

Report from Keith Witham, SCC Councillor, Worplesdon. February 2020

1. Potholes, roads, pavements, flooding and more.

Severe weather at this time of year is not unusual. As you would expect SCC is fully geared up, but the Council does rely on public reporting, so if you see a pothole or another road problem such as sunken ironworks, please help get them fixed quicker - **PLEASE REPORT IT**. By far the best way of reporting a pothole, or any other road defects is always via the SCC website site and the "report it" section, as you can bring up a map and mark the exact location on a map. This gets it logged and onto the work programme to be assessed and fixed asap <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/roadworks-and-maintenance/report-a-highway-problem>

Flooding, blocked drains, fallen trees, power cuts.

For these issues it is: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/emergency-planning-and-community-safety/flooding-advice/reporting-flooding-trees-and-power-cuts>

The recent severe weather and how SCC is doing

The rain has taken a toll on the roads, with many more potholes than usual forming, along with flooding and tree related issues. There have been 5 recent yellow weather warnings for both wind and rain issued covering Surrey for excessive wind and rain.

Surrey Highways increased the number of gangs working out on the roads network from the usual 10-12 gangs to over 20 gangs, including 3 working overnight to get all priority defects repaired as quickly as possible.

The situation is, as always, being monitored daily and 2-3 times a day as needed. This also applies, when needed, to road gritting and a network of gritters are ready to be deployed daily if/when the rain turns to snow or frost.

Finally, another website link for you specifically re potholes.

<https://www9.surreycc.gov.uk/HighwayIssue/whatistheissue.aspx?&code=potcw>

2. Surrey County Council Proposed budget for 2020/21

A lot of the time I spend at County Hall on your behalf is making sure that the priorities of residents I represent make their way into the Council's budget. So thank you to WPC and residents who have contacted me about any local issue, in some small way, you have helped me contribute to the formation of this progressive budget.

It is necessary to first understand that there are two types of local authority budgets

- **“Revenue”** (recurring annual expenditure, mainly financed by Council Tax)
- and **“Capital”** (for one off expenditure or projects, financed by the sale of assets (property) and borrowing.

Revenue. Council Tax will increase by 4% - being 2% for all services except Social Care, plus an additional 2% reserved specifically for use in Adult Social Care, which accounts for a large part of the total costs.

The other type of budget is **Capital**, for one off expenditure or projects. This is being entirely overhauled for the next five years providing over £500 million (over 5 years) aimed at a wide range of projects:

- £92m extra to improve the condition of our roads and pavements;
- £237m for the River Thames Flood Alleviation Scheme* (including £33million for other localised flood prevention schemes);
- £100m for a new Community Investment Fund to help regenerate high streets and similar schemes;
- £7.3m for 725 new extra care home places for older people;
- £31m for extra Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) school places;
- £70m for new school places;
- £84m for green projects inc solar farms, electric charging points and electric transport;
- £3m for improvements to the Countryside Rights of Way network

*the £234m contribution to flood prevention from SCC is over 10 years as a part of the overall 10 year flooding alleviation plan of over £600 million being supported by the Government.

I will keep Residents informed as each of these progresses.

The Revenue budget. A Brief Summary of what SCC does - through its annual budget of approx £1 billion, paid for by Council Tax and a share of business rates.

Adult Social Care - Support for older people and adults with physical disabilities, mental health support needs and learning disabilities; **Children's Social Care** - Child protection and care for vulnerable children; **Early years and education support** – this is additional to the education funding set by government and pays for things like early help for families, school transport and additional school places: **Special Educational Needs and Disabilities services** and school support; **Highways and transport** - Road and pavement maintenance and improvement, streetlights, gritting, bus services and road safety; **Waste disposal** - Disposing of waste and running 15 Community Recycling Centres; **Community Protection** - Surrey Fire and Rescue, Trading Standards and Emergency Planning; **Cultural Services** - Libraries, Registrars, Surrey History Centre, Surrey Arts and Adult Learning; **Environment and planning** - Looking after the countryside and strategic

planning policies; **Public Health**

Full more detailed information see: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/finance-and-performance/surrey-county-council-budget-202021>

3. Emergency grants for people in crisis

Would you know where to go if you suddenly found yourself with no access to money? Or how to advise someone you know?

The team at the Surrey Crisis Fund help people who find themselves in a crisis situation with nowhere else to turn for help. It could be job loss, unexpected delays or problems with benefits payments or people fleeing domestic violence – there are lots of reasons why this can happen to people young or old and through no fault of their own.

The Surrey Crisis Fund is an emergency discretionary grant to be used for food, gas and electricity, travel fares for medical appointments or job interviews. The scheme can also provide essential furniture and white goods for those who need to set up a new home and don't have resources of their own.

The award winning scheme was set up by Surrey County Council five years ago in response to the Welfare Reform Act 2012 to provide support for Surrey's most vulnerable residents. The team work closely with Surrey's Citizens' Advice and the Department for Work and Pensions.

If you know someone in need and have nowhere else to turn, Surrey County Council's Crisis Fund may be able to help. Visit the Surrey Crisis Fund web page for more information. <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/surrey-crisis-fund>

4. Enjoying Surrey's Countryside

Even at this time of year there are some great walks to enjoy in our lovely Surrey Countryside. For some ideas see: <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/surrey-matters/out-and-about/winter-explore-walks-in-surrey>

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