

**MEETING OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL****TUESDAY 19 MARCH 2024****QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED UNDER THE PROVISIONS  
OF STANDING ORDER 10.1****NATALIE BRAMHALL, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY, WASTE AND  
INFRASTRUCTURE****1. FRANK KELLY (MERSTHAM & BANSTEAD SOUTH) TO ASK:**

With regards to the recent spate of illegal fly-tipping of large amounts of waste on local roads and the cost of clearing these up, can I ask the Cabinet Member, what is the cost for cleaning up these occurrences, both in total and to each resident in their council tax?

Also, what deterrents are there in place and how is the Council going forward in prosecuting those responsible?

**RESPONSE:**

The clearance of fly-tipped material from public land including roads is the responsibility of district and borough councils in Surrey. The disposal of the fly-tipped material collected by district and borough councils is the responsibility of Surrey County Council as Waste Disposal Authority.

In 2022/23 Surrey district and borough councils delivered 2,536 tonnes of fly-tipped material to our waste transfer stations and using an assumed average cost for transport and disposal of £141 per tonne the total cost to the council was around £360,000. Using a figure of 482,000 households in Surrey this works out at about 75p per household per year.

This does not include the cost of clearing the fly-tipped material, which is the responsibility of the borough and district councils and for which we do not have any financial information.

Fly-tipping is illegal and both the district and borough councils have a range of powers to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) or to prosecute offenders. Surrey County Council does not have either the duty or the power to undertake investigations, issue FPNs or prosecute anybody for fly-tipping on the highway.

## **SINEAD MOONEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE**

### **2. CATHERINE POWELL (FARNHAM NORTH) TO ASK:**

Please can the Cabinet Member confirm which types of Technology Enabled Care she is hoping will be rolled out across the whole of Surrey and the time scales that she envisages that will occur over?

I am particularly keen to understand:

- a) the strategy for the roll out of the Docobo app, which is used by the Remote Monitoring Service for patients to enter information into their Shared Care Record and has been used very successfully in reducing GP appointments and emergency hospital admissions in the Frimley Integrated Care Board (ICB).
- b) the strategy for the roll out of the Mole Valley Life Technology Enabled Care offering particularly SMART Monitoring.

### **RESPONSE:**

- a) This is commissioned by Frimley Integrated Care Board and not Surrey County Council and we do not hold this information.
- b) We have successfully implemented an effective Technology Enabled Care (TEC) offer for residents delivered through several pilots. Over the coming months a strategic corporate strategy will be developed in collaboration with partners and coproduced with individuals who draw on our services through eligible care needs or preventative services. To support this work SCC have confirmed membership of TSA as the industry and advisory body for TEC, including securing consultancy support, to help develop a robust business case and benefits realisation model. This will ensure our strategy is suitably impactful and social care outcomes are measurable and understood for long-term investment.

We do currently work with Mole Valley Life who run an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) to provide this enhanced monitoring county-wide including delivering installation of TEC into people's homes. Additionally, we are piloting a 'Wellbeing and Community Responder Service' for people in Mole Valley, Reigate & Banstead, Epsom & Ewell and Tandridge areas, to respond in non-emergency situations.

We intend to build on the work already done and further innovate. We will ensure our strategy clearly outlines to the public that TEC is not seen as a replacement for personal care but instead is a key enabler in facilitating the best opportunities and outcomes for people.

## **NATALIE BRAMHALL, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY, WASTE AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

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

When Surrey County Council was selling County Hall, its former Kingston headquarters, developers RER issued a release stating it had a guide price of £20m.

This week Savills has issued a press releases stating the site now has a Gross Development Value of £250m:

<https://www.savills.co.uk/insight-and-opinion/savills-news/357792/a-unique--consented-residential-development-opportunity-in-prime-sw-london>

Can the council tell us exactly how much it got for its former Grade 2 listed site, and whether it feels this was best value for residents seeing as it now has the potential to bring in hundreds of millions of pounds for its new owners?

### **RESPONSE:**

Surrey County Council (SCC) sold its former Grade 2 listed Kingston Head Quarters in March 2021 for £25 million, on a subject to contract only basis. This followed an extensive open marketing campaign for which best value was secured.

The purchasers RER (Kingston) Ltd have been holding the 300,000 sq. ft complex vacant over the past three years whilst pursuing a detailed planning application through the Royal Borough of Kingston to convert much of the former complex into residential units. Costs would have been incurred for empty business rate liability, which would have been circa £700,000 per annum alongside security and other holding void costs.

Although planning consent is now expected, RER have placed the complex on the market through Savills.

Whilst the agents suggest a potential value post development, it should be noted that when fully sold or let, this is not the value that a market bidder will pay for the asset today. A value bid would consider the cost, timing and risks of the development, the capital investment needed to complete any approved scheme (heritage build costs, consultant fees, ongoing security, void costs, finance costs at elevated rates since 2021) and the marketing period to sell or rent all units once converted. This could be a further 3 to 5 year project.

It is worth highlighting that when SCC sold the asset for £25 million in 2021, we negotiated a contractual position to secure any excess of value that might arise from any future development if the quantum of development exceeded a certain level. This is protected by way of a legal charge against the asset.

**NATALIE BRAMHALL, CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY, WASTE AND INFRASTRUCTURE / DENISE TURNER-STEWART, DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR CUSTOMER AND COMMUNITIES**

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

Redhill Library was identified as having Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in September 2023, closed on 7 December 2023 with a click-and-collect service introduced in nearby Consort House from 30 January (<https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/libraries/borrow-or-renew/borrow-or-request-items-from-the-library/ready-reads>). The closure was noted as to, "Allow more detailed assessments and immediate safety measures to take place to ensure the building is safe to reopen to residents ..." and that "Further urgent work will need to be undertaken before we can provide any details on mitigation measures or timelines for re-opening."

Please confirm what detailed assessments have so far been conducted, what urgent work is now planned and when the library is scheduled to reopen either in its current location or as a pop-up or temporary library in Redhill town centre?

**RESPONSE:**

**Assessment and planned works**

Surrey County Council's (SCC) surveying consultant, AtkinsRealis has been appointed to undertake surveys and inspections to fully establish the extent and condition of the RAAC (Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete) at Redhill Library.

A Stage 1B Visual Inspection of the RAAC was undertaken on Friday 3 November 2023. Further on-going monthly monitoring inspections of the RAAC were undertaken on the following dates: 21 November 2023, 9 January 2024, and 14 February 2024. As a result of these inspections, no new cracking or spalling has been observed. The condition of the panels previously observed with cracking, spalling, water staining, or services penetration were unchanged. The next on-going monitoring inspection is scheduled for 15 March 2024.

The Stage 2 Intrusive Survey works have been instructed to AtkinsRealis. A separate contractor has been appointed to complete Enabling Works which started on site on 14 March, to remove the ceilings and fully expose the RAAC panels. A further contractor will then conduct a Measured Survey and 3D Laser scan of the RAAC before the Structural Engineer can inspect and report on the condition of the RAAC and confirm what remedial works are required. This is scheduled to be completed by end of April 2024.

Currently there is a risk due to the unknown scale of the RAAC at the library and the output from the surveys detailed above will inform the level of mitigations that need to be developed and the remediation work required.

Once the full set of surveys detailed above have been completed, a programme of remedial works will be developed at which point the cost and duration for these

works can be confirmed. Depending on the works required, the scheduled programme could be approximately eight months.

### **Continued provision of library services in Redhill**

Redhill Library opened on a click and collect basis at Consort House in Redhill on Monday 30 January 2024. The click and collect service, which is open Tuesday to Saturday enables users to return books and collect reservations and Ready Reads. The free Ready Reads service enables residents to request a selection of books along a subject matter or genre. These are then handpicked by staff and sent to Consort House for collection.

The service has been visited by 1,285 people between 30 January and 12 March 2024. We have also extended opening hours at Reigate and Merstham libraries during this time with usage increasing by an average of 40% during this period.

The library service and Land & Property have been working together to prepare the remainder of the ground floor of Consort House to extend the service offering. Therefore, from 22 April 2024, a temporary library will open offering a wide range of books, resources, study space, comfortable seating, children's area, rhyme times, events, and computers (subject to BT). The service offer will be smaller than that at the Redhill library previously, however, this is in line with what was due to be delivered during the refurbishment works. The library service will continue to be delivered from Consort House for the duration of the repairs and capital refurbishment works at the existing library building.

With regards to the longer-term provision of library services within the Redhill area, SCC is in discussions with both the freehold owner of the current site and the local Borough Council to explore all available opportunities for both the current and any potential future locations, aligned to a wider regeneration of the area.

**TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

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

In the Chancellor's most recent budget a County Deal for Surrey was confirmed, providing new powers for the county council. This includes "the opportunity to adopt innovative local proposals to deliver action on climate change and the UK's Net Zero targets". Tim Oliver, Leader of the county council said in December "This is not about all power to the County Council, it's more about power for Surrey as a whole with devolution from central government, across all partners working together to make Surrey an even better place to live, work and do business. Within the functions that will be devolved as part of the Level 2 County Deal, there will be greater opportunity to work closely with partners and in some cases explore options for double-devolution."

What do you envisage as the process for bringing forward, and encouraging, innovative local proposals from all sectors in Surrey to tackle climate change?

## **RESPONSE:**

The Net Zero and Climate Change chapter of the Surrey Devolution Framework Agreement sets out the environmental proposals that Surrey has agreed with Government as part of this devolution deal. These include enhanced working relationships with Ofgem around regional energy planning, better engagement between Surrey and relevant government departments to design a place-based approach to delivering retrofit measures, delivering more local green jobs following the devolution of the Adult Education Budget and UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and Surrey's role as the responsible authority for our Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Notably, the framework also outlines Surrey County Council's intentions to bring together relevant environmental and climate change strategies/plans/statutory duties under one single framework titled the Local Environmental Improvement Plan (EIP). This process will allow SCC to work more closely with relevant local partners such as district and borough authorities, utility companies and government agencies. As such, all relevant partners across Surrey will be able to better align relevant plans under the framework, allowing for more coordination at a local level. The Local EIP will also allow SCC to coordinate key partners to identify, map and assess relevant spending in the area and, through newly establish governance, will be able to better prioritise action and support implementation of local initiatives. This function will enable Surrey as a whole to more effectively tackle climate change and deliver a greener future for our residents.

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

### **6. ANDY MACLEOD (FARNHAM CENTRAL) TO ASK:**

The performance report presented at the Community, Environment and Highways Select Committee on 7 February showed that after NSL's abysmal performance at the start of the contract in April 2023, things have greatly improved. However, it is still disappointing that after nine months, in the third quarter NSL were only able to field 89% of the agreed parking enforcement hours against a target of 95%.

The consequence is that the average monthly number of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued in the third quarter of around 7,500 has now reached broadly the same level as that previously issued by the Districts and Boroughs. This is against an expected number of around 9,000 under the new NSL run system.

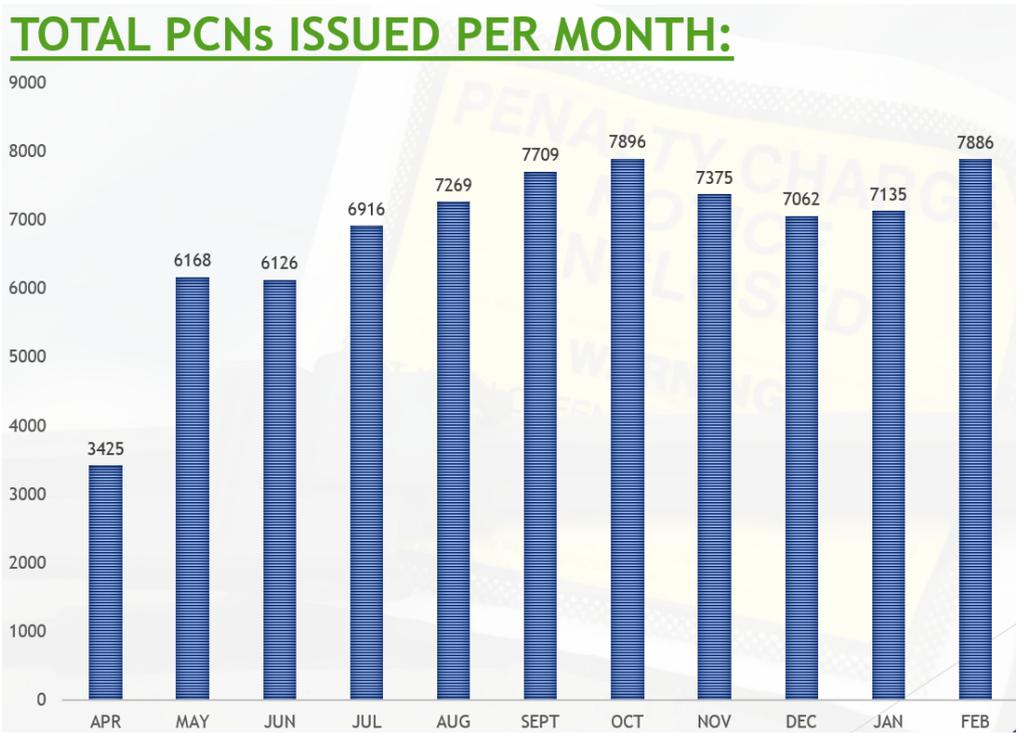
Committee members were also informed of an intention to develop a County Wide Plan to ask NSL to focus on problem parking sites.

Please can the Cabinet Member confirm:

- a) That NSL have been made fully aware that members are disappointed in their performance to date and in the second year, from April 24, it will not be acceptable for them to fail to meet their agreed targets.
- b) When Members can expect to see the County Wide Plan?

**RESPONSE:**

a) We have regular (weekly) meetings with NSL to discuss operational and performance issues associated with on-street parking enforcement, including feedback from Members. It is disappointing for everyone when expected levels of service are not met, however it has been mentioned on numerous occasions that only twelve Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) transferred from the districts and boroughs to NSL at the start of the contract in April 2023 meaning deployment levels were lower in this period, whilst an intensive recruitment drive went ahead. We do not have targets for Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) and the deployment levels reported for Q3 (89%) represent an average of the three months in that period, in which there was a month by month improvement in that time. I can also advise that Q4 is expected to be slightly above or very close to expected deployment levels, as staff levels have continued to increase and stabilise, although recruitment and retainment is a continual challenge. It is probable as CEOs become more familiar with their roles and areas, the number of PCNs will increase. The monthly enforcement reports for February show that the countywide PCN totals went up to 7886, the second highest total since the contract started in April. The breakdown of the PCN numbers has been included below for reference.



b) A countywide enforcement operational summary for 23/24 will be published by the end of May. Monthly reports are being sent to members highlighting enforcement activity in each borough, including school run enforcement visits. Future plans on school enforcement and district priorities will be shared later this year.

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

**7. LANCE SPENCER (GOLDSWORTH EAST AND HORSELL VILLAGE) TO  
ASK:**

Given that the School Transition deadline was 15 February, how many children in Surrey still do not have a placement at secondary school and how many of these have special educational needs?

**RESPONSE:**

Secondary Transition: For pupils who had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place before the statutory deadline of 15 February, there are 125 pupils who we are continuing to secure secondary provision for, for September 2024. 12 of these pupils require mainstream provision and we are actively in conversations with schools. The remaining pupils require specialist or centre provision, and we are working with providers for additional capacity. Since the statutory deadline 60 pupils have received agreement for an EHCP, 10 of which have had a school identified for September and 50 pupils have active school consultations out.

There are currently 98 children (without an EHCP) who are awaiting an offer of a secondary school place for September 2024. All of these applicants applied late, but we will endeavour to resolve an offer for each of them by the end of June as places are freed up by declines and further offers are made from waiting lists. Applicants who have not been offered a place at one of their preferred schools also have the right to submit an appeal. Late applications will continue to be received up until the end of August, as new families move into the area, and so the number of children without an offer of a secondary school place will fluctuate during this time.

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

**8. ANGELA GOODWIN (GUILDFORD SOUTH-WEST) TO ASK:**

Before Surrey County Council took back responsibility for parking controls Guildford Borough Council, maintained a very disciplined system of only issuing permits pursuant to the physical number of spaces available, and any new residents into the area wanting a new or extra Zone D permit would be on a waiting list that ensured they would only be issued a D permit when one becomes available due to somebody leaving or not renewing, and in the meantime, they were issued a permit for an adjacent zone.

Since SCC took over, they have observed that “literally anyone who requests a Zone D permit is being issued one as long as they fit the criteria of being a local resident, regardless of how long they have been there and how many permits are being issued per house”. As a result, the local streets have become overloaded by cars and residents are having “to plan when we go out (or not) and return to even try and have a chance to be able to park on return”.

Does SCC have any plans to restrict the issue of parking permits in Guildford to ensure that local residents are able to use the nearby parking spaces?

Is this a specific issue for Guildford, or has SCC had complaints from other areas on this subject since the move of responsibilities?

**RESPONSE:**

Guildford Zone D covers the town centre area where on and off-street parking is at a premium.

All permit schemes in the county have rules covering permit eligibility for residents, businesses and visitors. Those that have been set up around the county by the SCC Parking Team in the past do have relatively consistent and straight forward eligibility rules and it has therefore been easier for SCC/NSL to take over their administration. The permit rules in Zone D are far more complex, with Guildford Borough Council having defined the complex criteria, implementing and administering the Zone D permit scheme over a twenty year period.

The eligibility and terms/conditions for the various permit parking schemes in Surrey are linked here: [Parking permits, allocation, terms and conditions](#).

Following reports from residents in late 2023 that it was becoming more difficult to find a parking space in Zone D, we carried out an audit to check how many permits were in circulation.

The outcome of this audit check was that we found approximately 384 permits had been issued to Zone D properties which is higher than the number previously in circulation (316) when Guildford Borough Council was administering the scheme. We have therefore contacted permit holders who had been able to obtain a permit, but were not eligible according to the criteria in place, and either cancelled their permit or amended it from Zone D to a surrounding Zone in accordance with the rules (Permit holders were given over a month's notice and offered a refund or choice of alternative Zone for their permit in these cases).

These changes took effect from early March and will see the number of Zone D permits in circulation reduce to around 330 by April and consequently spaces should become easier to find for those residents who qualify for a permit. We will monitor resident feedback over coming months before deciding whether any further action is needed, although it would appear a longer-term simplification of the permit Zones around Guildford may be required.

Going forward, the rules for Zone D are now being more tightly enforced and a waiting list for new applicants is maintained to ensure permit numbers issued are controlled. This problem seems to be a Guildford specific one, however we will audit other permit zones around the county as needed.

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

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

Please can the Cabinet Member advise how the closure of the Mindworks to Neurodiversity referrals from both GPs and schools is going to be addressed to ensure that no-one is left behind?

Please can the Cabinet Member also advise the latest number that Surrey County Council has for the number of children who have been referred to Mindworks but are still waiting, and how we are tracking the number of referrals that are pending waiting for the system to start accepting referrals again?

**RESPONSE:**

Access to the neurodiversity (ND) diagnosis pathway is not closed, changes to access have been implemented that focus on those with highest need. Full details are on the Mindworks website: <https://www.mindworks-surrey.org/our-services/neurodevelopmental-services>

There was a collective decision with Mindworks, Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System (ICS) and Surrey County Council (SCC), in consultation with schools and families, that there was a need to move to a system of support that responds to the needs of neurodivergent children, rather than waiting until after a diagnosis before any help is enabled.

A Transformational Plan has been developed and its implementation is being reviewed and monitored in partnership with the Integrated Care Board / SCC / Mindworks and through a series of engagement events with schools and families. This plan has a focus on early support for all, and access to diagnosis for those based on need. The challenge is significant, and we recognise this is distressing for families which is why there are a series of co-production structures in place and being developed to share the position and work on the solutions together.

As a partnership, we have collectively funded additional assessment capacity and workforce to support with triage and the consultation conversations with schools and families which we hope will improve the current position and provide further support to children and young people (CYP), schools and families.

The latest communication to schools, primary care and families is available from the Mindworks website and newsletters from 18 March 2024.

As identified in the response above, children and young people with highest need or with safeguarding needs have always been able to access ND diagnosis. Oversight of the pathway escalation with Surrey and Borders Partnership (SABP) is through a weekly meeting. The risk is also on the Surrey Heartlands ICB organisational risk register and reviewed through quality and assurance oversight, providing update to Executives. The present Mindworks' position in March 2024 is

there are 890 CYP on the waiting lists for the “Spoke” team (the team triaging ND referrals) there are 3,608 on the waiting list for the ND diagnostic assessment. There are 940 children waiting for initiation of ADHD medication and these referrals will be further reviewed to understand risk and to support prioritisation. The children under ADHD medication – circa 2,400 require review in line with health guidelines and there is a workforce pressure to maintain these in timely way. SABP and partners are working through options to maximise workforce capacity to ensure needs of those waiting to start their medication and those under review, are met in timely way.

There are 35 slots per week available for schools to discuss children they are concerned about with the Mindworks team. At present (on average) only six consultation sessions per week of these are utilised. We anticipate this will increase to full capacity once further communication is released to schools and we will continue to work with them to support their needs.

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

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

What measures has Surrey County Council put in place to ensure that there is no repetition, this summer, of the unsatisfactory situation regarding grass cutting last year?

**RESPONSE:**

It is accepted that due to several challenges last season, in some areas we were unable to provide the quality service for grass cutting that was intended. As has been previously explained, this was in part due to the exceptional growth conditions in Spring 2023, lack of clarity in terms of areas cut by some districts & boroughs and challenges with some contractor resource. An update is being provided at this Council meeting - see the Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways' Briefing.

Building on feedback from some of our residents and Members, the number of urban grass cuts has now been increased from the original four to six. The last cut of the 23/24 season has now started across the county and so far, despite the exceptionally wet weather of the past few weeks, good progress is being made.

Key to providing a quality service is having clear records of what areas should be cut and everyone being aware of this. It is worth noting that we will only cut the public highway, and not private land. Officers have undertaken a considerable amount of work to ensure we now have accurate mapped areas for cutting. You will be aware of the prototype online maps, which detail the verge areas that will be cut, from the link I shared towards the end of 2023. These were also shared with district & borough council officers. They have been updated based on the feedback we received, and the revised version will be available to the public and Members in the next few weeks. The cutting programme will be available on our website, broken down by divisions. However, with something like grass cutting, there will inevitably be some operational changes (due to weather etc), but these new maps will be

updated every time an area is cut, enabling Members and residents to see not only the verges which will be cut, but also when any cuts took place.

I am also pleased to confirm we have increased the number of contractors we are using for this activity and strengthened the governance in place. There are regular contractor meetings and each contractor provides a daily whereabouts. Alongside this, officers will audit a sample of cuts to ensure quality standards are maintained. These measures will support early identification of any performance issues and enable appropriate corrective action to be promptly taken.

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

**11. JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Question)**

Redhill bus station was redeveloped as what was then described as a “temporary improvement” in 2009. It has a draughty waiting room and not enough bus stops. Increased bus numbers in the past 15 years have led to buses parking up for driver breaks on Marketfield Way. As part of Surrey County Council’s Local Transport Plan 4 (2022-2032) there is a plan to further increase public transport patronage, presumably with new bus routes and frequency.

Please confirm what the bus station’s capacity is required to be to:

- a) deal with current demand; and
- b) deal with expansion due to LTP4 to 2032 (and beyond).

**RESPONSE:**

Redhill Bus Station was redeveloped during 2008 to improve passenger accessibility, significantly enhance the passenger waiting environment by replacing the old bus shelters with a modern glass waiting room and ticket office, and to address the safety issues of passengers and pedestrians using the informal cross points in front of buses. This was a joint initiative between Reigate & Banstead Borough Council (the landowner) and Surrey County Council. During this redevelopment, it was, and is still, recognised that the operational capacity of Redhill Bus Station is constrained by the size of the bus station site and the location being adjacent to the A23 and nearby offices.

Surrey County Council has committed funding to accelerate the decarbonisation of the local bus network and we are excited to work with the local bus operator Metrobus to introduce zero emission hydrogen fuel buses in the Redhill area. This is supported by proposals to introduce measures along the A23 to make sure these buses can operate effectively and efficiently, reducing journey times and improving reliability. More real-time bus passenger information will also help residents make informed decisions on their journey.

The County Council’s Local Transport Plan 4 sets ambitious targets to increase bus patronage, and this is reflected through the Enhanced Partnership we have with our

bus operators and our equally ambitious Bus Service Improvement Plan. The County Council will continue to work with our bus industry partners and with Reigate & Banstead Borough Council to identify and agree the most appropriate schemes to help deliver growth in the bus network and to mitigate any identified bus station capacity challenges. This will include reviewing current bus stop arrangements in Redhill town centre, together with the operational efficiency of the bus station, to ensure that these can meet existing demand, and how we can support predicted future growth in the bus network.

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

**12. CATHERINE BAART (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK:  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Question)**

Princes Road is a private road, previously part of a bus route for the Royal Earlswood Park development (conditioned through S106) and NHS Diabetes clinic. The buses stopped running in October 2022 due to the poor road condition. Princes Road is part of the cycle route from Redhill to East Surrey Hospital, due to be improved through Active Travel funding from government, and part of a walking route in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) for Reigate and Banstead. Princes Road needs to be resurfaced (Surrey County Council was found not responsible for this in a Court hearing in July 2023) and there is an urgent need for the road design to be improved such that it is safe to all road users (drivers, cyclists and pedestrians) and reopens as a bus route.

Can the Cabinet Member please confirm what part Surrey County Council will play to help deliver that outcome?

**RESPONSE:**

As highlighted a court case was brought by a resident of Princes Road arguing that Surrey County Council were not maintaining a highway maintainable at the public expense given that Princes Road is a public right of way, and rights of way are maintainable at public expense.

We argued that as a right of way, our liability was to provide a safe surface for pedestrians and that the Town Path part of Princes Road provided that but that a right of way does not need to provide a suitable surface for vehicles. The judge agreed with our arguments.

We will continue to maintain the west side where there is a highway maintained Town Path (pavement) which is mainly used by walkers avoiding the live carriageway. The active travel cycle scheme will end at the junction of Earlsbrook Road and Princes Road and will commence again at the public footway junction with Asylum Arch Road. There are no works planned on the private Princes Road as part of this scheme.

It is important to note that this is a privately owned road and it is for the owner of the road to maintain it. The County Council has no further planned works for Princes Road on this basis.

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

**13. LANCE SPENCER (GOLDSWORTH EAST AND HORSELL VILLAGE) TO  
ASK:  
(2<sup>nd</sup> Question)**

The failings of Surrey County Council's children's services has meant the Authority paid more than £250,000 in fines, compensation, and redress payments to families it let down last year.

Does SCC have a plan to reduce the number of cases that end up in this situation, and how much has been put in the budget for 2024/25 to pay parents for failings in this area?

**RESPONSE:**

The Council's expectation is now that all families receive regular, proactive communications from the Special Educational Needs (SEN) teams, and area managers are expected to check and review this is happening. Additionally, the Council is in the process of training a new helpdesk team to support with communications to families and other stakeholders.

A comprehensive multi-agency recovery plan is underway, with the aim of achieving an overall Education Health and Care needs assessment timeliness rate of around 60% by the end of May 2024, to address overdue assessments and ensure timely assessment for children with higher risks. This target surpasses the national timeliness percentage and aligns closely with Surrey County Council's 2021 performance.

To support this initiative a £15 million investment has been allocated for Special Educational Needs (SEN), Educational Psychology (EP), and early intervention capacity over a three-year period. The plan has three key objectives:

- Reduce long waiting times: To complete the EHC needs assessments for all children, young people, families, and schools who have been waiting longer than the statutory timescales as soon as practically possible.
- Better support while waiting: To support children, young people, families, and schools as effectively as possible whilst they are having to wait longer than they should.
- Securing a sustainable service model: The goal is to restore a sustainable service quickly, ensuring that the majority of EHC needs assessments are completed within statutory timescales, beginning with achieving a 60% rate and ultimately striving for 100%.

Targets have been set against each objective and progress is being rigorously monitored. The number of unallocated educational psychology assessments which are required as part of the needs assessment process, cases has reduced from 1,014 cases in May 2023 to 130 at the end of January 2024 and 0 unallocated cases at the end of February 2024.

In terms of budgeting for future payments related to complaints, these payments come from the specific operational service that the complaint relates to. Over two thirds of payments are in recognition of missed provision, which service budgets are already designed to cover. One third of payments are symbolic remedies for injustice, often in acknowledgement of delays, which are being addressed in the recovery plan mentioned above. These symbolic payments do not impact materially on budgets when broken down by service.

The Children, Families and Lifelong Learning directorate is focused on addressing the root cause of the complaints through significant investment in service delivery, staff development and communication, which will in turn reduce financial remedies for injustice in the future.

It is worth noting that the largest payments directed by the Ombudsman often relate to complaints initially raised between one to two years ago. Therefore, the current improvements in level of service delivery and level of communication will have a more noticeable positive impact on complaint volumes and remedy payments in the medium term rather than the short-term.

## **DAVID LEWIS (COBHAM), CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES**

### **14. ROBERT EVANS OBE (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK: (3<sup>rd</sup> Question)**

Will the council please list the full Surrey County Council budget, year on year since 2010 and alongside, give the equivalent figures if the budget had kept up with inflation?

### **RESPONSE:**

The way in which local authorities are funded has changed significantly over the time period requested, as have the services delivered. The introduction of local retention of business rates, combined with transition funding for short period of time to compensate for reductions in revenue support grant, the transfer of public health responsibilities from the NHS and the introduction and replacement of historic social care grants, reflective of the increased demand for these services over the years, mean that useful comparisons of yearly budgets is only possible for the last five years.

The average annual budget increase over the period 2020/21 to 2024/25 is 5.5% per annum, with larger than average increases reflected in recent years due to increases in social care funding and higher allowable Council Tax increases. The Council's net

revenue budget in 2020/21 was £968m and this has risen to £1,197m for 2024/25, an increase of 24% over the five-year period.

Average Retail Prices Index (RPI) over the same period was 6.9%, with March positions ranging from 1.5% in March 2021 to 13.5% in March 2023. If the Council's budget had increased by the March RPI amount each year, the annual budget for 2024/25 would be c£1,261m, £64m more than the budget recently approved by the Council for 2024/25.

	SCC Net Revenue Budget £m	RPI (%) at prev % increase March 31		Budget if increased by RPI £m
2020/21	968.3			
2021/22	1,003.6	3.6%	1.5%	982.8
2022/23	1,039.0	3.5%	7.8%	1,059.5
2023/24	1,101.9	6.1%	13.5%	1,202.5
2024/25	1,197.0	8.6%	4.9%	1,261.4

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

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

The Cabinet Member wrote to all Members in preparation for the 2024 grass cutting season in December 2023 asking Members to review the SCC grass cutting responsibilities and identify which areas were missing. Where several areas in my division that had been designated as verges because they are part of the highway extent that were in fact areas that are not adjacent to a road at all but greenspaces in housing estates used for recreational purposes by residents and particularly children.

Please can the Cabinet Member advise:

- a) When the final grass cutting maps for the 2024 season will be shared with members as first cuts are due imminently?
- b) Whether the grassed recreational areas inadvertently included as verges rather than much valued recreational green spaces will now be cut to allow use by residents particularly children as part of ensuring that all children have access to the recreational spaces as intended when the housing estates were laid out?

**RESPONSE:**

An update is being provided at this Council meeting - see the Deputy Cabinet Member for Highways' Briefing.

We have started cutting the final and fifth cut of the 23/24 season. The first cut of the 24/25 season is planned to start in April. Our website is being updated and the intention is that the online maps you reviewed will be available for both members and residents from the start of the first 2024/25 cut.

The County Council has two categories for highway verges, these being rural or urban. There is no specific designation as recreational space on the public highway. Those highway verges in housing areas will generally be categorised as urban and benefit from six cuts per annum, which is an increase on last season. Some estates may have recreational verges, but these do not form part of the public highway and will either be managed by the landlord or, in private areas, the residents' managing agent.

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

**16. JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:  
(3<sup>rd</sup> Question)**

In December 2023 the Surrey Live carried an article on Netherne-on-the-Hill (Isolated Surrey village demands bus route before 'elderly forced to leave' - Surrey Live ([getsurrey.co.uk](https://www.getsurrey.co.uk)) and quoted Councillor Furniss as follows: "Following the success of our Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) scheme in Tandridge, from Spring 2024 we will be looking to expand the scheme to include bordering areas such as Netherne-on-the-Hill." "Officers have already been in communication with the Community Link Officer for this area to discuss the expansion, and we will be looking to see how we may best serve some of the needs of the residents of Netherne."

Please can the Cabinet Member provide an update on plans to expand DDRT to Netherne-on-the-Hill and other bordering areas?

**RESPONSE:**

I am delighted to announce that the phase 2 expansion of our successful and extremely well received Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) service, Surrey connect, will be available to residents of Netherne-on-the-Hill from September 2024. We are currently planning to add an extra four buses to the current Surrey Connect two bus scheme operating across the Tandridge area. This has enabled us to increase the operating zone and include Netherne-on-the-Hill.

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

**17. CATHERINE BAART (EARLSWOOD AND REIGATE SOUTH) TO ASK:  
(3<sup>rd</sup> Question)**

The Green Economy nationally is reported to be growing at 9%. Surrey County Council has recently taken on the role of skills and economic development through the new County Deal and the closing of the Local Enterprise Partnerships this year.

What does SCC plan to do / do already to positively encourage the green economy for example supporting or attracting companies that support the county council's net zero aims?

**RESPONSE:**

The County Council has had an economic development function operating for several years delivering across strategic themes linked to innovation, skills and talent, supporting our places, and economic infrastructure. The transition of Local Enterprise Partnership functions and responsibilities to the County Council will further enhance this activity and bring in new opportunities, such as the Growth Hub.

Recent research into Surrey's green economy by WPI Economics, Data City, and Lightcast provides a more accurate picture based on Surrey's unique business base and sectoral specialisms to help inform effective strategy development and decision-making. This research suggests that green employment is currently 20% higher in Surrey compared to the UK as a whole and is forecast to increase by around 8% per year to 2030 and on average 4% per year between 2030 and 2050. For context, the digital sector grew on average 4% between 2009-2019. A copy of this research will be made available for all Members.

Supporting the growth of the green economy is a priority for the council and it cuts across the different themes that the economic development function delivers. Here are some recent examples that the council has already delivered or been the driving force behind:

- **Skills Bootcamps** – securing £2.7 million to deliver training within Surrey in partnership with local colleges and training providers, focusing on high demand local sectors and key local skills gaps, which will include courses in Retrofit, Green electrical, and Sustainability.
- **Heat Pump installation Training** – jointly funded with Nesta to help upskill existing heating engineers and plumbers to be able to install Heat Pumps, along with an offer of financial incentives to encourage increased participation in the home retrofit sector.
- **Green skills summit** – jointly hosted with Surrey Chambers of Commerce to bring together green businesses and educational institutions to address current and future green skills gaps, exploring how the green skills needs of local residents can best be met, including key actions required.
- **Green Careers resources** – to inspire residents with the various opportunities available at businesses operating in the green economy and outline different pathways into green careers.

The creation of a Surrey Growth Hub and new business support website will further enhance and expand the council's offer to support businesses operating in the green economy to start-up, scale-up, and grow. This might include delivering tailored 1:1 support to high-growth green businesses, or a county-wide programme of support to

local businesses on implementing measures to ensure their business operations can become net zero.

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

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

As discussed at the budget meeting there was a review of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) capital programme underway at the time the budget was agreed but this was not identified as a risk in the budget papers.

Please can the Cabinet Member advise whether this review has been completed (previous advised end of February) and whether the costs have risen for the delivery of the whole planned programme?

Please can the Cabinet Member also advise what steps are being taken to ensure that the programme, that was developed prior to the pandemic, still meets the needs of children in Surrey in terms of the number and type of places being provided and their geographic location, particularly given the ongoing financial pressures associated with home to school transport?

**RESPONSE:**

In the first four years of Surrey's Capital Programme (2019-2023), the 43 permanent capital schemes, which were more technically and financially straightforward projects, have delivered 920 additional specialist places with a further 250 places coming online for September 2024. This has increased the overall state-maintained specialist education estate by 28% from around 3,320 when the capital programme started in 2019 to around 4,240 now.

The Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) capital programme delivery viability and cost review was completed as planned. It shows there has been a 48% increase in the net construction costs between 2015 and 2022 for SEND development specifically. It will now cost more to deliver the remainder of the Capital Programme due to this inflation, the condition of existing school buildings, carbon net zero responsibilities, and the Council's new additional conservation liabilities.

Surrey's Leader has provided a clear statement of prioritisation for SEND and AP capital budgets. This would require a further £56m resources to increase the approved Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2027/28.

The Service regularly validates the planned growth year on year to 2030/31 from the capital programme against Key Stage transfer points and in-year transitions to ensure provision aligns with children's needs.

Alongside capital delivery planned work undertaken by other strands of the Additional Needs and Disabilities (AND) Transformation Programme continue to reflect the thinking of the Service and the wider partnership in relation to how best to achieve the vision for Surrey children's enhanced life chances and maximising a sense of belonging and inclusion to achieve our local strategy.