

CABINET – 23 JULY 2024

PROCEDURAL MATTERS

Members' Questions:**Question (1) Catherine Baart**

Data published by the Department for Transport shows that carbon emissions from light vans rose by 68% between 1990 and 2021, while emissions from cars and HGVs fell 19% and 2% respectively. Similarly there has been much greater falls in nitrogen oxide emissions from cars and HGVs compared to light vans. Research by Transport and Environment has shown there are a million more vans on the road since 2014 and most are diesel fuelled. One barrier (not the only barrier) to using electric vans is charge points - electric vans often require longer cables and longer spaces compared to cars to be able to use the charge point.

What is the county council doing to support van drivers and small businesses in Surrey wanting to switch to electric vehicles? For example, are there plans for zero emissions logistics zones, as in the Netherlands? Can the county council encourage the switch to electric vans in other ways too?

Reply:

We have sought to be innovative in our approach to getting businesses and van drivers to switch from diesel to electric. For example, we have been working with National Highways and Guildford Borough Council on the Electric Towns and Cities Initiative focused on the A3 through Guildford, the aim being to improve poor air quality on this stretch of National Highways road. The scheme includes a subsidy toward the purchase of an electric van, along with the installation of rapid chargepoints specifically targeted at recharging medium size commercial EVs. However, despite our collective best efforts, the take up of available grants from qualifying businesses has been modest, not helped by the deadline for the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles being pushed back from 2030 to 2035 earlier this year. Just over 30 vans have successfully converted to EV, plus around 30 grant vouchers issued but still to be used, against a target of 1,000 by 2025. Whilst travel planning support for businesses through the Electric Towns and Cities Initiative scheme will continue to help employees travel more sustainably, we are working with National Highways to determine potential future next steps once the Electric Towns and Cities Initiative scheme closes.

More positively however, Connected Kerb's work to install rapid chargepoints at one location adjacent to the A3 is continuing. In addition, 2 rapid chargers on a further site near the A3 are being adapted for commercial vehicles, including the marking out of longer bays and the provision of longer cables.

For Surrey's onstreet EV chargepoint installations we believe that catering for commercial vehicles is a necessary part of our strategy. Where onstreet chargepoints are being installed as parallel parking at the kerbside, where the outside bays are adjacent to double yellow lines and space allows, then the parking bays are longer bays of 6m. These bays act as accessible bays and allow longer

vehicles to more easily gain access to chargepoints enabling them to drive directly into or out of the charging parking space.

Further initiatives and opportunities will continue to be considered, within the remit of our Surrey Transport Plan policy.

Matt Furniss

Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth

23 July 2024

Question (2) Catherine Baart

In the Full Council meeting of 21st May, I highlighted that the Council had been awarded Bronze standard by the Carbon Literacy Organisation and asked whether there was an ambition and plan for the Council to reach the Platinum standard. In the Cabinet Member for Environment's absence, the Leader said that he believed that the Council has that ambition. The Platinum standard for Carbon Literate Organisations requires that 60% or more of the workforce must be certified as Carbon Literate, assuming 90% of the senior management team are certified Carbon Literate. The recently signed off Member Development strategy describes Carbon Literacy training as one of the courses which is "offered" to Members. Is Carbon Literacy training similarly just "offered" to county council employees, rather than being part of required training? What % of the workforce is currently certified as Carbon Literate?

Reply:

Whilst we are intending to continue with Carbon Literacy Training and have committed to ensuring that all staff get appropriate carbon training, we have not yet concluded whether obtaining Platinum accreditation status is the most efficient or effective way of doing so.

The Climate Change Delivery Plan agreed by Cabinet in 2021 commits to supporting all Council staff to reduce emissions in their workplace and the services they provide to Surrey. This is necessary for us to reach our net-zero 2030 target and to maximise our impact on carbon emissions across Surrey.

To this end, all staff require some form of climate training, but training needs vary depending on the type of service delivered, and the level of seniority. This is why, to date, there has been no firm commitments for Surrey County Council to achieve platinum level carbon literacy. Since the adoption of the Climate Change Delivery Plan, the following training has taken place:

- 4394, which is up to 43%¹ of SCC staff have taken a two hour online climate change training module, with an expectation that around 50% will have complete it by 2030.
- As part of a pilot project conducted in 2022/3, 194 (1.5 %) of SCC staff have received full carbon literacy training, including all of the corporate leadership team, 9 DLT and 11 cabinet members.
- At least 50 officers have undergone specialist training including low carbon design, green finance climate adaptation, planning and climate change engagement.

•Numerous informal training has taken place, partly through the Green Champions scheme, including lunch and learns, knowledge sharing and teach-ins on a wide range of topic areas.

The carbon literacy training pilot concluded that, when compared to the resources required to teach in person, results were most impactful at a more senior level. The current proposal is to create whole staff training plan, and in the meantime, continue to prioritise Carbon Literacy Training towards the senior leadership team. The next tranche will be completed by March 2025.

Marisa Heath
Cabinet Member for Environment
23 July 2024

Question (3) Catherine Baart

Residents have asked who will cover the cost of road repairs and any other costs to infrastructure resulting from the recent diesel spillage on the A24. Will this be the county council?

Reply:

Surrey County Council always seek to claim back costs through insurance companies for damage to county property where we have information about the individual or company responsible for the damage. We will take this approach in this situation. As you may be aware, there is also currently an ongoing police investigation into the spillage on the A24. Should it not be possible to claim back all the costs, then the county council will need to cover any shortfall.

Matt Furniss
Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth
23 July 2024

Question (4) Catherine Baart

What can we learn from collision data provided by Surrey Police about the contribution of road defects (e.g. potholes) to road safety in Surrey?

Reply:

Any concerns raised by the police with regards to road defects are inspected by highway officers and jobs are raised for repair where needed.

Collision data provided by Surrey Police is used in the determination of planned maintenance schemes. Detailed assessment is carried out at sites identified through collision data analysis and this will contribute to the prioritisation of maintenance schemes, particularly where there are skid resistance issues. The detailed assessment will also consider other factors alongside the road surface such as lighting; signage and road marking; overgrown vegetation or drainage and identify issues for further investigation where necessary.

Matt Furniss
Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth
23 July 2024

Question (5) Catherine Baart

Please could you give an update on the delivery of facilities for cyclists at Woodhatch Place? I understand the space for new bike racks was prepared several months ago.

Reply:

The longer-term solution for cycle storage, showers and drying facilities is on hold as engagement with cyclists has demonstrated that the proposal was not fit for purpose. Workplace & Facilities met with colleagues who cycle to the office in June 2024, and they explained that the proposed location for the storage and other facilities was too far from the main building. The main concern related to cycle storage and security, however the existing showers inside Woodhatch Place were deemed sufficient for current and future demand.

As a short to medium term solution, Sheffield Stands will be installed at Woodhatch Place by the end of August to accommodate those who wish to cycle to work. These stands will be purchased in the coming weeks and installed by Macro outside the ground floor, central block south, opposite the picnic benches by the Lodge. This location was agreed with the engagement group.

Natalie Bramhall
Cabinet Member for Property, Waste and Infrastructure
23 July 2024

Question (6) Jonathan Essex

Agenda item 11 (Consort House, Redhill) notes that heads of terms to handover the building is targeted to be completed by 1st September 2024 and that library services current use of the asset is under review and subject to a separate report to Cabinet. However, the next cabinet meeting is due for 23rd September 2024, after this date. Please can you confirm that there will be a continued offer of library in Redhill, at least with the same floor space as currently, in the interim before the library can reoccupy its space in the Warwick Quadrant following the refurbishment works.

Reply:

The library service was relocated to Consort House as an interim measure when Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) was identified in their premises at Warwick Quadrant, Redhill. This required a rapid temporary relocation whilst minimising additional expenditure.

We are committed to ensuring that that library service continuity will be sustained and a suitable fit for purpose location is being prepared for a seamless transition from Consort House, whilst the full refurbishment of the library's long-term home at

Warwick Quadrant continues. This is subject to commercial sensitivity. As soon as the lease agreement is completed, we will provide further details.

The Redhill Library refurbishment is going ahead as planned and as detailed within the SCC Cabinet paper approved in June 2023. <https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/s92462/Item%208%20-%20Modernising%20our%20Library%20Estate%20Libraries%20Transformation%20Programme%20Phase%201%20Part%201%20FINAL.pdf>

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding of £500k has been secured for Redhill Library from Reigate and Banstead Borough Council.

Details about the refurbished library can be found on the SCC website here: Library transformation and modernisation - Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk) <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/libraries/news-and-events/modernisation#epsom>

Appropriate communications will be in place at the relevant local touchpoints to Redhill library including library digital platforms to support a seamless transition to the new interim premises for library users.

Denise Turner-Stewart
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities
23 July 2024

Question (7) Jonathan Essex

Agenda item 11 notes that the moving Consort House to a leased (investment) building will take it out of the scope of SCC's organisational carbon emission net-zero 2030 target, will have an overall positive impact on meeting our 2030 target, 'as the asset is retained for lease, it will still be part of our indirect emissions impact and therefore still falls under the scope of the corporate climate plan.' Can the council please confirm as a climate responsible landlord what it will be doing to invest in reducing the carbon footprint of this building, as normally it would be the landlord not tenant of a building who would invest in refurbishing it.

Reply:

In terms of the decarbonisation approach, Consort House now falls under Surrey County Councils scope 3 emissions (buildings which are owned and leased). An approach to scope 3 emissions will be included in the refreshed Climate Change Delivery Plan (2026- 2030) which will be produced next year.

Natalie Bramhall
Cabinet Member for Property, Waste and Infrastructure
23 July 2024

Question (8) Jonathan Essex

The 'Case for Change' at the start of the Customer Transformation paper (Item 8) notes that in 2023/24, Surrey County Council recorded a total of 2,598 complaints, a 5% increase across the board compared to the previous financial year (2,467).

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How many of the complaints reported in paragraph 9 (p107) are thought to be due to quality of customer engagement as opposed to failings of the underlying service that the engagement relates to (e.g. potholes, SEND, home to school transport?). In addition, to what extent is the investment expected in the Customer Transformation is anticipated to lead to change staffing levels and/or to deliver financial savings as well as improving how Surrey County Council interacts with its customers?

Reply:

We do not currently record complaints in a way which can provide a breakdown of complaints in terms of type (other than team/service area) that would enable Surrey County Council to see complaints relating to poor customer communication, customer dissatisfied with service received etc. The Customer Transformation programme will provide an opportunity to gain this insight and to use this to target and design services in a way that improves customer experience and outcomes, working together with services.

In general terms, complaints are seldom about one thing or theme in isolation; they are usually a composite of several themes and root causes. The programme team will undertake analysis of data sets that include complaints, social media, resident surveys etc. to identify themes around the customers' experience of accessing information and support from Surrey County Council which can be addressed that will result in a reduction in customer complaints.

The programme aims to create efficiencies through reducing duplication and streamlining contact and resolution activities, this includes staffing as well as systems and processes. The extent to which financial savings could be made through consolidation of functions and roles is dependent on baseline analysis of service delivery functions/roles being carried out and the final design of any one area of business aligned to delivery of the Dynamic Operating Model.

Denise Turner-Stewart
Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities
23 July 2024