from the Department for Transport on monitoring road user statistics and vehicle kilometrage, along with locally collected indicators such as bus patronage, bus fleet composition, electric vehicle registrations, electric vehicle usage and electric vehicle charging points. Other local indicators for place-based programmes, active travel schemes, schools focussed improvements and similar interventions will provide valuable data on mode share, air quality and resident satisfaction. All of this data will be used to estimate and evaluate carbon reduction against our pathway to net zero.

**CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES,  
LIFELONG LEARNING**

**8. CATHERINE POWELL (FARNHAM NORTH) TO ASK:**

The Foster Carers Portal is included the Childrens Social Care Transformation portfolio, and the Fostering Service has advised that this will go live in the first half of this year.

- a) To ensure that we have learned lessons from the Unit 4 roll out please can the Cabinet Member advise if an End User Acceptance Phase has been incorporated into the plan and how the End User Acceptance Group has been selected to ensure that all stakeholders can thoroughly test the system before it goes live?

I am particularly concerned as we need to ensure that the system design supports Foster Carers using this system to reduce the time they spend supplying and completing information requests to maximise the time they have available to look

after the children we place in their care and the roll out of the Unit 4 system had significant challenges for all users.

- b) Please can the Cabinet Member also confirm that the Surrey Foster Carers Association have been included in the End User Acceptance Group and have been able to contribute to the development of the testing protocols and User Acceptance Criteria for go live have been defined and agreed?

**RESPONSE:**

I can confirm that an End User Acceptance Phase will be incorporated into the plan. An End User Acceptance Group has not yet been selected but the team will ensure that all stakeholders, including a group of social workers (both fostering service and children's teams) and foster carers will form this group as they have done with previous system changes and with previous implementations such as the Foster Carers SharePoint Page and the electronic expenses claim forms, both implemented in 2023.

This project is currently in the "building" stage and ensuring the portal will meet the basic needs of the service prior to sharing with foster carers for consultation. The portal is part of the Liquidlogic Childrens System (LCS) which gives a direct link between the foster carers and the case records held in LCS on foster carers and the children they care for. Surrey is an early adopter of the system and so we are currently learning about the limitations of the system which the fostering service needs to understand before the views of foster carers can be incorporated, as it is important to have a thorough understanding of the system, what it can do and how it supports the Council's statutory duties. This will enable the team to speak about it and its benefits to foster carers with a high degree of confidence. The main purpose of the portal is to make life for Surrey foster carers and the social workers supporting them and the children in their care easier and to improve communication between all parties, so the service is invested in making the portal as user-friendly and helpful for all as possible.

We are aware that the 31 March deadline is tight, if necessary, implementation will be pushed back to ensure that all users are reassured. All concerned will make sure that design and user testing is done thoroughly and that all key stakeholders are consulted and involved. A programme of training for all staff and carers will be rolled out when the service and carers forming the End User Acceptance Group are satisfied that the system will meet basic needs.

**CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES,  
LIFELONG LEARNING**

**9. ROBERT EVANS OBE (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK:**

- a) Is the Council happy that some school governing bodies are removing from their admission criterion: '*children for whom the school is the nearest to their home address*'?
- b) What is the current advice from Surrey to governing bodies on this matter?

## **RESPONSE:**

The role of the Council is to ensure the admission arrangements for each school comply with the School Admissions Code and Admissions law and to object to the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) in cases where it believes a set of arrangements does not comply. It is the responsibility of own admission authority schools (academies, foundation, free, trust and voluntary aided) to determine the admission arrangements that will apply each year and to consult where they propose to make a change. Whilst the Council has no role in agreeing a set of arrangements determined by an own admission authority school, we are supportive of schools which have consulted on removing or clarifying priority on the basis of 'nearest school' in line with our advice (see below), as this ensures their arrangements are compliant with the School Admissions Code.

The Council offers advice and guidance to schools on admission arrangements as and when matters arise from determinations of the OSA, to ensure the admission arrangements for each school are legally compliant. In November 2019, there was an adjudication by the OSA regarding Stamford Green Primary School which highlighted concerns about priority on the basis of 'nearest school' within admission arrangements. The adjudicator set out that this effectively created a catchment area, but not one that was clearly defined, consulted on, or published as required by the School Admissions Code. Following that determination, the Council provided advice to 117 own admission authority schools which gave priority on the basis of 'nearest school' to highlight the issues raised by the adjudicator and to ask them to consider this aspect of their arrangements when they next reviewed them. Since that time, the majority of Surrey's own admission authority schools have removed priority on the basis of 'nearest school' and the Council has also removed it from the admission arrangements for its community and voluntary controlled schools.

Surrey's advice to own admission authority schools which continue to give priority on the basis of 'nearest school' remains for them to review this aspect of their arrangements. However, it is for those own admission authority schools to decide whether they wish to remove priority on the basis of nearest school or, if not, how they might wish to amend their arrangements to ensure they are compliant with the Code. The local authority has suggested the following options to schools to help them in their deliberations:

- Remove nearest school priority and just use home to school distance.
- Replace nearest school with a drawn catchment area.
- Replace nearest school with a straight-line distance radius (making sure that this conforms to the Code).
- Replace nearest school with feeder links (junior and secondary intakes only).

Whilst schools also had the option to retain priority on the basis of 'nearest school,' if they did this, we advised them that, in doing so, they must make sure they can demonstrate that this would meet the requirement of the School Admissions Code. Failure to do so might put them at risk of a successful objection to the OSA.

For 2024 admission, Surrey has nine schools which continue to give some priority on the basis of 'nearest school'. For 2025 admission, we expect that number to drop to just two schools, subject to final determination from schools.

**MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH / CLARE CURRAN, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES, LIFELONG LEARNING**

**10. CATHERINE POWELL (FARNHAM NORTH) TO ASK:  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Question)**

The school places team has acknowledged that there is a shortage of secondary school places in the west of Surrey particularly in the Farnham area and in areas along the border with Hampshire. This is being driven by the significant housing delivery in this combined area, particularly in Rushmoor, Hampshire. There are specific issues in Farnham because both primary and secondary schools are ranked as some of the best in the UK in The Times's Parent Power league tables.

There are two specific updates in the December 2023 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that I would like to draw the Cabinet Member to, see below additions in December 2023 in **bold/underlined** and deletions in ~~*italic and struck through*~~:

Paragraph 7

The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development, **including the provision of homes, commercial development, and supporting infrastructure in a sustainable manner**. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs<sup>4</sup>. At a similarly high level, members of the United Nations – including the United Kingdom – have agreed to pursue the 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development in the period to 2030. These address social progress, economic well-being and environmental protection.

Paragraph 14

In situations where the presumption (at paragraph 11d) applies to applications involving the provision of housing, the adverse impact of allowing development that conflicts with the neighbourhood plan is likely to significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, provided ~~all of~~ the following apply:

- a) the neighbourhood plan became part of the development plan ~~two~~ **five** years or less before the date on which the decision is made; and
- b) the neighbourhood plan contains policies and allocations to meet its identified housing requirement (see paragraphs 67-68).
- ~~c) the local planning authority has at least a three year supply of deliverable housing sites (against its five year housing supply requirement, including the appropriate buffer as set out in paragraph 74); and~~

~~d) the local planning authority's housing delivery was at least 45% of that required over the previous three years~~

Questions:

- a) Given the lack of school places in Farnham and the on-going pressures on the Home to School Transport budget, please can the Cabinet Member advise whether or not SCC is going to take a more proactive approach to responding to the planning applications in areas with acknowledged shortfalls in school places?
- b) Please can the Cabinet Member advise whether particular emphasis will be placed on responding where applications are for new housing developments that are on sites that are not included in Neighbourhood Plans that are less than 5 years old?
- c) For example, will the Cabinet Member confirm that the Surrey School Places team will be providing responses to the applications in this category in Farnham, where a significant shortage has been identified over the whole planning period and for which there are no obvious solutions and where there have already been a significant number of additional housing developments approved (at appeal in the last 12 months) over and above those allocated in the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan, which is delivering to plan and is less than 5 years old?

**RESPONSE:**

- a) The Education Place Planning team has taken action to promote a more proactive and collaborative working relationship with Waverley Borough Council's Planning team. Meetings have been held with the Head of Planning at Waverley Borough Council to further discuss the challenges with providing additional education provision within Farnham, particularly at Secondary level. The Education Place Planning team has also met with officers at Waverley Borough Council to ensure that the provision of the projected deficit of education provision will be outlined within the latest Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP). The Education Place Planning have had meetings with Hampshire officers and will continue to build links with the place planning counterparts across the border. The location of pupils across the border means that they may live closer to Surrey schools than they do Hampshire schools. The admissions preference process means Hampshire pupils are correctly placed in Farnham schools. This creates pressure on places for Surrey pupils, as admission legislation does not allow for an artificial boundary such as the county border. The forecast data based on historical trends and other demographic data means that Place Planning are exploring options for additional secondary places in the area.
- b) Working alongside the Planning and Place making team, the Education Place Planning team, has raised with Waverley Borough Council the importance of being notified of all planning applications for developments with 10 units or more.

- c) The Team will respond to all notified planning applications emphasising the significant need for secondary school places in Farnham as a direct result of additional housing. Comments will be provided on all planning applications received from the borough council for developments with 10 units or more. Additionally, the issues highlighted have been noted in terms of cross-border working with neighbouring counties, this is being addressed via the Spatial Policy Team in Planning.

**MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

**11. ROBERT EVANS OBE (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK:  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Question)**

Cars and vans parked on pavements is an increasing problem in some areas. This can have a detrimental impact on pedestrians but especially disabled people or those with pushchairs etc.

Scotland has recently enacted new legislation in this area. Will Surrey consider a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to address this situation?

**RESPONSE:**

We recognise the problems caused by antisocial pavement parking and try to tackle the problem either through enforcement where it is possible or the use of parking restrictions as part of our parking review process.

The City of Edinburgh has recently enacted legislation made under the Transport (Scotland) Act, passed in 2019 which banned pavement parking, double parking and parking at dropped kerbs. At present, in England, the legal situation outside of London is that only the police can enforce pavement parking if it causes an obstruction. However, our Enforcement Team can, and do, enforce pavement parking where there are already waiting restrictions (yellow lines) because these apply to the pavement as well as the road; however, in many cases they are not present.

Councils can make Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO) to ban pavement parking over a small or large area which they could then enforce, but under current legislation we would need to put up signs at regular intervals to indicate this restriction. On a countywide scale the implementation of such a restriction could cost many hundreds of thousands of pounds and take years to implement.

A blanket ban on pavement parking could also cause significant displacement problems in some residential areas as drivers would park wholly on the road leaving less space for emergency, public service and delivery vehicles to get through.

We think that changes are needed at a national level, and in 2019/20 the Government carried out a consultation concerning new laws that could reduce the problems caused by pavement parking. At the time, we responded positively to their

consultation and fully support an option to introduce a new parking offence called 'unnecessary pavement obstruction' which could be enforced by our own enforcement officers without the need for a TRO. This would help us to manage this problem more effectively across the varied communities in Surrey in combination with our policies to help promote more sustainable modes of transport.

The outcome of the consultation and way forward has not yet been published by the Department for Transport (DfT). More information can be found here: [Managing pavement parking - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/managing-pavement-parking). Both myself and Cllr Deanus, when holding the portfolio, have requested when the report will be published.

In the meantime, we do aim to tackle all types of parking problems through our parking review process and there is more information about reporting these and requesting new parking restrictions, as well as how we carry out parking reviews to reduce obstructive parking by following this link: [The parking review process - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/council-and-politics/council-meetings-and-agendas/council-agendas/council-agenda-items/2019-2020/council-agenda-item-10-19-2019).

Parking contraventions can also be reported direct to our Enforcement Team via: [surreyparkingenforcement@nslservices.co.uk](mailto:surreyparkingenforcement@nslservices.co.uk).

Other obstructions on the pavement can be reported to either the police if it is dangerous, or to Surrey Highways via our web page below, and we will aim to investigate and deal with the problem as soon as possible: [Report it online - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/council-and-politics/council-meetings-and-agendas/council-agendas/council-agenda-items/2019-2020/council-agenda-item-10-19-2019).

## **MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

### **12. CATHERINE POWELL (FARNHAM NORTH) TO ASK: (3<sup>rd</sup> Question)**

A commitment was made to undertake a review of the Ringway contract following its one-year anniversary, this is now overdue.

- a) Please can the Cabinet Member advise when will it be released to all Members?
- b) Please can the Cabinet Member also advise when this review will be scrutinised?

### **RESPONSE:**

The performance of the Ringway Highways Term Maintenance contract has continued to be reviewed as part of the ongoing governance of the contract, including review by the Cabinet Member. It is anticipated that a report on the Highways Term Maintenance Contract will be taken to the Communities, Environment and Highways (CEH) Select Committee in the new financial year once the forward plan has been agreed. Prior to that report, the Environment, Transport & Infrastructure Performance Report is being shared with the CEH Select Committee meeting on 7 February and has been updated to highlight where Ringway (as well as

other partners) are responsible for the Performance Indicator measure in question being delivered.

Other reviews have taken place since the contract started, including a review undertaken by the Contract Management Advisory Service (CMAS) which considered primarily the officer governance of the contract. The Council's Internal Audit function is also currently undertaking an audit of the outputs of the contract covering planning, performance and quality. Once complete, the findings of the audit and any recommendations will be published in the usual way.

## **DAVID LEWIS, CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES**

### **13. CATHERINE POWELL (FARNHAM NORTH) TO ASK: (4<sup>th</sup> Question)**

The Cabinet papers contain a large number of planned efficiencies that were identified as red or amber in the budget planning documents released in October to the Select Committees. As noted in the Budget papers pressures on the in year services have continued to rise since October.

Across all directorates these red and amber rated efficiencies amount to around £35 million, including:

- £9.1m for the Adults, Wellbeing and Health Partnerships directorate,
- £7.9m for the Children, Families and Lifelong Learning directorate and
- £15.5m for the Environment, Infrastructure and Growth directorate.

My understanding is that a contingency budget of £20 million is included in this year's budget (confirmed by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources at the Cabinet meeting on 30 January 2024). I believe that this is in the Central Income and Expenditure budget although this is shown separately.

The budget papers include this statement:

*"We recognise that this financial year and the next 2-3 are likely to represent an extremely challenging period. Continued increasing demand for key services and high inflation means that the cost of delivering services is increasing at a faster rate than our funding."*

There are also ongoing and acknowledged net risks in this financial year - the Month 8 position documented in the Cabinet identifies a net risk of £1.7 million.

- a) Please can the Cabinet Member advise what the contingency plan is if the contingency budget is insufficient to these higher risk efficiencies not being achieved?
- b) Also, please can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the status of the red and amber efficiencies across each directorate as they have been included in the budget?

## **RESPONSE:**

The Final Budget proposals contain a risk contingency budget of £20m, within the Central Income & Expenditure budget. This is to provide financial resilience and mitigation should cost pressures exceed budget assumptions and/or efficiency targets be deemed unachievable. Historically this level of contingency has been sufficient to provide such resilience, prior to 2022/23 contingency budgets were not utilised and instead added to our reserves.

The inflationary and demand pressures, experienced nationally, have resulted in the application of the contingency budget both last financial year and in this year. The contingency budget is one of a number of financial resilience measures in place. Regular financial monitoring ensures that forecast variances to budget are identified in a timely manner. Where Directorates forecast variances against budget, they are expected to identify actions to mitigate forecast overspends and contain costs within available budget envelopes. Where this is not deemed possible, then the contingency provides resilience. Should forecasts exceed the available contingency, then further corporate spending controls may need to be utilised.

In addition, the Council has worked hard over recent year to restore its reserves to a level that is appropriate to the risk environment in which we operate. As a short term measure, reserves are sufficient to provide financial resilience against overspends while medium term measures to reduce revenue expenditure are actioned.

The total efficiency target included in the budget proposals for 2024/25 equates to £53.7m. At the time of this meeting, 79% of efficiencies are rated green or amber, with 21% rated red. These ratings are continually reviewed as delivery plans are developed and by the start of the financial year it is anticipated that more of the red/amber efficiencies will be green, as plans are further developed. The Council has a strong track record of delivery of efficiencies in recent years.

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