|  |
| --- |
| **SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL** **TUESDAY 19 MAY 2020 - INFORMAL** **QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED UNDER THE PROVISIONS**  **OF STANDING ORDER 10.1** |

**SINEAD MOONEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

1. **MRS HAZEL WATSON (DORKING HILLS) TO ASK:**

It has come to light that some elderly accommodation (retirement developments and sheltered housing) do not have hand sanitiser dispensers for external people such as carers and couriers to use at entrances to such buildings. Although residents will be confined to their accommodation, some schemes require them to use communal laundry facilities and thereby access communal areas.

Given that older people living in elderly accommodation are more at risk of infection with Covid-19, can the County Council do anything to ensure that hand sanitiser dispensers are provided at all building entrances of such elderly accommodation, whether run by Housing Associations or private providers to help reduce the risk of infection for these residents?

**RESPONSE:**

In line with the national guidance it is the responsibility of the Housing Association and private providers to risk assess their premises to reduce the spread of Covid-19. There are several measures being taken by providers to do this with hand sanitiser being one of these. For instance, some providers are not allowing any guests or visitors from entering their buildings, with any deliveries left at reception.

For services where people are required to visit homes there is guidance available which covers the use of PPE where needed, handwashing and the need for employers to provide hand sanitiser to their workers.

For instance there is quite developed guidance for food deliveries: <https://www.cieh.org/media/4070/covid-19-food-delivery-and-takeaway-guidance.pdf>

and for services involving vehicles (e.g. couriers):

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/vehicles>.

**TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

1. **MR EBER KINGTON (EWELL COURT, AURIOL & CUDDINGTON) TO ASK:**

In regard to the Council’s response to Covid-19, what role will Members have in monitoring the Council's Recovery Plans and contributing to the political decisions that will inevitably arise in regard to the management and use of resources and the nature of future service provision?

**RESPONSE:**

The council has had to operate its crucial statutory services and protect vulnerable residents during the extraordinary pressures created by the coronavirus pandemic and in doing so democratic processes have not been omitted from changes to normal life. However, new regulations mean that council decision making processes can now take place virtually as long as they are open to the public and I can confirm that there is a solution in place to allow all committee meetings in the council diary to take place as planned as remote meetings which will allow members to be involved in decision making and scrutiny.

As a result of the pandemic we will be reviewing the council’s direction of travel including its key strategies, the transformation programme and the budget and it is our intention to bring a paper to Cabinet in September to re-set our priorities and I am keen for the select committees to have oversight of these important reports.

The Select Committee Chairmen and Vice-chairmen’s Group have also agreed to establish the following two select committee sub-groups to monitor the impact of and response to coronavirus by the council:

* An Adults Social Care & Public Health sub-group consisting of the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Adults & Health Select Committee to cover the services at the frontline of the pandemic – namely adult social care and public health - and to consider the impact on Surrey’s most vulnerable residents.
* The Resources & Performance Select Committee convene a Budget Sub-Group that focuses on the emerging impacts on the council’s budget as a result of the coronavirus.

I know that many Members have taken the opportunity to participate in the recent virtual member seminars regarding the Council’s response and recovery to Covid-19 and I would also like to take this opportunity to remind Members that they are of course able to ask questions of me and the Cabinet at Council and Cabinet meetings on any aspect of the recovery plans going forward.

**SINEAD MOONEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

1. **MRS FIONA WHITE (GUILDFORD WEST) TO ASK:**

A lot of Surrey residents are paying for care packages that cannot be delivered because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of them are having to meet additional costs as a consequence of the need to socially isolate. What arrangements are being made to reimburse those people and how quickly can the repayments be made to them?

**RESPONSE:**

Where the council has arranged care and collects a contribution from residents for their care we will adjust any charges accordingly, in line with our policy. For residents who have made their own arrangements and self-fund their own care the Competition and Markets Authority has issued clear guidance on refunds for services not provided and there is also the dedicated coronavirus business complaints service that residents can use to alert Government to poor practice / poor business behaviour.

**TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

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

Given the Government’s promise to recompense Local Authorities for expenditure incurred and income lost as a consequence of the pandemic and what now appears to be hesitation in providing adequate funding to honour that promise, how helpful have Surrey’s MP’s been in promoting to Government the Council’s case for appropriate compensation?

**RESPONSE:**

I have been pleased to see that the Government has recognised the huge contribution that local authorities have made in responding to the Covid-19 crisis. So far, the costs that have been incurred by Surrey County Council have been covered by the Government through the £47 million of additional funding that we have received. We are continuing to submit delta returns which detail the additional expenditure. I have every confidence that central Government will review these positively and the county council will recover all costs genuinely incurred as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. I am in very regular contact with Surrey MPs and we will continue to press Government to ensure that adequate funds are made available for us to continue to support residents as we respond to the crisis.

**SINEAD MOONEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

1. **MR ROBERT EVANS (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK**:

Surrey has over 300 registered care homes. What extra measures is Surrey currently taking and planning to take in the near future, to ensure, as far as possible the safety of residents, carers and workers in these homes?

In the light of Covid-19, what is the current figure for deaths in these homes and how is the data being monitored?

**RESPONSE:**

According to the latest figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), there have been 1,592 deaths in care homes in Surrey since 1January 2020. 248 of these deaths involved Covid-19. (Source: ONS Deaths by local authority and cause of death, for deaths that occurred up to 1 May but were registered up to 9 May)

Public Health provide daily intelligence on all Surrey deaths by place of occurrence to the Death Management cell and the Care Setting cell. The data is supplied by the Surrey Registry office who supply the same information to ONS. Public Health also provide a weekly summary on deaths from Covid-19 to these cells and the wider Local Resilience Forum (LRF). The Tactical Information and Analytics Cell maintain a surveillance dashboard which includes ONS information on deaths. This dashboard is accessible by elected members as well as the representatives of LRF.

The measures that Surrey plan to have and those already in place, to ensure as far as possible the safety of residents, carers and workers, are based on the guidance provided by Public Health England. This includes what type of PPE to wear and what care setting it is to be worn to protect both the carer and the resident.

**TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

1. **MR NICK DARBY (THE DITTONS) TO ASK:**

PART 2 – confidential information.

**MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS**

1. **MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:**

Following the Government’s recent announcements for £250 million as emergency as well as long-term funding for walking and cycling improvements to councils: (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/2-billion-package-to-create-new-era-for-cycling-and-walking>)

Please can you confirm:

- what the allocation to Surrey will be;

- how this will be fairly divided between boroughs and districts; and

- how Surrey County Council propose to listen to residents and implement emergency improvements within weeks (as announced by the Government)?

**RESPONSE:**

At the time of preparing this response, the allocation to Surrey has not yet been confirmed by Government. This information will be shared at the meeting if it is available.

The announcement by Government, setting direction for authorities to support active travel and the commitment to additional funding is very welcome. The County Council has a history of improving accessible and sustainable modes of transport and this strengthened policy by government endorses our past and planned approach. Even before the Covid-19 pandemic, works were ongoing to increase sustainable and active travel options. This includes engaging with both internal and external experts (such as Create Street) to further develop our understanding and proposals.

When any allocation is known, it will be used to support priority works across the County. Some areas will lend themselves more to these measures than others, hence it will not be allocated per any specific District / Borough formula.

The statement from Government shows a desire to undertake any changes promptly. An Officer team has been established to look at options across the County. Appropriate communication will be made with relevant stakeholders.

**TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

1. **MR ANDY MACLEOD (FARNHAM CENTRAL) TO ASK:**

Stephen Spence, the councillor for Farnham North, and I as the councillor for Farnham Central, very much welcome the setting up of the Farnham Project and the Farnham Board to oversee this project. This project is very much a continuance of the work of the informal cross party group initiated by our local MP Jeremy Hunt in 2017, which included the three Farnham County Councillors and representatives of the local community. The work of this group was highly praised locally and Stephen and I are pleased that the leader and the deputy leaser have become personally involved in moving this important work forward.

However we are highly concerned about the democratic deficit in the governance arrangement for this project and in the setting up of these arrangements. We were not consulted or even made aware of the how this project is to be set up or organised by the Surrey leadership. We are only aware of the terms of reference for the project through being passed draft copies, which may or may not be the latest versions, by Borough Councillors and Town Councillors who have apparently been invited to join the Board and who are apparently being consulted about the terms of reference. The Surrey councillor for Farnham South, who represents the part of Farnham largely unaffected by the issues set out in the draft terms of reference, certainly in terms of its priorities, is apparently a member of the Board

This project has been publicised by articles in the local paper by Jeremy Hunt, which has become one of our main sources of information about what happening on the project. This has raised a great deal of local interest about the project and we are being asked by our residents to explain what is happening and how they can get involved with us on the project. Unfortunately we are not in the position to explain anything about this project to our residents or answer any of their questions. This is completely undermining our positions as local councillors as we will have to refer all such queries to the board members none of whom represent our divisions. This is deeply disappointing to us as we are and always have been committed to the apparent objectives of this project since we were elected.

So my question to the leader is why has he had no meetings or discussions with Stephen or me on this project, why did he cancel the one formal meeting which I requested to discuss the project and is he aware of the consequences of his actions in undermining local democracy and our ability to represent both our residents to Surrey and Surrey to our residents, in how he has set up the project?

**RESPONSE:**

I am very pleased that we have now established the Farnham Board as well as a key stakeholder forum to address the long standing issues in Farnham. The board includes the Leaders of Waverley Borough Council, Farnham Town Council and Surrey County Council as well as broader representation. It is important that any solutions are implemented, wherever possible, by consensus of all three authorities, recognising that there are strongly held views and opinions.

The project team have already started to engage with local members and the inaugural meeting of the Board will be on Friday 22May 2020 when the terms of reference will signed off. I totally recognise the importance of listening to as many views as possible as we collectively move forward with developing the Farnham plan and with Andy MacLeod and Stephen Spence joining the board I believe that will assist in that wider engagement with the residents of Farnham.

**MATT FURNISS, CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS**

1. **MRS NIKKI BARTON (HASLEMERE) TO ASK:**

The coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis has had a terrible impact on the lives and health of many Surrey residents, as well as severe economic consequences. But one of the consequences of the lock down also presents a rare opportunity to move towards our ambitious Climate Change target for transport of a reduction of in 60% emissions in the transport sector by 2035.

During the lock down, the quieter and less polluted streets have encouraged our residents to walk and given many who have never cycled before, a new confidence to get on their bikes. Over several weeks, the lock down has resulted in a level of behaviour change that most transport strategies can only dream of.

The recent Surrey Climate Change Strategy states that to achieve our goal of net zero carbon by 2050, we must act today to reduce our carbon emissions. The strategy identifies the reduction in our transport emissions asfundamental to achieving this goal, stating the county will promote an integrated, accessible, affordable and reliable public and active (walking or cycling) transport system.

A shift to more agile working, the need to socially distance when travelling to work and the appreciation of the health benefits of cycling and walking indicate that this change in travel behaviour could be long term. Many of my residents in Haslemere are very keen that this once in a life time opportunity is not missed.

Please could the Cabinet Member explain how this Council intends to ensure Surrey’s transport network support the recovery from the COVID-19 emergency to provide a lasting legacy of greener, safer transport?

Could the Cabinet Member outline how the Highways team are responding to new guidelines under the Traffic Management Act 2004, and the recent statement by Grant Shapps which expects local authorities to make significant changes to their road layouts to give more space to cyclists and pedestrians. Such changes will help embed altered behaviours and demonstrate the positive effects of active travel’?

**RESPONSE:**

These have and continue to be very challenging times and as a necessity established behaviours have been forced to change. It is correct that the statement from Government expresses a desire to make changes to road layouts to support the Covid-19 recovery and cycling/walking. The County Council takes the whole green agenda very seriously and prior to the Covid-19 crisis the direction was to increase sustainable modes of transport. With the changes caused by the crisis and the need to socially isolate, this has become even more important.

An Officer group has been established and tasked to consider what our appropriate response to meet these challenges could be. Members will be kept updated.

**SINEAD MOONEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

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

**(2nd question)**

Can the administration confirm that the Council is in contact with all care homes in Surrey with regard to their PPE requirements for all staff and if so, how far can we be assured that these requirements are being met?

**RESPONSE:**

In response to the pandemic and the national and local deficits in PPE stock, the Local Resilience Forum in Surrey has set up a PPE “Cell” or Team which takes bulk orders from Central Government, donations from suppliers in Surrey and procures its own PPE stocks for urgent and emergency use in the care sector. Whilst independent sector care homes are still attempting to order PPE stock from their usual suppliers, deficits in supply and long lead-in times for delivery has meant that many care homes in Surrey are relying on the PPE Cell to provide urgent and necessary PPE. The Council continues to work very closely with the Surrey Care Association in this regard, and to date just under 500 providers receive weekly orders and deliveries through the PPE Cell, which so far has distributed over 3.7 million items of PPE to the care sector across Surrey.

**TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

1. **MR ROBERT EVANS (STANWELL AND STANWELL MOOR) TO ASK**:

**(2nd question)**

Last summer, on his election the UK prime minister and his ministers pledged to revive English devolution as a way to ‘level up’ all parts of the country and reduce regional inequalities. In February this year, in answer to parliamentary written question number 12269, the then [Minister of State for the Northern Powerhouse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Northern_Powerhouse) [and Local Growth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ministry_of_Housing,_Communities_and_Local_Government)stated that ‘the Government is committed to empowering local places to drive local economic growth. The Queen’s Speech reconfirmed the Government’s commitment to an English Devolution White Paper, further details on which will be made available in due course’. Has the Leader of the Council had any discussions about this and can he enlighten Council as to what he interprets ‘due course’ to mean?’

**RESPONSE:**

I am aware of the Government’s intention to issue a Devolution White paper and understand that this is likely to be in September this year.

This Devolution White Paper represents a tremendous opportunity for Surrey that we should take very seriously. This presents a chance to secure freedoms and flexibilities to do what is best for the future of Surrey and deliver the best services for our residents. To grow our economy in Surrey and improve the lives of our residents, we need an approach that is tailored to our local circumstances. We are looking forward to picking up this discussion with Government once the White Paper is published later this year.

**SINEAD MOONEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULTS AND PUBLIC HEALTH**

1. **MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:**

**(2nd question)**

Following the Government’s announcement of the shift of responsibility for testing in care homes to Public Health Directors please can you confirm:

-How the Surrey testing hub will prioritise testing within different groups of essential workers, and ensure prioritisation extends to those who cannot access the drive-through centres?

- Whether similar devolution of powers for tracing will be sought by Surrey County Council, and how the data collected might be owned and managed?

**RESPONSE:**

**A:** Our priority is testing patients to inform their clinical diagnosis. As per the Health Secretary’s announcement on 28 April 2020, the following categories of individuals can also get tested:

* All essential workers including NHS and social care workers with symptoms
* Anyone over 65 with symptoms
* Anyone with symptoms whose work cannot be done from home (for example construction workers, shop workers, emergency plumbers and delivery drivers)
* Anyone who has symptoms of coronavirus that lives with those identified above

In addition, we are testing:

* Social care workers and residents in care homes (with or without symptoms) both to investigate outbreaks and as part of a rolling programme to test all care homes
* NHS workers and patients without symptoms, in line with NHS England guidance

For those who cannot drive to the test centres, Home Testing is the appropriate route.

We will be piloting a walk-in testing option in the coming days with the plan to expand this option with our local Mobile Testing Unit, should this model prove safe to implement and successful.

**B:** The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), Public Health England (PHE), and NHSX are working at a national level on an integrated approach to testing and contact tracing, known as ‘Test and Trace programme’ which is being piloted on the Isle of Wight and will be launched nationally in mid May 2020.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/coronavirus-test-track-and-trace-plan-launched-on-isle-of-wight>

The operating model consists of the following levels:

National level includes:

* PHE web-based Contact Tracing and Advisory Service (CTAS)
* Phone based contact tracing with 15,000 call handlers for people whom digital channels are not appropriate or possible, and for those whose first language is not English
* NHS app CV19 which is an automated system for rapid symptom reporting, ordering of swab tests, and sending tailored and targeted anonymous alerts and advice to other app users who have been in close contact

Regional level includes:

* Phone based contact tracing with 3,000 health professionals for more complex contact tracing, testing and advice, based on the footprint of the nine PHE regions

Local level includes:

* PHE local Health Protection Teams (HPT), and Local Authorities (LA) focusing on the most complex outbreaks e.g. Care Homes, to provide local targeted support

For the NHS app CV19, the privacy and security of users’ data is a priority and NHSX has involved experts from the National Cyber Security Centre to advise on best practice through the app’s development. Data will only ever be used for NHS care, management, evaluation and research and the NHS will comply fully with the law around its use, including the Data Protection Act.

**DENISE TURNER-STEWART, CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY, FIRE AND RESILIENCE**

1. **MR JONATHAN ESSEX (REDHILL EAST) TO ASK:**

**(3rd question)**

Since the lock-down a range of essential workers (including those in the private sector - beyond the roles required by councils, the NHS and social care sector) have continued to work. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has not taken a hands-on approach so far in reviewing risk assessments or providing detailed guidance; carrying out spot testing; enforcing social distancing; ensuring the supply of PPE and washing facilities at work places. Now many more workplaces are being opened, this monitoring is even more important.

Please confirm what role Surrey County Council (as part of the Surrey Local Resilience Forum) will play in ensuring Surrey’s work places are safe, and whether there are any plans to transfer powers from Government to Surrey County Council and/or our boroughs and districts, such as involving trading standards or utilising environmental health officers?

**RESPONSE:**

In the event of an investigation. In terms of Covid-19, it is the responsibility of the employer to undertake a risk assessment of the workplace, taking into account the hazard of Coronavirus. The HSE have been heavily involved with the Government in producing the Covid Secure Workplace guidance that was published on 11 May.

Surrey County Council (SCC) have issued a set of principles and a draft risk assessment for SCC managers’ guidance. These were signed off by CLT on 6 May. There is now a process being developed by the SCC Covid-19 Strategic Operations Group to ensure risk assessments are in place prior to any worker returning to work. These assessments will also be monitored through this same group.

Surrey County Council (SCC) are absolutely committed to ensure workplaces are safe prior to reoccupation, with the involvement and support of Land & Assets, Corporate Health & Safety, Communications Team and Project Management Office.

We are not aware of plans to transfer powers from Government to SCC. The regulatory powers in terms of workplace safety lie with The Health and Safety Executive.

The LRF sits outside of SCC who are one of the many partners that work within its structure, it is not an employing agency but a coordinating organisation formed under the civil contingencies act whose role is in bringing all Surrey partners together to ‘plan and prepare’ plus ‘form a coordinated response and recovery’ to any major incidents that may occur in Surrey. Furthermore in order to understand the impact of known local and national risks it will analyse, plan and exercise all Surrey partners’ response to these in order to ensure community resilience.