Top salary for bottom borough

Woking Borough Council's new managing director will be tasked with navigating its "grave" and "extremely vulnerable position" – and be paid more than any other council CEO's salary while they do so.

The latest government report into the state of the council's debt recovery was published this week when it was also confirmed who would succeed Julie Fisher as Chief Executive.

Epsom and Ewell Times receives frequent reports on the appalling financial plight of Woking Borough Council. Its debt is £2.6 billion. We seek to select those that may be of greatest interest.

Mrs Fisher announced in November her decision to quit, less than two years after stepping into the top job in April 2021. Her replacement has been announced as Richard Carr who will take on the role as Managing Director Commissioner on an interim basis.

According to the letter sent to Woking Borough Council, Mr Carr will be "entitled to a fee" of £1,100 for each day he is there, up to 260 days, as well as expenses. This is more than any other council CEO's salary, not including pention contributions. Other CEOs once pension packets are included – would receive a higher total package.

This works out as £286,000 if he stayed for the period, and it "is the council's responsibility to meet these costs", the report reads. Anything above this needs prior approval of the Secretary of State.

Surrey County Council's CEO Joanna Killian receives a salary of £234,600 and oversees a larger budget. Comparable Surrey borough councils Runnymede, Spelthorne and Elmbridge pocket £138,000, £142,000, and £145,220 respectively. [The UK Prime Minister's salary is £164,951.]

In a letter to outgoing CEO Julie Fisher, the commissioners said: "Your authority has worked collaboratively and cooperatively with the commissioners. That being said, the situation remains grave.

"The first report, published on October 19, made it clear that the scale of the challenge at your Authority 'should not be underestimated'.

"In their second report the commissioners continue to paint a stark picture of the challenges, noting that the authority remains in an extremely vulnerable position due to its overhanging debt and historical lack of rigour in its commercial activity. In the short-term, tough decisions need to be made, requiring clear leadership across the authority, and a steady hand at the wheel. In the longer term, innovative solutions need to be developed to tackle Woking's financial position and organisational model.

"With this in mind, coupled with your resignation as chief executive, the Secretary of State deems that any corporate leadership gap in Woking poses too great a risk to the integrity of the authority. The Secretary of State has therefore made the decision to increase the capacity of the commissioner team to enable focus on the long-term challenges the authority faces and has appointed a managing director commissioner to join."

Once his appointment begins, Mr Carr will be responsible for day-to-day operations of the council, provide strategic direction, and implement "efficiencies" \cdot

The letter continued: "It remains clear that, although progress has been made, the most difficult phases of the authority's recovery are still yet to begin, and there is still much work to be done to ensure Woking Borough Council can again meet its best value duty independently."

Cllr Ann-Marie Barker, leader of Woking Borough Council, said: "I'm pleased that the Commissioners have recognised the council's hard work and the progress we have made in their second report, while setting out clearly the very significant challenges the council continues to face." She added: "I'm delighted that Julie Fisher has kindly agreed to stay on as chief executive until April to ensure that the council has the senior leadership it needs over that period and to enable an effective handover to Richard."

Doctor struck off where police found insufficient evidence

A Surrey doctor who used his position to gain the trust of a woman before choking and sexually assaulting her has been struck off. Former Royal Surrey County Hospital doctor Adnan Sadiq texted the woman saying "I'm a doctor, I save lives", "You can trust me", "I'm a nice guy" and "you don't have to worry" before meeting with the woman during lockdown and assaulting her.

The Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service found that he placed both hands on the woman's neck, anonymised as Ms A, and applied pressure. He also pushed Ms A's head towards his exposed penis, before asking if he could 'put it in' or words to that effect during the November 2020 predatory attack.

When questioned Ms A told the tribunal: "I genuinely feared for my life and was glad to escape... it took me a while to realise that what had happened was not ok."

Dr Sadiq initially denied choking was his kink, but later accepted he liked it in a sexual context, according to the tribunal report. Allegations he sent explicit images over snapchat were not proven but overall his behaviour was so egregious that he was struck off as a doctor.

The report read: "Dr Sadiq's actions would undermine public trust and confidence in him, as well as in the medical profession." Dr Sadiq qualified in 2020 from University of Szeged, Hungary, and moved to Britain to take up his first medical post in October 2020. A month later he began texting the woman before going on to sexually assault her. During evidence he gave answers that were "too implausible to be truthful".

He also contradicted himself in relation to his predilections and other topics. For example, when asked about kissing Ms A, he said: "'We both kissed at the same time... because her face was coming towards me and I didn't want her to feel awkward."

The report added: "The tribunal considered Dr Sadiq's actions to amount to sexual assault, with an element of violence. The tribunal was concerned as to his apparent continued lack of insight into the seriousness of his actions and their consequences for (the woman) and public confidence in doctors.

"Erasure is the only appropriate and proportionate sanction sufficient to maintain public confidence in the medical profession and to uphold standards of conduct for doctors."

The tribunal determined that Dr Sadiq's name should be erased from the medical register.

The General Medical Council suspended Dr Sadiq in September 2023 and he was immediately stopped from working at Royal Surrey. The full tribunal process concluded in November and he was erased from the medical register.

A spokesperson for the hospital trust said: "In May 2021 the General Medical Council informed the Royal Surrey County Hospital that an allegation had been made against Dr Sadiq regarding inappropriate sexual conduct outside of the trust. Since then we have followed clear and robust processes in a timely way, appropriately reflecting the investigations and decisions taken by the GMC and Surrey Police at each stage. While this incident occurred outside of our work place, we expect anyone employed by our trust to uphold the highest moral standards and would like to express sympathy for the distress caused to the complainant in this case."

A spokesperson for Surrey Police said they received a sexual assault report in February 2021 and later arrested a 30-year-old man. The spokesperson said: "Following our investigation, officers concluded there was not sufficient evidence to proceed with the case. The victim was kept informed throughout and supported by officers. The man arrested was a medical professional at Royal Surrey NHS Foundation Trust and Surrey Police provided information to the General Medical Council about the investigation."

Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service (image Google)

Smoke safety lessons for Surrey services

A 63-year-old bedridden man was killed in a house fire after smoking in bed, shortly after an "inexperienced" officer carried out an "unscrutinised" safety visit of his independent living flat.

In February 2023, Kevin O'Hara died from smoke inhalation and burns after falling asleep while smoking, an inquest found. Mr

O'Hara had been visited in his Frimley home by Surrey Fire and Rescue on November 17, 2022, for a 'safe and well visit' which failed to identify the correct position for the smoke detector or his careline monitor.

A later visit by Surrey's Adult Social Care team, on January 23, 2023, also failed to include a risk assessment – despite concerns for his health and the dangers of smoking in bed.

This was all the more urgent as it was known that would not be able to get himself out of the house independently in the event of a fire. According to the Prevention of Death report, Mr O'Hara died in a fire that started from a lit cigarette "igniting debris" on a crash mat next to his bed. His smoke detectors and the intercom box, however, were in the hallway and the door shut.

The alarm was only triggered when enough smoke had built up to seep through the top of the living room door. Mr O'Hara died before emergency teams could reach him.

Both Surrey Fire and Rescue, as well as Surrey Adult Social Care, say they have since undertaken work to mitigate the risks of a recurrence, including serious incident reports, increased training and greater coordination across teams. They say they have also adopted an improved 'person at risk' referral system to better identify fire dangers to individuals.

The coroner, Susan Ridge, however said more needs to be done to ensure a review system is in place to give more oversight to experienced staff. The report reads: "Evidence was given that the Safe and Well Visit in November 2022 was conducted by an inexperienced officer. The results of that visit did not seem to be subject to any scrutiny. Surrey Fire and Rescue does not appear to have in place a system of review or audit by line managers or more experienced staff of completed Safe and Well Visits, with the risk, as in this case, that errors or issues requiring action are not identified."

Tim Oliver, Leader of Surrey County Council: "We would like to express our deepest condolences to Mr O'Hara's family and anyone else affected by his tragic death. We recognise the importance of learning from serious incidents and carried out a review of what happened in this case which led to our fire and rescue service and adult social care service working together to introduce a new process for identifying people at risk. Surrey Fire and Rescue Service has also enhanced its training for officers involved in Safe and Well Visits and is in the process of developing a quality assurance system to identify and address potential risks more effectively.

"We will continue to embed an understanding of prevention activity across the service. Within adult social care, we have taken steps to strengthen management oversight over risk assessments and have brought in further training for staff.

"While we have taken a number of actions in the months since this case, we are carefully considering the coroner's findings and are committed to doing all we can to improve the way we support vulnerable people and manage any fire risks they face."

Image: illustration purposes only.

Credit:Vadym Plysiuk

Surrey borough kicks up a stink about stink

More than 200 tankers of human poo were shipped in to Camberley from across Surrey, Hampshire and London, saving Thames Water millions in potential pollution fines and its sewage trucks from "exploding". This comes at the expense of 11,600 residents who got nothing in return, save for a summer of vile stench, a committee heard.

Chiefs from the utility firm were called in to Surrey Heath Borough Council to answer questions as to how 12,000 cubic metres of raw untreated sewage and sludge was left to fester in the heat – forcing thousands of people to stay inside with their windows closed during the summer.

The committee also challenged water bosses over pledges they thought had been made on compensation to Camberley residents who "bore the cost" so the company, which recorded a total revenue of £2.3 billion last year, could profit.

Councillors said they were led to believe Thames Water would contribute towards a playground as a goodwill gesture to children who had been forced to stay indoors, with committee chair, Councillor Rob Lee, going as far as to say Thames Water should offer "a year's free water bills" to those affected.

Thames Water's representatives said they never made a firm commitment to contribute to any scheme. The company claims they have made organisational improvements since.

The committee heard that Thames Water could not have made any offers of goodwill as the people attending the meeting did not

have the power to do so.

In the end, Thames Water's leadership offered to let staff have a charity day to support building a local project that never got off the ground.

The sewage started being shipped into Camberley Sewage Works in February this year and by March the two 6,000 cubic metre tanks were "completely full".

At the time, the committee heard, odour suppression was in place but it wasn't 24/7 and didn't cover the entire tank, which also suffered from maintenance issues.

By June, the council began to receive formal complaints. Initially the council was told the problem was due to blockages and drainage.

It took until the middle of July for Thames Water to publicly admit it was a holding tank with a "large quantity of sewage sludge within it". It would remain untreated until the beginning of August with the tanks finally cleared and cleaned of waste on September 25.

Speaking to the committee was operations director James Bentley. He apologised "unreservedly" and said: "We didn't get everything right in that process and we're not here to pretend that we did." He said the firm should have put in odour controls in place and communicated with residents much sooner. He said: "We had been experiencing a very extreme sludge event...where our system across the whole of the Thames Water estate, was overloaded. Not only with liquid sludge but also with cake which is the solid material when we process sludge and remove a chunk of the water from it. That system was overloaded on the liquid and solid side."

Thames Water staff told the meeting it left them with no choice but to put liquid sludge into reserve tanks. Mr Bentley said: "It has to go somewhere, it cant just be discarded into the environment. We have to store it until we are able to treat it." His colleague added: "If we didn't move the sludge we'd have pollution trucks potentially exploding, and that's why we'd done it."

Cllr Rob Lee said: "You act in the shareholders best interest, you don't intend to cause a substantial sewage leak unless its a commercially managed one, you don't intend to cause a Heath and Safety Executive incident, so what you did was you moved the sludge to Camberley. So the people that bore the cost of that were the residents of Camberley, substantially through the summer, through their loss of enjoyment and I think it's understanding the loss position those residents bring.

"They are your customers, they pay you money, and they missed out substantially on the enjoyment of their summers. Raw sewage smell around your home is pretty different to that in a treatment plant as that is your job. You need to consider a gesture of goodwill to residents. A starting point is a year's complimentary water bill. It clearly saved Thames Water in material terms millions if not tens of millions of pounds, so I think we need to start exploring that avenue."

The two hour meeting concluded with the Thursday, November 28 executive partnerships select committee agreeing to formally ask for a "decision maker who has the ability to sign off on compensation" to appear before the next meeting, in March.

The council's executive team will also write to regulators Ofwat, MP Michael Gove and the environment secretary to ask them to consider the wider sense of pollution and whether Thames Water diverted the risk of fines by increasing the air pollution in Camberley.

Image: Thames Water Meeting (Surrey Heath BC)

Poorest will pay for a Council's mismanagement

Vulnerable people are set to bear the brunt of service charge rises after **Woking Borough Council**'s executive committee agreed to inflation-busting increases. People who receive community meals or extra care facilities will be asked to pay more, as will users of community alarms.

The day-care services, which were previously free, run from The Vyne and St Mary's Community Centre are to be moved to Brockhill and Hale End Court and cost £20 a day. The daycare charge would not include the cost of transportation which is currently undertaken by Woking Community Transport - which in itself is under threat given its loss of funding.

The hit is being forced on residents after Woking Borough Council declared itself effectively bankrupt in June this year, with an unpayable deficit of about £1.2 billion and debt set to soar to £2.6bn. It meant all services the council was not legally obliged to provide would have to pay for themselves.

Other increases recommended for approval included garden waste fees rising by almost 50 per cent to £70 per bin, and community hall fees jumping by 20 per cent.

Decisions on big ticket items, such as Pool in the Park, and parking charges, are still to come as the council awaits consultation results and is not expected until the new year.

Introducing the measures to the Thursday, November 16, meeting, was Councillor Dale Roberts, portfolio holder for financial planning. He described service charges as "a bit of a political football but this is also not like any other year." He said: "This must be done while reducing, removing, the subsidy from discretionary services effectively delivering them cost neutral such that they are affordable, sustainable to this council."

Leader of the council, Councillor Ann-Marie Barker said: "These are non-statutory services, they are services the government doesn't require us to provide. We provide them because they are good and useful services to residents but if we want to continue to provide them we've got to cover the costs, we've got to make them cost neutral. But affordability has to be a key measure as well because we may be impacting people who can't afford to pay them." She added: "It's not easy but it's symptomatic of the situation we find ourselves in."

Opposition members raised flags over the lack of detail in the papers, stating it made approving blanket increases difficult as there was no way to know the extent that they were needed. This was agreed by the executive who said the problem was deeprooted and part of the council's long-term problems.

Cllr Roberts said that officers have worked very hard but that he recognised "that there is missing information, things we would all like, that are just not there". He said: "Councils don't fail because they get into financial difficulty they get into financial difficulty because they failed. The fact that we are absent of some of the information we absolutely need, critical to moving forward, is because this council has failed, its broken."

A formal vote will be taken by a full meeting of Woking Borough Council. It is due to sit on November 30.

The Vyne, Woking (Image Google)

No way to discharge bankrupt Council

Bankrupt Woking Borough Council is spending up to £148,000 a year on free charging for electric vehicles – about the same it would cost to save the "Bustler" community bus service.

The great electric give away at the Red Car Park in Victoria Square is happening, it emerged, because antiquated IT systems mean the council is powerless to charge people who use them.

It has led to calls for the electric vehicle charging stations to be switched off immediately in the hope the money could be used for community projects that are struggling with funding cuts as the council grapples with its near £2.6bn debt.

The shocking figure was uncovered during the Monday, November 20, Overview and Scrutiny Committee when officers were grilled on budget overspend over electricity costs for the Red Car Park in Victoria Place which "had not been budgeted for resulting in an estimated overspend of £148,000".

Councillor Kevin Davis (CON, Heathlands) said: "What on earth is going on in that car park that's racking up electricity charges of 148 grand?" He was told the money was going to the council-owned Thameswey account as part of its decentralised heat network - which ultimately provided power for electric vehicle charging points in the car park.

Officers told Cllr Davis they were aware the council was "not able to financially charge, sometimes we're not (even) able to electrically charge" because the "back office systems that support the EV charging system are not in place".

Cllr Leslie Rice (LD, Heathlands) said: "Somebody is getting free charging." He added: "This has come out in a meeting. We talk about transparency and good management practices and we've turned over a new leaf, this doesn't look like it. Someone from one side of the political divide picks up on something and it's built on and built on and it's not a good picture. It does not reflect well on council officers, this should be disclosed and it shouldn't be dragged out this way in the meeting."

It comes less than a month after the chief executive of Woking Community Transport warned of 'dark days' ahead after learning its service agreement was under threat as part of £11m of cuts the council must make to balance its budget.

The door-to-door community transport, known as the yellow Bustler service, helps take people with mobility issues to day centres

in the borough.

The council, which declared itself bust in June, has to stop spending on all services not classified by the Government as essential.

Cllr Davis said: "This is just a shocking example, and it's been dragged out by accident, and now we have to come up with a solution. We should be looking at stopping people getting free electricity."

Cllr Rice added: "£148,000, I think £150,000 is the Bustler grant that we're talking about. There are so many different things we could do with £150,000."

Finance lessons for Parliament from Surrey Boroughs

Surrey Heath Borough Council is burning through its reserves and eyeing up serious cuts to services, the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee was told. The Monday, November 13, cross-party panel of MPs heard from experts including from the National Audit Office, the Institute of Fiscal Studies, and chief financial officers of local councils as it delved into the 'financial distress in local authorities'.

Among the group giving evidence were Paul Dossett, from Grant Thornton the forensic accountants deep-diving into Woking Borough Council, Jonathan Carr-West, of the Local Government Information Unit, and Surrey Heath's chief finance officer Bob Watson.

The committee was also told a lack of professional accountability among senior officers – across all councils – has been a driving factor behind local authorities running into financial trouble – and has been made worse with many scared to stand up against councillors for fear of losing their jobs.

Mr Watson said: " (Surrey Heath) is not in immediate financial distress, it is like many other councils, predicting a use of reserves over the medium finance period and the burn rate on those reserves is unsustainable into the medium and long term future."

He told the meeting of the "challenging budget process" the council was going through, including looking at cutting non-essential services. He said: "We have over the past two and a half years embarked on a number of efficiency measures where we've taken costs out of the organisation without cutting services to the residents and business in Surrey Heath. It is potentially now likely we will have to look at some of the discretionary services. We also have over the past built levels of ear-marled reserves for very such cases where we've started to see some of these higher interest rates coming through. We plan to use those reserves to smooth the gap over the four years. Sufficient reserves to take us through the four years but it is challenging."

Part of the reason, the committee heard, for councils struggling to balance the books has been a 61 per cent cut in funding, which has had the knock on effect of increasing demand for services – notably in housing and homelessness.

Mr Watson told the committee that the cost of living crisis has impacted on people paying private rent and who were now presenting as homeless. He said: "We in our borough haven't seen it quite the same (levels of homelessness) as some of the other Surrey boroughs but we're starting to see that increase. Last month's statistics of people presenting to our council offices actually doubled- again driven by cost of living pressures on individuals. We have the cost prices going up with hotels, we have the cost of hotels going up driven by demand going through and were now starting to see some of the hotels closed by central government these people now presenting to the local authority as homeless." He added that it was not just a refugee crisis as people have been struggling to find affordable homes for years.

Earlier in the session the committee heard from Grant Thornton's Paul Dossett. Grant Thornton works with about half the councils in the UK and is completing a deep dive into how Woking Borough Council went bankrupt with debts approaching £2.6billion. Mr Dossett told the committee that local government financing "just bumbles along with no attempt to fix it" and when councils do go bust its the most vulnerable, the ones who rely on council services the most, who are impacted.

He said: "Some of the things that have gone wrong, what we have seen with some of those people responsible from an officer side, in those key roles, the golden triangle of chief executive, monitoring officer and section 151 officer, there hasn't really been professional accountability. There may have been job accountability in that the person has moved on to a different place but the sort of professional accountability of someone not doing their job to the right professional standard we don't really see that in any meaningful way. Alongside that there needs to be better job protection for statutory officers to enable those statutory functions to speak very clearly to members to say 'you can not do this'

"That is either breaking the law, or involves a degree of financial risk that the Section 151 officer is not comfortable with, and should be able to say that without any fear that there will be comeback against you in that role."

Surrey Borough flushed with pride

Toilets in Waverley have reclaimed their thrones as some of the country's best bogs after inspectors released their results from unannounced lavatory visits.

Two watering closets in Waverley Borough Council's parks have achieved Loo of the Year status.

Broadwater Park, in Farncombe and Frensham Great Pond and Common have been awarded platinum status – honours they held from 2017 and 2019 respectively. The Waverley washrooms were the only in Surrey to have secured nominations.

Councillor Steve Williams, Waverley Borough Council's portfolio holder for environment and sustainability, said: "Clean, well-managed toilets are very important for those visiting our sites and I would like to say a big thank you to our contractors and staff who do such a great job keeping them up to such a high standard."

According to Loo of the Year organisers, the awards encourage the highest possible standards in all 'away from home' washrooms and inspectors make unannounced visits to toilets across the UK and Ireland to judge them.

Acceptable toilets are graded silver, gold, platinum or diamond and are held up against a number of criteria, including décor, cleanliness, hand washing equipment and accessibility.

The awards have run since 1987 and are considered the 'washroom standard' with overall winners across the 61 categories announced on Thursday, January 18.

Related reports:

The Cost of Spending a Penny: a review of Epsom and Ewell's public toilet provision.

Famous 16th Century Surrey pub saved, for now?

A 16th century pub in the heart of the **Surrey Hills** has been saved from developers after plans to convert one of the last remaining Abinger watering holes into houses, holiday-let pods, and a new bar area were thrown out.

Mole Valley Borough Council's planning committee met on Wednesday, November 1 to hear proposals from developers, **JPW Osprey**, to turn the Volunteer pub in Sutton Abinger, near Dorking into self-catered holiday lets.

The plans were voted down eight to six as councillors sided with resident groups, formed to save the pub, as well as **Abinger Parish Council** which had lodged formal objections.

Addressing the meeting was **Paul Clever** who was part of a community group that had raised £600,000 in a failed bid to purchase the pub and save it. He said: "The aim of this application is to close the Volunteer, replace it with an unviable alternative which gets through planning. The new entity will last as long as needed to prove that it is not viable and the developer will then sell the asset for multiples of what it cost."

He added: "The Volunteer is being closed and the new layout and proposed service will ensure the new venture in the new area will fail. The planning application and the planning report refer to the pub being unviable and that is simply not true. The Volunteer Community Group has proof of this for the year preceding the sale, during the worst trading conditions ever for publicans.

"The Volunteer is viable and very precious to its community, known far beyond the boundaries of Surrey. It should not be allowed to go the way of so many other pubs near and far, especially when there are so many people willing and able to make it work as a public house and community facility."

The pub sits on the western side of Water Lane within the hamlet of Sutton Abinger, close to the boundary with Guildford. The land is designated Metropolitan Green Belt, Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Area of Great Landscape Value.

The surroundings, the officer report said, "lend the pub an engaging verdant setting and areas of the garden afford views over rolling wooded countryside to the south taking in attractive historic properties, some of which are listed."

The Volunteer had been owned and operated by the Dorset-based brewery, Hall and Woodhouse, until 2022 when it closed and sold to the applicant.

In Novermber 2022 the pub was listed as an Asset of Community Value having been nominated by the Abinger Community Pub Group as a building that furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community.

Speaking on behalf of the the application was **Simon Best** who told the meeting it was the best way of bringing the pub back in use. He said: "Change is not always a bad thing and it is clear from previous failures that diversification is needed to ensure the Volunteer can run as a viable entity. Holiday lets will support and enable the pub to continue."

Councillor **Margaret Cooksey**, who moved that the plans be rejected said: "If they kept the public house building as is and used what is going to be the extension as accommodation that would have made much more sense. They have got it the wrong way round. It would have been better a different way round and hope they take note of that and come back with a better proposal next time round."

She added: "They've got it horribly wrong".

Image: The Volunteer Pub (Mark Davison)

Surrey police station futures

No decisions have been made on the long-term future of Caterham or Reigate Police Stations as proposals put forward "are not fit for purpose" and "cost-prohibitive".

Front-desk services returned to Caterham, after a five-year absence, as an emergency measure following the discovery of dangerous crumbling concrete nine miles away and on the other side of the M25 at Reigate Police Station.

The problem was uncovered after Surrey Police began searching their estate for Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in September as the national emergency spread.

RAAC concrete can collapse and crumble without notice. It meant the force had to shift staff and officers out of Reigate including moving front-desk counter services to Caterham, and close CCTV monitoring.

Three weeks after the discovery, there is still no timetable to return, nor any updates on whether the switch will be made permanent.

A spokesperson for Surrey Police said Caterham remained operational and had previously housed a front-counter service but closed in 2018 to save money as part of a wider review into funding.

It was deemed expendable, the force said, due to a "decrease in footfall of front counter services".

They have yet to confirm whether the counter will stay in Caterham long term, move back to Reigate, find a new home completely, or shut.

They said: "It seemed sensible to reinstate it at Caterham as it was once there until a long-term solution is found for the eastern division headquarters. Adding: "The front counter at Caterham Police Station will remain open until further notice, and we will update local residents as soon as any longer-term decisions have been made. The priority has been to maintain policing services while ensuring the health and safety of our officers, staff and visiting public."

As for Reigate, Surrey Police said they have explored a number of options for the continued use of either the whole or specific parts of the building, however, the proposals that have been put forward are not fit for purpose either for staff, or for victims to be able to report crime, and are also cost-prohibitive.

Related reports:

Reigate Police Station closes with a concrete problem

[Surrey Police's counter service in Epsom is located during normal business hours only within the Town Hall, The Parade, Epsom. Reigate Police Station's counter-service was open full-time, so from now out of hours personal attendances will have to go to Caterham or Staines or Guildford.]