

# Council, 23 September 2021, 19:30

## Member questions on notice

Council procedure rule 2.15

### Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Member questions on notice.....   | 1  |
| QUESTION 1: Partnerships with voluntary and community sectors.....      | 2  |
| QUESTION 2: Support for youth employment.....                           | 4  |
| QUESTION 3: COVID impact on revenue and income.....                     | 6  |
| QUESTION 4: Afghan resettlement programme.....                          | 8  |
| QUESTION 5: Environmentally sustainable housing.....                    | 10 |
| QUESTION 6: Ash dieback at land between Arne Grove and Landen Park..... | 11 |
| QUESTION 7: 20 mph speed limit in residential areas.....                | 12 |
| QUESTION 8: Support for Armed Forces veterans.....                      | 13 |
| QUESTION 9: Garden waste collection.....                                | 14 |
| QUESTION 10: Littering and street cleansing.....                        | 16 |
| QUESTION 11: Parking on Redhill Station roundabout.....                 | 18 |
| QUESTION 12: HGV driver shortage impact on Council services.....        | 20 |
| QUESTION 13: Anti-social behaviour at Memorial Park.....                | 20 |
| QUESTION 14: Public water fountains.....                                | 23 |
| QUESTION 15: Delivering change in Horley Town Centre.....               | 24 |
| QUESTION 16: Gatwick consultation.....                                  | 25 |

## QUESTION 1: Partnerships with voluntary and community sectors

**Question from Councillor Moses to Councillor Ashford, Executive Member for Community Partnerships**

**Question:**

Could the Executive Member for Community Partnerships please outline how the Council is currently working in partnership with the borough's voluntary and community sector organisations to support our residents?

**Response:**

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to highlight the Council's excellent partnership working with the local Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), which I will summarise as follows:

**Funding**

We have 3 funding programmes for local VCS organisations totalling around £300k per year as Small Grants, Medium Grants and funding for the 9 partner organisations we directly commission to deliver services through Service Level Agreements. My team regularly monitors how grants are spent to ensure our funding achieves the maximum impact for our residents.

Examples of the wide diversity of projects supported this year include: funding towards a new dementia day service at Horley; funding towards a qualified breast feeding councillor at two local baby cafes; and funding for the YMCA East Surrey's accessible Wellbeing Walks project, aimed at specific groups including those with mental health difficulties or those living with cancer.

**VCS Advice and Support**

We continue to live through extraordinary times which has placed greatly increased demands on many local VCS partners, not least on the local foodbanks. I'm pleased to say we have been able to direct over £80,000 to local food banks to help them manage increased demand and we continue to work with them to support their service delivery.

My team has also worked extensively with VCS partners and churches to set up 5 local food clubs which help residents on low incomes access good quality food at low cost.

We are also very keen to help partners to understand and make full use of our grant schemes. With this in mind, in October the Community Partnerships team will be running a grant funding workshop. Events like this are important as they strengthen our relationships with the VCS sector which in turn provides positive impacts to our residents.

**Partnership Initiatives and Networks**

Community Partnerships officers are in regular contact with our voluntary sector partners to understand their current needs and challenges which can be as simple as arranging low-cost printing through to redeploying Council staff to assist Voluntary

Action Reigate & Banstead to manage its huge influx of volunteers at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. The team is currently bringing together money-advice services and local foodbanks to explore ways of working better together to tackle the growing issue of increasing dependence on foodbanks.

Our Community Development team regularly bring local VCS partners together to network and to provide an opportunity to identify areas where they can explore solutions to shared issues. Working with local VCS partners, last winter we ran a pilot fuel poverty scheme to help residents who were experiencing fuel poverty to access pre-payment meter top-ups.

My team also maintains close working relationships with key local partners including the YMCA East Surrey and East Surrey Domestic Abuse Service (ESDAS).

In July the Executive approved plans to transform our Community Centres at Banstead, Woodhatch and Horley, into vibrant multi-use centres delivering a varied activity programme that supports wellbeing for all ages; places for residents to come together; offering sessional room hire for community groups and private functions, as well as for charities and small businesses to provide services that meet local need.

These centres also have a long history of working in partnership with VCS organisations such as food clubs, food banks and local growing projects and we aim continue developing these important partnerships as the centres evolve into places for everyone.

To summarise, our strong working relationships with our local voluntary and community partners are not only key in supporting our residents - they are also key to supporting the sector itself to ensure it can respond effectively to both opportunities and challenges as they present themselves.

## QUESTION 2: Support for youth employment

**Question from Councillor Absalom to Councillor Humphreys, Executive Member for Economic Prosperity**

### **Question:**

Acknowledging the fantastic work done by this Council in supporting the local economy and businesses before, throughout and beyond the pandemic and, as the "world of work" cautiously and gradually reopens and readjusts itself to today's realities, with regards to local employment and especially our younger residents looking for employment, some for the first time, what are the Council doing to help?

### **Response:**

The Economic Prosperity Team is involved in three initiatives which are helping our younger residents looking for employment and making key decisions about their employment options.

#### **1. Youth Hub**

The Youth Hub was launched earlier this year in response to the disproportionate impact Covid-19 is having on the borough's young people and their employment prospects.

The Youth Hub is a collaboration between Reigate & Banstead Borough Council, Tandridge District Council and DWP. It is supported by two Youth Hub Officers who help prepare young Universal Credit claimants for their future careers and work closely with them to set career goals, improve skills, prepare for interview, and find opportunities for paid work and work experience.

To date, the Youth Hub has engaged with 105 young people resulting in 52 customers finding employment, 28 of whom have been placed through the Kickstart Scheme. 62 young people have been supported to interview and 1 customer has gone into education.

#### **2. Reigate & Banstead Works (RB-Works) - [www.rb-works.co.uk](http://www.rb-works.co.uk)**

The Economic Prosperity Team launched RB-Works in February 2021. It is a website for all working age job seekers and is funded by Retained Business Rates.

The website provides a series of in-depth local employer profiles, an overview of the local economy and key sectors, a google-powered map to profile where employers are located, live job search function, and skills tools for those seeking employment (e.g. CVs, interviews).

1,500 users of the site registered within the first month of launching and every month the site logs between 1,500 and 2,000 user sessions.

Both RB-Works and Start Reigate & Banstead (see below) have had the involvement of a working group of HR professionals from the borough's major employers who have helped to shape the content and provided case studies and industry insights.

#### **3. Start Reigate & Banstead**

Start Reigate & Banstead is a careers website for young people in education which provides insights into the key sectors and employers in Reigate & Banstead.

The careers advice portal is being rolled out in the borough's secondary schools and FE Colleges with the aim of raising awareness of local employment opportunities and helping to connect employers with our local schools.

- Oakwood School, Horley 1,298 Students registered
- Warwick School, Redhill 537 Students registered
- Merstham Park 522 Students registered
- Reigate College 279 BTEC students and apprentices

#### **4. Reigate & Banstead Borough Council Employment Opportunities**

All of our job, apprenticeship and worker scheme opportunities are available to our residents including our younger residents.

Our Five Year Plan includes:

- extend our apprenticeships scheme, maximising the value we secure from the Apprenticeship Levy and creating career development opportunities for residents and staff
- Since the Apprenticeship Levy started in 2017 fifty Reigate & Banstead Borough Council apprenticeships have been started and over half of those were aged 18-24.
- 75% of new apprentices recruited who completed their apprenticeships are still working with us in new roles.
- 25% of new apprentices recruited who completed their apprenticeships started new jobs with new employers.
- 33% of these apprentices progressed onto another apprenticeship at a higher level or for their career development.

#### **Supplementary question:**

Thank you for your reply. The figures and numbers you supplied are fantastic. Will Members be kept informed of this workstream as it progresses?

#### **Supplementary response:**

I'd be more than happy to have some form of ongoing reporting process for all councillors so that you can be kept informed.

## QUESTION 3: COVID impact on revenue and income

**Question from Councillor Cooper to Councillor Schofield, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance and Governance**

**Question:**

Covid has inflicted significant financial pressures on our residents and businesses alike.

People have had to cope with reduced incomes and businesses have suffered dramatic falls in trade.

Can the portfolio holder give members an update on the impact this has had on the council's revenue collections and service incomes to date?

**Response:**

Thank you, Madam Mayor, and thank you Cllr Cooper for your question.

Taking the revenue collections first; council tax collection was adversely affected during 20/21 due to the COVID pandemic. This was due to a combination of residents being financially affected, through job losses and the furlough scheme, plus the suspension of recovery action through the courts.

We were able to help those residents who experienced income reductions, through the council tax reduction scheme and through the new COVID hardship fund rolled out by the Government.

At the end of 20/21 we collected 98% of council tax against our usual collection rate of 99%. This year to-date we are 0.4% up on the equivalent 20/21 period.

The collection of business rates was not so badly affected due to new and increased reliefs introduced by the Government resulting in a slightly reduced collection rate for 20/21 of 99.8%. This year to-date cumulative collection rates are broadly in line with normal expectations.

Overall a very good result in exceptional circumstances which reflects the high quality of our Revenue and Benefits team.

Moving onto Services income; the downturn in receipts has had the most significant impact on the Councils finances.

Income shortfalls were experienced across council services as we paused garden waste collections, commuters and shoppers stayed at home and our community centres and theatre were subject to lockdown. On a positive note I would however point out that, unlike other councils, our property rental remained buoyant throughout with only a minor shortfall compared to budget at year end; a remarkable outcome under the circumstances and testament to the sterling work of our Property team.

Throughout last year the pandemic therefore represented a potentially material financial risk to the Council's budget and financial position

At year-end the total income losses were a £2.4m shortfall compared to the level of income that was originally budgeted. Fortunately, the Government made good its

promise to support local government and these losses were offset through a combination of compensation and grants.

This year the current position is much less positive. As I recently reported in the Quarter 1 budget monitoring, we are currently forecasting a net income shortfall for the current year of £1.854m. Unlike last year the Government has only committed to underwrite a small proportion of residual income losses and there is no indication that this will change.

The main area of ongoing concern is the failure of car parking income to return towards pre-pandemic levels.

Car parking income receipts are being monitored closely to determine whether this reflects a permanent change in behaviour, particularly among commuters who were previously travelling into our borough for their work.

For 2021/22 we have set aside a Revenue Reserve in anticipation of ongoing unfunded income shortfalls, but we need to remember that use of reserves can only ever be a short-term measure.

As a result, income budgets will require close scrutiny during budget setting for 2022/23 in order to determine the 'new normal'. If the outcome is to conclude that they will never return to pre-pandemic levels this will require repositioning our financial strategy over coming years to make good the shortfall through other income streams or reducing expenditure wherever possible. Fortunately, and for the moment, we do have healthy revenue reserves to help cushion the transition in the short term.

To close, it is clear that we will continue to face financial challenges for the foreseeable future. It is also clear that we have a highly professional and dedicated team of officers constantly addressing these challenges to minimise any disruption of our services to our residents.

## QUESTION 4: Afghan resettlement programme

**Question from Councillors Ritter & Turner to Councillor Neame, Executive Member for Housing & Support**

**Question:**

With regard to the Afghan Resettlement Programme, can you please inform us of:

- the Council's current position,
- what offers have or will be made,
- and how this impacts the Council -

Including:

- Provision of housing, including funding for rental properties; and,
- Funding any ongoing support, in addition to that offered by local voluntary organisations.

**Response:**

The Council has committed to the South East Migration Partnership to accommodate and support 3 households under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy.

The process dictates that once a Local Authority has secured a suitable property, a request is then made to the Home Office to be matched with a household to fit the property.

Currently 4 potential properties have been identified, unfortunately 2 were not suitable and the remaining 2 are being followed up. Officers will shortly be enquiring with local letting agents for vacancies.

The Council will only be using private rented properties for this project so there will be no negative impact on other local households waiting for affordable housing or those being helped as homeless.

The Government has provided a 3-year funding package for each household that along with regular Department for Work & Pensions benefits will cover the costs of private rented housing and 3 years support for each household.

The support offered by officers will include but is not limited to applying for bank accounts and initial benefits, accessing appropriate health care, accessing education, and securing employment. After the initial 3 years it is expected each household will be self-sufficient.

Finally, if you or your contacts are aware of any private rented properties where the landlord might be prepared to let their property to an Afghan household please email provide me or Richard Robinson (Head of Housing).

**Supplementary question from Councillor Ritter:**

I am aware of other refugees placed in Reigate and Banstead temporarily who are struggling to access childcare to enable them to attend the language classes that



might be provided for them. I know that that is part of the package that you mentioned.

You mentioned that only two of the properties are suitable. Would it be possible for this Council to provide temporary accommodation whilst we waited for one of those private places to come available?

In addition, if we could have a sort of wider understanding of the extra support that might be needed for, say, counselling services for those who experience trauma on their way here – that would be an interesting thing to hear about, thank you.

**Supplementary response:**

Thank you, Councillor Ritter. We must give these families a permanent residence. We cannot put them into a private residence and then move them on, because they've gone from being in an isolation hotel to a bridging hotel.

The last thing we want to do with these families that have got young children is then move them to temporary accommodation before we can find them a permanent accommodation.

This is why the government have asked us to come up with accommodation where they can stay one to three years and that's why it's really important to make sure:

- One – we have the right accommodation for the family; and,
- Two – that we don't move these people about. They feel moved about too much, and that would just add to the trauma that they have already been through.

The second part of your question is about how we will deal with other agencies. People think that when we take on these families that we just put them in a house. What we do is liaise with all the agencies to make sure these families have got, apart from the standard things like bank accounts and benefits, a chance to come into our society and move in. They will all be given language courses, however most of them in this cohort do speak English or have an English speaker in the household.

All of the traumas will be taken into consideration and agencies will be brought in for each family. The Council will be given a report from the Home Office for each family paired with us, which tells us what each family needs as part of a very individual approach. Families will only be matched with Councils who can provide all the things the family needs. We will then bring in the agencies.

With regard to the voluntary agencies, who provide furniture and clothes etc., once we have the property our officers will contact the local voluntary agencies because we will know that family and will know the age of children, we will know what they need and then we connect the voluntary services and make sure that the whole household is set up before we bring these families in.

The whole idea is that, when we bring them here, it's a settled accommodation with a settled area around them, so that they can settle in an area and start to have roots. So, we can't really put them in temporary accommodation - it really would be too much after what they've been through, thank you.

## QUESTION 5: Environmentally sustainable housing

**Question from Councillor Booton to Councillor Neame, Executive Member for Housing & Support**

**Question:**

In light of Raven Housing Trust's recent placement in the top 10 sustainable housing providers, what is the Council's understanding of the carbon footprint of our housing stock and what then is the plan to reduce this to net zero?

**Response:**

The Council only own 8 residential units of which 5 are within Raven Housing Trust blocks of flats and 1 is a house within a Raven estate.

We will be discussing with Raven joining their scheme of work and including these properties with their upgrade plans.

We will consider options on the 2 remaining properties based on learning within the sector and taking account of improving technologies.

The initial work is likely to be surveys to understand the current carbon footprint and therefore work required.

We plan to link in with Raven initially, this approach compliments the work officers are already doing with Raven on a joint bid to the Governments round one of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund.

**Supplementary question:**

It's great to hear Reigate and Banstead are engaging with Raven but it would be interesting to know, what is the Council doing with other housing providers in the area, namely Thames Housing and Southern Housing Group, none of which even fell into the top 30 sustainable housing providers at all?

**Supplementary response:**

Raven Housing is one of our biggest providers and we've been working with them. They attended an Overview and Scrutiny meeting, which was open to all Councillors, so you could have asked them questions and they are very open about what they're doing.

Until we know what the housing stocks are, and that's down to each Housing Trust to actually ascertain where their housing sits within the carbon footprint, and once that's done, we will be in conversations to find out how they're going to move that up.

That's what we're doing at the moment with Raven because they are our biggest supplier, and that is something that will happen with the other housing providers as and when it comes together, thank you very much.

## QUESTION 6: Ash dieback at land between Arne Grove and Landen Park

**Question from Councillor Stevens, on behalf of Councillor Buttironi, to Councillor Brunt, Leader of the Council**

**Question:**

Will the Leader of the Council write to the landowner of the land between Arne Grove and Landen Park on behalf of the Landen Park Village Green group to ask them to actively engage with the group with regard to the issue concerning ash dieback, which could pose a danger to both human life and property on the estate?

**Response:**

I would like to thank Councillor Buttironi for his question, who I know is asking on behalf of the Landen Park Village Green Group in Horley, which was formally recognised by Surrey County Council in 2018 as a designated and protected village green and consists of a small but diverse area of Greenland trees and shrubs dissected by footpaths.

As Members will be aware, ash dieback is increasing problem for landowners in the borough. It can lead to the affected trees needing significant pruning or felling. Active monitoring and management of these trees is key.

I am happy to write to owners of the land to encourage them most strongly to work together with the group, who I know are keen to do the work, provided they have permission of the landowner. I will encourage them to work together to manage the affected trees. Please provide those details to me and I will send that.

## QUESTION 7: 20 mph speed limit in residential areas

**Question from Councillor Tary to Councillor Brunt, Leader of the Council**

**Question:**

I have spoken to concerned residents about speeding traffic along residential roads in Hooley, Merstham and Netherne.

I share their worries, especially during both the morning and afternoon school run.

With this in mind, would the Council support our community's call for a 20mph speed limit in residential areas?

**Response:**

I'd like to thank Councillor Terry for his first question. Firstly, I suppose I should declare a bit of an interest in this subject, as both a resident in this ward as a fellow Ward Councillor of the area concerned.

While Reigate and Banstead Borough Council does not directly have responsibility for highways and the speed limits set on them across the Borough, it does however have a key responsibility for community safety.

As such, it has a role in promoting initiatives that will improve residents' safety, along with its partners such as Surrey Police and Surrey County Council, so I agree that it is key that we should be promoting these concerns for residents.

As a Council, I think it's critical for us to understand and recognise residents' safety concerns such as this, and I would encourage you, Councillor Tary, to follow up on your residents' concerns about a vehicle speeding in Merstham and in other areas, both through both the Surrey County Council and Reigate and Banstead Local Committee and also in partnership with your local county councillor, Frank Kelly. Thank you for your question.

## QUESTION 8: Support for Armed Forces veterans

### Question from Councillor Baker to Councillor Brunt, Leader of the Council

**Question:**

Following recent events In Afghanistan, veterans' affairs are once again in the headlines.

I spoke recently with Johnny Mercer MP, and like him, I want to ensure the welfare of veterans and serving personnel is subject to thorough planning and forethought within a national framework.

Will Reigate and Banstead Borough Council commit to becoming an example to the rest of the country in our efforts to support our armed forces and Veterans?

**Response:**

Thank you, Councillor Baker, for your question and as the Council's Armed Forces Champion. It's as important as ever as a borough community and as a Council to recognise the service of both serving and former members of our armed forces and their families, and for us to do all we can to continue to recognise and support them.

As signatories of Armed Forces Covenant, the Council is committed to ensure that those who serve or who have served in our armed forces and their families are treated fairly and with your help, Councillor Baker, I'm determined to see that we honour this commitment.

I am also looking to you, partly as an ex-serviceman yourself, and as our Armed Forces Champion, in working with our partners and charities to help guide the Council on this subject and I would encourage you to welcome new ideas on how we can do more, thank you.

## QUESTION 9: Garden waste collection

**Question from Councillor Michalowski to Councillor Mrs Bramhall, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services**

**Question:**

I am aware that four Boroughs and Districts in Surrey have now stopped collecting garden waste.

Can the Portfolio Holder confirm to this Chamber that this Council has not had to, nor has any current plans to suspend this service?

**Response:**

The waste and recycling service has been compromised by the combination of HGV driver shortages, the ping pandemic and the peak holiday period. The W&R team were not able to take all planned holiday during 2020 due to the pandemic so are overdue a well-earned break. HGV shortages impacted on the supply of Agency drivers and the pinging from the covid app. caused further disruption due to self-isolation.

Despite all of this the Service has risen to the challenge.

Management sought exemption from Defra for critical workers who were pinged resulting in a reduction in those self-isolating.

Due to a relaxation in Driver's hours legislation regular Saturday working was a possibility. The Service worked every Saturday for 11 weeks to ensure that no rounds were stood down and that Garden waste was not affected.

We can tentatively say we are through the worst of the challenges so there are no plans currently to suspend any services.

The waste and recycling team have had to work harder and longer than ever before but remain remarkably upbeat and resilient.

During this period our Cleansing team delivered the Bulky Waste collection service on the Waste & Recycling teams' behalf, this operation generates a significant income for the service, so was vital to keep operational.

We have also seen a similar issue within our Greenspaces team, in addition to staff absence due to the pingdemic and peak holiday season we saw significant rain and sun in equal measures, which delivered perfect growing conditions, which is unusual for this time of year, however, this added additional pressure to the team, trying to keep up with the grass cutting schedules.

This year the team have been inundated with requests & complaints about grass cutting. In equal measures of those who want the grass cut and those who feel it should be left to grow.

With the occasional resident complaining directly to an operative, carrying out a task he's been given, suggesting strongly that he shouldn't be cutting the grass. I would be very grateful in your support of the team, who are carrying out their role as directed by the current policy.

Whilst on the subject of the Greenspaces team I'm very happy to confirm that we have achieved the best results ever in our South East in Bloom entry, with 9 awards. 4 golds including Earlswood Common, 4 silver gilts and 1 silver.

The team work tirelessly to keep our borough looking inviting for our residents and I'm very proud of their achievements.

## QUESTION 10: Littering and street cleansing

**Question from Councillor Torra to Councillor Mrs Bramhall, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services**

### **Question:**

In this age of us all getting involved with litter picking events in our borough, can we be provided with:

- a breakdown of the number of street cleaning operatives that are currently employed by Reigate and Banstead; and,
- the number of littering prosecutions that they have issued in the past year, and the extent to which these figures have changed since the start of the Covid crisis?

### **Response:**

There are 30 full time staff including the Cleansing manager and Cleansing Supervisor

- 1 x Manager
- 1 x Supervisor
- 2 x Mechanical sweeper drivers – HGV
- 4 x Mechanical sweeper drivers – mini
- 3 x Park's bin clearance & litter picking
- 12 x Bin clearance & litter pickers – early start
- 2 x Bin Clearance Litter pickers – late shift
- 4 x Town Centre Beatmen
- 1 x Grab lorry driver, fly-tipping & graffiti removal

The cleansing team do not carry the responsibility for prosecutions. The team sweep over 400 miles of road within the borough, empty 550 street & park bins, mechanically sweep our shop fronts daily, litter pick, remove fly-tipping, clean our bring sites daily and remove graffiti.

They work with the community payback team and liaise with our boroughs volunteer litter picking groups, to provide equipment and purple bags to support their work.

Since September 1<sup>st</sup> 2020 to 26<sup>th</sup> August 2021 – the Joint Enforcement Team have issued 38 Fixed Penalty Notices for littering, 43 for fly tipping, 3 for fly posting, 1 failing to provide documentation and 1 for abandoning a vehicle. A total of 86.

A littering offence is exceedingly difficult to capture as it must be witnessed by the officer concerned or recorded on overt CCTV. A considerable amount of time is spent reviewing footage from the overt camera that we deploy mainly at our bring sites or at know fly-tipping hotspots in the borough.

It has not been necessary to prosecute individuals as the FPNs we have issued have been paid without getting to that point in the process.



The JET team were redeployed to other duties during the pandemic and enforcement was reduced however they are enforcing littering and fly tipping again, at about the same level as pre-Covid.

**Supplementary question:**

Is there a programme on new recycling litter bins being introduced and increasing frequency of the bins being emptied? In COVID there have been a lot of people out and about and bins are being filled quickly, and takeaways find that their bins are filling up too quickly and are not being emptied quickly enough by the Council, so I wanted to know if that frequency has been increased?

**Supplementary response:**

Thank you. We've already installed two 'Big Belly Bins', which one of the director's, Luci mould, and I found some years ago in Bournemouth at an LGA conference. What they do is they get filled up and then they compress automatically within themselves and keep compressing until they're full up and then they actually dial-in to the depot and tell the operatives to come and empty them, which I think is incredibly clever.

One of those is due to be going in, if it's not already installed, at Earlswood Lakes. Unfortunately, there are very expensive, so to roll those out across the borough would be cost prohibitive.

We have a number of operatives, as you know we've got 30, so if we were to get them to empty the bins twice daily then we would have to employ more staff and then there would be ongoing costs to the service.

It is something I can take back to my head of service and discuss with her, but I think bearing in mind a lot of people have gone back to work the bins now tend to be emptied and they haven't been getting refilled anywhere near as quickly. So, at the moment if there is a problem, I'm sure it will be raised with me and we can discuss a positive way forward, thank you.

## QUESTION 11: Parking on Redhill Station roundabout

**Question from Councillor Sinden to Councillor Mrs Bramhall, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services**

### **Question:**

Over lock-down there has been an increase in illegal and obstructive parking directly near McDonalds and Roadrunners at the end of station road, around the station roundabout and into the access road into the bus station in the centre of Redhill.

While we thank the council for the installation of the pretty planters, engagement with McDonalds and higher presence by the council's parking enforcement team this problem continues often within minutes of the parking enforcement team leaving the area and at times when they are off duty.

Residents continue to express their concern for their safety when attempting to cross to the island by the bus station and traffic jams have been created such as when Sainsbury's lorries cannot access for deliveries in the evenings. I have witnessed this myself.

We have requested Surrey County Council to investigate increasing parking controls, but this would need an extension of parking enforcement to work on its own.

Can you please provide an update on what the Council is doing and how it plans to resolve the problem such as installing CCTV on the side of Warwick Quadrant or stronger enforcement of home delivery pick-ups and private hire vehicles?

### **Response:**

The pandemic has seen a huge increase in home delivery services such as Uber Eats, Deliveroo and Just Eat, all of which contribute to the recovery and viability of related businesses in Redhill.

Loading and unloading is permitted in these areas as is the picking up and setting down of passengers by private hire vehicles.

The design of the paving and roundabout is such that vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists can easily access the area.

We installed planters as a temporary measure, and these have lessened the impact but not by a significant factor.

Until such time as the layout is changed significantly by SCC, there is likely to be an issue as this spot.

The parking wardens enforce this area multiple times each day the team have visited the location over a thousand times since April 21 and have issued 36 PCN's, this includes a daily visit where we stay at the location for 1 hour.

In terms of additional parking restriction measures, I have asked that officers investigate the process of installing a red route or similar restriction that prevents any stopping in that area. I hope that helps you, Councillor Sinden.

**Supplementary question:**

Do you really think that the red route will work? Will it be sufficient?

**Supplementary response:**

I have no idea. Who knows?

## QUESTION 12: HGV driver shortage impact on Council services

**Question from Councillor Hudson to Councillor Mrs Bramhall, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services**

**Question:**

Can the Executive Member confirm how the Council are dealing with the HGV driver shortage, and what knock-on effect this has had?

Also, what is the Council doing to encourage other members of staff to train for, and become, HGV Drivers?

**Response:**

As I mentioned in my previous response to question 9, the council has been impacted by the shortage of HGV drivers, we have struggled to engage drivers through our normal agency partners but have worked with the HR team to look at different avenues and to work with new agencies.

We have been lucky not to lose any of our existing drivers to date, however with the Pandemic, covid isolations and it being peak holiday season, our reliance on recruiting short term agency drivers has been impacted.

To manage this shortage as previously stated the Waste & Recycling team who have been most affected by the shortage, have worked 6 days a week.

In answer to what we are doing to encourage other council staff to train, I can confirm that one of our long-standing refuse loaders has just passed his HGV test and is now able to drive a refuse truck.

We have another 3 long standing loaders preparing for their HGV training and another 4 staff members from other departments who we are considering putting forward to provide the resilience the team will need in the future, to support through difficult periods.

We are working with our colleagues in HR to look at the package we offer our drivers to ensure we offer a competitive package which we believe we do, we offer a good salary, good holiday entitlement and a great working environment.

## QUESTION 13: Anti-social behaviour at Memorial Park

**Question from Councillor McKenna to Councillor Mrs Bramhall, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services**

**Question:**

We have been approached by residents of Ladbroke and Lynwood Road concerning anti-social behaviour including noise and drug taking in Memorial Park, particularly in the evenings and late at night.

Loud music and inappropriate language is disturbing residents often into the early hours of the morning. Notwithstanding the litter that is left to be picked up by council officers the next morning the main concern is how this new issue, is now impacting on the lives of residents living around our park.

This activity is particularly taking place near the community orchard and in/near the basketball court which are far from the CCTV and distant from the park entrances.

Please can you confirm what action the Council is seeking to take to address this, such as moving benches, locking the courts and introducing gates which can be locked at the park entrances at night?

**Response:**

Thank you for your question, I can confirm that we are aware of the issues relating to Anti-Social Behaviour in Redhill Memorial Park. As a means to address these matters, a Public Space Protection Order ('PSPO') was brought into force on 10 October 2020, for a duration of three years, until 9 October 2023, where it will be reviewed.

The PSPO enables the issuance of fixed penalty notices to those who are found in breach of the Order, for offences such as the consumption of alcohol and acting in an anti-social manner.

Memorial Park is on the JET Officers tasking sheet for patrols, which they do at different times during their working day, including the Saturdays. The current ASB happening in the park is occurring after hours, very late at night and Surrey Police are aware of the situation. The matter has been raised at JAG (Joint Action Group), with JET liaising with the police over the issue.

Regarding the operational suggestions, such as locking courts and the introduction of lockable park entrances, it should be noted that whilst these measures may act as a deterrent for some, it will not necessarily serve to eliminate the problem, given the relative ease for determined people to scale fences and gates. In addition, the implementation of such a system would result in added resource implications in terms of staff opening and locking the site, and after-hours call outs.

The potential to relocate benches has been successful in other instances, however, it would generally be considered as a last resort, and may ultimately serve to move the problem as opposed to resolving it.

Therefore, in the first instance we will continue to work with Surrey Police on potential solutions to the issues being experienced on site and would ask that residents affected by anti-social behaviour report it immediately through the non-emergency police, contact channels.

**Supplementary question:**

Can we arrange to have officers meet with us and residents to discuss this issue on site so that we can explain the issues more closely, particularly as I believe that no fixed penalty notices have been issued, thank you.

**Supplementary response:**

I think you're directing your question to the wrong organisation. I think you should be requesting a meeting with Surrey Police, perhaps the neighbourhood inspector.

It's for its for Surrey police to enforce anti-social behaviour and the PSPO, not for greenspaces officers. I know you put a number of suggestions forward, such as moving the tennis court, I think there was some other some other suggestions which were totally unworkable.

I would also say that this has happened on and off for a considerable amount of years. I would also suggest to your residents that they have gardens and their houses were purchased, and they back on to a town centre Park. So, by virtue of that, there is noise.

I take my grandsons there and it's pretty horrendous during the day, let alone in the evening. Personally, where I live, in front of my house is a large amount common land with a children's play area that suffered probably more incursions from the Traveller community over the last few years than anywhere else in the Borough

By virtue of where my house is placed, that's just sometimes what happens. I would suggest that as soon as any of your residents hear any noise that they immediately get on to the police number 111 and report it in. So, if I can do anything to help you to facilitate a meeting with the Neighbourhood Inspector and Surrey Police I will of course do that, thank you.

## QUESTION 14: Public water fountains

**Question from Councillor Chandler to Councillor Mrs Bramhall, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services**

**Question:**

In a 2018 survey by Keep Britain Tidy 58% of people felt they were much more likely to use a reusable water bottle if there were more public water fountains available as it's hard to ask for a refill when not making a purchase.

Given that bottled water is 2000 times more carbon intense than water from a tap (as reported in National Geographic in August 2019) and the average UK resident purchases 150 bottles a year or 3 per week, if Reigate and Banstead residents purchase at this rate that's over 22 million bottles a year.

Will Reigate and Banstead follow the lead of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council who this July installed 6 public water fountains in popular green spaces such as Bourne Hall Park and Court recreation ground?

**Response:**

Thank you for your question. I can confirm that the Council takes its commitments to environmental sustainability very seriously. In October 2018 the Council pledged to do all it could to eliminate its consumption of single use plastics ('SUPs') from its buildings, facilities and services and instead use reusable, compostable or recyclable materials.

This commitment was further strengthened through the formation of an Environmental Sustainability team and the subsequent adoption of the Council's Environmental Sustainability Strategy in 2020 and while the Council's agreed Environmental Sustainability Strategy does not include specific actions about the installation of water fountains, it does commit the Council to promote the 'Water Re-fill Network' scheme – more information about which is available on the sustainability pages of our website.

As part of the Council's work, various initiatives have been investigated and implemented to date, which includes areas such as water efficiency, waste reduction and responsible sourcing.

At present, RBBC has two public water fountains installed in green spaces, namely Reigate Priory Park and Lady Neville Park, Banstead. If there is a wider appetite to deliver more water fountains within our open spaces then we would need to carry out a feasibility study and consider this additional cost in Service & Financial planning for 21/22 or 22/23.

There are as well a number of outlets within Redhill that I know of myself that are signed up to the Redhill water refill scheme, and you can just go in there with your bottle and they'll fill it up straightaway, so if you check the website you'll be able to find those throughout the Borough, thank you.

## QUESTION 15: Delivering change in Horley Town Centre

**Question from Councillor Stevens to Councillor Biggs, Executive Member for Planning Policy & Place Delivery**

**Question:**

I am keen for the "Delivering change in Horley Town Centre" scheme to get underway for our town, improving the high street for residents and business owners alike, and finally sorting the long-term issue of the subway. These changes are much overdue for our town, and I am really excited for the prospects for our community as a result.

Could I ask the appropriate executive member as to the current progress of the scheme, and if the timetable for the proposed works on the subway is still on track?

**Response:**

Working with our partners, the Council has made significant progress in bringing forward our Delivering Change in Horley Town Centre programme, since it was presented to Executive in September 2020.

The comprehensive programme of targeted investment supports this Council's ambitions to help regenerate Horley town centre and will include:

- The refurbishment of the subway to address flooding and to improve the look and feel of this key town centre route
- Further public realm improvements in the High Street to address the poor-quality environment and to prioritise pedestrians and cyclists
- The installation of pay-on-exit parking in town centre car parks to provide more convenient payment methods for visitors and
- Bringing forward the development of the underutilised High Street Car Park site to deliver much needed new homes.

A multi-disciplinary professional design team have been appointed and we have undertaken preliminary design and investigations in relation to each of the projects and we have been working with our partners including Network Rail and Surrey County Council to bring these forward.

While Covid 19 has affected our programme we do anticipated that the:

- Pay-on-exit car parking in the Central Car Park will commence this financial year
- Works to the subway works and the High Street Public Realm Improvements will commence in the 2022/23i financial year and
- The redevelopment of the High Street Car Park site will commence in the latter part of the 2022/23 financial year subject to planning



## QUESTION 16: Gatwick consultation

**Question from Councillor Essex to Councillor Biggs, Executive Member for Planning Policy & Place Delivery**

**Question:**

A public consultation on turning Gatwick's emergency runway into a second runway started on 9th September and runs until 1st December.

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council is one of ten councils around the airport that is being formally invited to respond.

In light of this how will the Council engage with councillors and residents to ensure an appropriate response is submitted?

**Response:**

Officers across various departments have attended topic groups held by Gatwick Airport Limited or GAL, which have been held to date to understand the various technical impacts. There are also cross-authority Officer groups to discuss issues and impacts arising from Gatwick's proposals.

However, it is only on receipt of the consultation documents on the 9<sup>th</sup> September that all the information was available and this will be reviewed by Officers on a topic by topic basis.

Officers have this week shared with all Members a briefing note providing a summary of the process and proposals. We have also asked GAL to hold an all-member briefing so they can explain their proposals first-hand and Members can have the opportunity to challenge or ask them questions directly.

Once Officers have reviewed the consultation documents, challenged assumptions and fully understood the issues and impacts, they will draft responses and potential mitigation measures. There will then be further opportunity for Member briefing to inform the final response on the consultation.

It is important to note that the Development Consent Order (DCO) process will run similar to a local plan examination or planning appeal and be heard by an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

The Borough Council is essentially a consultee in the process and therefore any Members, residents or organisations may be best served responding to the consultation directly rather than seeking to make representations through the Council.

That way it can be ensured that any individual views are submitted in full. However, should anyone want to copy their responses to the Council for consideration in its response then of course that would be fine and best emailed to [LDF@reigate-banstead.gov.uk](mailto:LDF@reigate-banstead.gov.uk).

In terms of engaging residents, the Council has been sharing Gatwick's social media posts and will be doing more of that in advance of their mobile consultation units visiting the borough.

We will also be putting something in our next Borough e-news, which is our newsletter to residents signed up to receive it and the Economic Prosperity team plan to share in their Business e-bulletin.

A piece has also been included on Re-Member – the members e-newsletter - so that Members are aware and able to assist in engaging residents. An article was also published on the Knowledge intrant to inform staff.

In summary the Council response will be aiming to secure the best outcomes from the DCO process for the borough's residents and businesses, but this may mean different things to different people, and so we would encourage individual representations to be made direct to GAL albeit we are very happy to have sight of these and consider them in the Council's response.

**Supplementary question:**

In that all-Member briefing, can we include a briefing particularly from the air quality monitoring specialist of the Council, because this is a particular responsibility we have as a Council. That has become more important since publication of the World Health Organisation's report on air pollution, thank you very much.

**Supplementary response:**

I'm more than happy to look at adding air quality if it's not already one of the topics. Officers will be going through the briefing topic by topic, as I mentioned in my answer, so if it's not, I will certainly ask them to review the air quality situation.