

## Tasteless Tweeting Councillor loses Tory whip



A Horley councillor has lost the Tory whip after posting what his party called “wholly unacceptable and grossly offensive” posts from a now-deleted Twitter account. **Surrey County Councillor Andy Lynch** was investigated by the Conservatives for posts made last month from an account with the handle @TheLandlorduk.

Surrey County Councillor Andy Lynch now sits as an Independent.

On Tuesday (November 1), the chairman of the Surrey County Council Conservative group, **Cllr John O’Reilly**, said the investigation on behalf of the party into the account had concluded. He said: “Having spoken to senior members of the Conservative group, we have unanimously agreed that Mr Lynch’s various comments under ‘The Landlord’ twitter handle are wholly unacceptable and grossly offensive, and, accordingly, the Conservative whip has been withdrawn from him.”

Screenshots taken before the Twitter account was deleted show one post sent in response to a tweet about asylum seekers which said: “When are [politicians] going to recognise the human rights of the indigenous people to have a quiet and peaceful life?” Separately, a county council spokesperson confirmed two complaints have been received about the @TheLandlorduk account, and were being considered in line with the authority’s process for complaints against councillors.

In May this year Cllr Lynch was found to be in breach of the county council’s code of conduct for separate posts sent in February from a different Twitter account, now also deleted, with the handle @cldrAndyLynch. Tweets posted from the @TheLandlorduk account included calling the “police force an absolute disgrace these days”, and responding to a picture of a Muslim woman and child standing at a halal fridge saying: “Throw a packet of bacon in there”.

Posts also called London Mayor Sadiq Khan an “absolute knob” and London a “third world s and the murder capital of Western Europe”. A county council spokesperson said the authority’s code of conduct had no specific guidelines regarding previous conduct of the same nature but the council’s member conduct panel may take it into account when considering a complaint made against a councillor.

llr Lynch had not responded to LDRS requests for comment at the time of publication. In May, the Horley West, Salfords & Sidlow councillor was found to have breached Surrey County Council’s code of conduct for posts from the @cldrAndyLynch account.

He sent a written apology to the county council’s chief executive, its chairman and its leader. At the time, Cllr Lynch was removed from a select committee by the Conservative group, and received a statement of censure from the county council. Minutes from the conduct panel said: “The panel noted that Andy Lynch had fully co-operated with the investigation and had voluntarily admitted and apologised for his conduct.”

At the time of the first account being deleted, from which Cllr Lynch called journalist Yasmin Alibhai-Brown “a racist b\*\*\*”, he was also a Reigate and Banstead borough councillor but did not stand again in May’s local elections. A borough council spokesperson said he was suspended by his council political group as part of its disciplinary process, and remained suspended until the end of his electoral term in May.

The investigation by the borough council’s monitoring officer did not conclude because the complaints were withdrawn. Cllr Lynch was elected to the county council in May 2021.

“The Landlord” account repeated comments about Ms Alibhai-Brown including calling her an “evil, racist loon”.

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## Trading favours for Epsom’s Foodbank



**Surrey Trading Standards** with Buckingham have donated 1,760 items and over £550 for the **Epsom & Ewell Foodbank**. The items donated include food, household cleaning supplies, personal care items and cash.

The donations are in celebration of Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards reaching the milestone of 150 **Primary Authority Partnerships**, making it the largest regulatory provider of Primary Authority services.

Image: Jonathan Lees of Epsom and Ewell Foodbank

Primary Authority is a means for businesses to receive assured and tailored advice in meeting various regulations through a single point of contact. This is invaluable for start-up businesses to get it right from the outset and enables all businesses to invest with confidence in products, practices, and procedures.

The landmark achievement comes off the back of Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards also winning the “**Service Excellence Award**” at the BEIS Regulatory Awards 2022.

**Michele Manson**, Business Team Manager at Buckinghamshire & Surrey Trading Standards said: “We’re delighted that we and our partners have been able to collate so many donations for Epsom & Ewell foodbanks. The work they do is so vital and it’s great that we have been able to aid them like this. We were determined to celebrate our recent achievements in a meaningful way that supported our local communities, and this has been the perfect way to do that.”

**Jonathan Lees**, Managing Director and Founder of Epsom and Ewell Foodbank said: “It’s great that Bucks & Surrey trading standards have worked with their business partners to make this donation, cooperation like this helps us to continue to provide vital emergency support to people in the local community.”

**James Lowman**, Chief Executive Association of Convenience Stores said: “Entering our partnership with Bucks & Surrey Trading Standards was one of the best decisions we have made, and it has continued to deliver every year. The quality of support from the team, has been consistently professional, pragmatic, and engaged. This has helped us to tackle new and existing compliance challenges with confidence.”

Business partners who have helped contribute donations include:

- Green Motion Car and Van Rental
- Delphic HSE Ltd.
- Natural Instinct Limited
- Coca Cola Europacific Partners
- Global Manuka UK
- E Scooter Professional LTD
- Solution EU Limited
- Bahlsen LLP
- Sports Supplement Ltd
- Creative Nature

For more information on Primary Authority Partnerships, please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/primary-authority-overview>  
For more information on Epsom & Ewell foodbank please visit: <https://epsomewell.foodbank.org.uk/>

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## More cash for Ukraine refugee hosts



**Epsom Refugee Network** welcomes the promised increase in cash to those local residents who take into their homes individuals and families who have had to flee Ukraine. It is hoped the extra money will attract more hosts in an increasingly difficult situation. **Jo Sherring**, leader of the Epsom Refugee Network, told Epsom and Ewell Times: "As we launch an appeal for new sponsors in the area, we welcome the news of the increased thank you payments which we hope may encourage more families to consider offering a place of safety to a family fleeing Ukraine. We are also desperate to find sponsors for families who are already in the UK and are having to move on from their first sponsor and find a new host family. If you are thinking of hosting and have questions please, please get in touch". [www.epsomrefugeenetwork.org](http://www.epsomrefugeenetwork.org)

**Surrey County Council** and local district and borough councils who are managing the "**Homes for Ukraine**" scheme locally have agreed an additional thank you payment, to be paid monthly to host families from end of November 2022 to March 2023. This is acknowledging that the financial circumstances faced by host families in Surrey, who welcomed Ukrainians into their homes, will have changed from the time they agreed to host Ukrainian families to our current economic situation in the UK.

Currently, host families are paid £350 a month for being sponsors, this payment will be increased by £250 to £600 a month from end of November 2022. This is to compensate for the rise in energy, food and fuel bills in this cost-of-living crisis. This applies to existing hosts who are already in receipt of thank you payments, and new hosts who complete all the checks satisfactorily going forward. This funding comes from DLUHC (**Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities**) via the County Council to the district and borough councils to pay the sponsors directly once they have passed all the relevant housing, DBS (**Disclosure and Barring Service**) and safeguarding checks.

Surrey County Council leader **Cllr Tim Oliver** said "We are forever grateful for the unerring warm welcome and support that communities, charities, and district and boroughs continue to offer our Ukrainian guests here in Surrey. But in particular to those sponsor families who have opened their homes up to welcome Ukrainian families to live alongside them and their families. As if this sacrifice were not enough, we now need to ensure that they are not being penalised financially and can continue to offer support as sponsors in this current economic climate. Unfortunately, the conflict in Ukraine continues and so there is still a need for host families. SCC has taken the decision to increase the thank you payments after fears many people wouldn't be able to afford to extend their current six-month agreements as winter approaches and the cost-of-living bites."

Additional reporting from Surrey County Council news.

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## Emissions a taxing issue for Council



Thursday 27th October's meeting of **Epsom and Ewell's Licensing Committee** was taxed by emission standards for the Town's black cabs. Over the summer the Council had circulated a draft hackney carriage and private hire vehicle and driver policy for consultation. One local response was "Black diesel cabs have the highest emissions of any vehicle and they regularly travel up and down my road polluting the air. The most common black cab models in London are polluting the streets with nitrogen oxide (NOX) emissions up to 30 times the level of personal petrol cars of the same age."

In London since 1 January 2018, taxis presented for licensing for the first time have needed to be Zero Emission Capable. This means having CO2 emissions of no more than 50g/km and a minimum 30 mile zero emission range. First-time taxi vehicle licences are no longer granted to diesel taxis. ZEC taxis with petrol engines need to meet the latest emissions standard (currently Euro 6). Transport for London offers £7500 payments to support taxi-drivers making these changes.

Cllr **Julie Morris** (LibDem College Ward) asked why the proposed new taxi policy could not require all new applications for hackney and private hire vehicle licences to be ULEZ compliant (ultra-low emission zone). Despite issues of emissions being raised during the consultation the draft policy had not specifically proposed such a requirement. The Council officer stated that 12 months would be required to undergo a legally necessary consultation. Ms Morris went on to claim that the Council was lacking in leadership over the climate emergency.

The draft policy requires new vehicle licence applications to comply with Euro 5 (the standard from 2011) rather than the London standard of Euro 6 (applicable to new vehicles from 2015). The officer explained that implementing London's higher standards would risk reducing the provision of black cabs in Epsom as the income of local black cab drivers was lower than their London counterparts.

The committee's chair Steven McCormick (RA Woodcote) indicated that he would work with officers and endeavour to achieve the required consultation and bring back a revision on emissions standards within 6 months. The committee approved the new policy to go for decision by the Full Council in due course.

The Local Government Association advises that consultations should last between 6 to 8 weeks and possibly shorter in urgent situations.

Click [HERE](#) for the full report to the committee - pages 11-138 re taxis.

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## Balancing the Borough's Books



Borough budgets are difficult to follow. However, a practice adopted this year presents to Council committees an overview of budget plans. Without savings being made in the budgets for 2023/2024 onward the Council is predicted to face a loss of £2.6 million by 2025/2026. [Small compared with Woking Borough Council's Black-Hole of a debt of £2.4 billion - see our report on their debt [HERE](#)]

Thursday 27th October's Licensing Policy and Planning Committee received a report from the Council's Finance Department. The overview and recommendations provided to the Councillors is helpful and highlights are reprinted with some edits below. Full REPORT [HERE](#) (see pages 7 - 10). The recommendation approved by the Committee that "growth items" must be funded from existing budgets means that some items will not grow but will diminish. Cuts might be avoidable if recommended rises in various chargeable services are sufficient to pay.

Report to Councillors:

"The Council is facing a great deal of uncertainty, with sufficient information unlikely to be available to reliably predict the medium-term impact of elevated inflation and the cost-of-living crisis on Council services before the end of 2022. As such, the report to Strategy & Resources Committee modelled 3 scenarios - optimistic, neutral and pessimistic - to forecast the Council's future budget position.

In the neutral scenario, adopted for financial planning purposes, the Council faces a projected budget deficit of **£2.6m by 2025/26**.

Budget targets include:

Excluding any new growth in expenditure, a level of savings of £2.6 million is needed to achieve a balanced budget over the next three year financial planning period to 2025/26.

Recommendations:

That estimates be prepared including the delivery of savings already identified in the Financial Plan for 2023/24 totalling £215,000.

That at least £396,000 additional revenue be generated from an increase of 6% on discretionary fees and charges in 2023/24.

That a provision for pay award is made of £524,000 that would allow for a 3% cost of living increase.

That the homelessness service be set a target to reduce net costs by £243,000 per annum.

That any additional new growth items supported by Policy Committees will need to be fully funded from existing budgets."

## Surrey to SEND £40m for special schools



A £40 million project to improve education facilities for some of Surrey's most vulnerable children has moved to its next stage. **Surrey County Council** is currently not providing enough spaces in its "alternative provision" schools, which cater for children who have been excluded from mainstream schools or have additional educational needs. [Ed. SEND = special educational needs and disability.]

The current facilities are also described by the council as in "extremely poor" and "dilapidated condition".

It is hoped that being able to provide places in council-run facilities will unlock more than £1m a year because the cost of a place with private providers is around £30,000 more per year than in an authority setting.

A meeting of Surrey County Council's cabinet on Tuesday (October 25) heard from the authority's cabinet member for education and learning that the new and redeveloped sites would be "first class".

Councillor **Clare Curran** (Conservative, Bookham and Fetcham West) outlined plans for sites across Surrey which would be redeveloped, demolished or built from scratch to aim to increase the authority's capacity.

Currently, according to council documents, the authority can only provide 196 spaces, out of a total of 240 that are required by law.

Legally, the county council must secure suitable, full-time alternative education for children who, because of reasons including illness or exclusion, would not be in education unless it was arranged for them.

It must also make sure there is provision for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who have Education, Health, and Care Plans in place.

Alternative provision is often a short-term solution until a child can return to mainstream education or move to a dedicated school, but in some cases is a longer-term solution.

Cllr Curran said the new sites would provide an environment where children would feel valued, could access high quality curriculum and get the emotional, health and well-being support they needed.

She said: "These short-stay schools can include some of the most vulnerable and marginalised children and young people that are in the county. We really want to ensure that we're providing them not only with first-class accommodation, but a first-class learning experience."

The plans, which would add 44 alternative provision places, include new sites in Elmbridge, on a council-owned site at Thamesfield Farm North, in either Surrey Heath or Runnymede and a new school on a new site for Reigate Valley College.

There are also plans to demolish the current Fordway School in Spelthorne, with the school relocating temporarily to Wey Valley College in Guildford while a new school is built, and plans to remodel and expand the Wey Valley College site.

The targets for the school sites are autumn and winter 2024.

An officers' report said: "The current assets are in extremely poor condition and lack capacity to provide adequate places in appropriate locations across the county. Existing accommodation across the current nine buildings is significantly undersized and the buildings are in a dilapidated condition which is likely to render them unusable within the next two years. As such, the existing accommodation does not enable the provision of a full statutory educational offer that meets the educational needs of Surrey's most vulnerable learners."

Cabinet members approved the £43.2m budget for the project, which should also generate £5.77m in capital receipts when current council land is sold off.

The officers' report showed that the average cost of a child going to an independent facility was around £52,000 per year, compared to £22,000 per year for a place at a maintained specialist school.

The additional places in council-run schools would mean a difference of £1.32m a year to the council's budget.

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## Surrey County Council on the level.



On 2nd February 2022 the **Government** published its **Levelling Up White Paper** which laid out an agenda for tackling inequality across the country. It outlined the future landscape for devolution in the UK and provided a blueprint for improving opportunity and outcomes in education, the economy, infrastructure, transport, and health by The White Paper also set out a commitment to bring devolution in the form of County Deals 'to every part of England that wants one by 2030'.

The Government's **Levelling Up White Paper** presents a rare opportunity for the **Surrey County Council** to pursue a devolution deal for Surrey that will bring new powers, freedoms and flexibilities, better enabling the council to deliver for residents against the **2030 Community Vision**, the council's four strategic priorities (Growing a sustainable economy; Tackling health inequality; Enabling a greener future; and Empowering communities), and work towards the overarching ambition of No One Left Behind.

In April 2022, Surrey County Council's Cabinet was presented with a paper that outlined the key implications of, and opportunities within, the Government's Levelling Up White Paper for Surrey, particularly in relation to the devolution framework and a County Deal for Surrey. Within this, it set out the initial ideas being explored and developed in partnership with stakeholders that would form proposals within a County Deal.

More recently the government have announced two Level 3 devolution deals to establish the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority and East Midlands County Combined Authority. Both deals align closely with the wording set out in the Devolution Framework and have provided a useful basis from which to compare with the proposals being considered for Surrey's County Deal.

Despite securing these devolution deals, progress has slowed in government due to a number of factors, including the ongoing challenges with the cost-of-living crisis, the Conservative Party Leadership contest to elect a new Prime Minister and then the death of Queen Elizabeth II. Capacity within the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities is limited, so until the first set of early County Deals are agreed they are unlikely to start negotiating with new areas.

Once negotiations begin, there is a chance that the "core" proposals set out in a Council Report will evolve and new proposals could emerge as part of discussions. The intention before any final County Deal is agreed is for the details of the deal to be brought back to the Cabinet to endorse and for wider members to have appropriate opportunities to comment, scrutinise, and approve.

Key areas subject to proposals and consultations include:

### **Housing Strategy**

The Cabinet agreed with the recommendations outlined in a report on a single, unifying housing strategy for Surrey.

Housing is fundamental to people's wellbeing and life chances, but there is not currently a joined-up housing strategy for the county.

The council is working with partners in district and borough councils, Registered Social Landlords, developers, businesses and health providers to provide ambition, focus, direction and alignment across the whole Surrey housing system.

The full report is available [here](#).

### **Surrey Skills Plan**

The Cabinet endorsed the Surrey Skills Plan, which aims to help deliver the skills, jobs and opportunities for Surrey's economy to thrive.

The Skills Plan will officially launch at the Surrey Skills Summit on 10 November at Sandown Racecourse.

The full report is available [here](#).

### **Healthy Streets for Surrey**

Cabinet endorsed the new healthy streets planning guide, which aims to support the creation of high quality, attractive, safe, accessible and sustainable developments.

The developments outlined in the guide will bring a raft of benefits, including:

- More cycling and walking
- Streets where children can play safely
- Improved air quality
- Reduction in residents' transport carbon footprint
- Creation of attractive and popular streets that will require less long-term maintenance.

The full report is available [here](#).

### **Bus Services in Surrey**

Cabinet agreed to the recommendations outlined in a report on the council's response to the National Bus Strategy (Bus Back Better).

As part of this Cabinet approved a consultation about the future for bus services in Surrey.

The council will be seeking residents' views on investment proposals, the introduction of more on-demand buses and possible alterations to some existing bus routes.

The consultation will run from 3 November - 6 January 2023.

The full report is available [here](#).

Surrey County Council News with edits by Epsom and Ewell Times

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## New Fire Chief to the rescue



Surrey Fire and Rescue Service have appointed **Dan Quin** as their new permanent Chief Fire Officer. Dan has been acting-up as Chief Fire Officer since June 2022, prior to that he was the county's Deputy Chief Fire Officer since October 2019.

He has served his whole career within Surrey Fire and Rescue Service since joining over 23 years ago in 1999 as a firefighter at Leatherhead Fire Station and takes on the role following a robust interview process.

Dan is also the Vice-Chair of the **United Kingdom Rescue Organisation** who are the industry leads in advancing professional rescue skills nationally.

Speaking of his new appointment, Dan said: "I am absolutely delighted to have been appointed as Surrey's permanent Chief Fire Officer and very much looking forward to building on the plans I put in place during the last few months as Acting Chief. As someone who has been in the service for the whole of my career, I am aware of the many strengths as well as the areas we need to improve upon. I am dedicated to making Surrey one of the best fire and rescue services in the industry and I know we have the people to help see that through."

Council Leader **Tim Oliver** said: "I'm pleased to welcome Dan as Chief Fire Officer. After a very positive spell leading Surrey Fire and Rescue Service on an interim basis, Dan was clearly a very strong candidate for the job. I'm confident he will be a great leader of the service - knowledgeable, experienced and approachable to staff and partners across Surrey. He will continue on the improvement journey that is well underway and I'm confident SFRS is in good hands to continue its journey to being an excellent service."

Cabinet Member for Communities and Community Protection, **Denise Turner-Stewart** said: "Having worked with Dan before and very recently too, I am very pleased to hear that he has been made our Chief Fire Officer and am looking forward to continuing to work closely alongside him. Dan brings a wealth of experience from serving the residents of Surrey for over 20 years already and it gives me great confidence that Surrey Fire and Rescue Service and the safety of residents are in good hands."

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## Surrey Skills at the Summit



**Surrey County Council** launches **Surrey Skills Plan** at **Skills Summit** November 10. A landmark event in Surrey next month will bring together education providers and businesses in a bid to turbo charge Surrey's local economy.

The Surrey Skills Summit at **Sandown Racecourse** on 10 November will give leading local businesses the opportunity to outline what skills they need in the years to come. Education providers including colleges and universities will be on hand to discuss tailoring vocational offers and training, with a view to developing Surrey's workforce of the future.

The event will also launch the **Surrey Skills Plan**, including recommendations and actions to help deliver the skills, jobs and opportunities for Surrey's economy to thrive.

The Summit will also include:

- Presentations from experts on the national skills landscape, including developments and their implications for Surrey businesses and training providers.
- Case studies from Surrey businesses who have taken creative approaches to meeting their recruitment, retention and skills needs
- The chance for businesses to have their voice heard to help build a world class skills system in Surrey that meets the needs of all businesses and residents.

Learn more and register here: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/surrey-skills-summit-tickets-415842374737>

**Matt Furniss**, Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth, said:

"Surrey has the UK's second largest GDP after London and for decades has been a natural home for companies from across the world. As competition for talent becomes tougher and skills shortages become more pronounced, it's essential for Surrey to become more proactive in planning for the future. The Skills Plan and events like the Skills Summit are essential for growing a sustainable economy for Surrey. We need to come together to provide the right conditions for business to thrive, delivering skills, jobs and opportunity for all."

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## Safer nights in Epsom in sights



Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's (EEBC) Environment and Safe Communities Committee approved the allocation of a grant for plans to improve safety in the area. - Tuesday 18 October -. In a bid that resulted in a £271,712 grant from the Home Office Safer Streets programme, the council put forward a range of

initiatives to promote safety within Epsom's night time economy.

In conjunction with the Safer Streets bid, a 'Night Time Safety' survey, specific to Epsom town centre, was created. Only 30% of those who responded said they felt safe in the town centre at night, and only 18% of respondents said they felt safe within Epsom's nightclubs. The bid also cited a rise in spiking in the borough, with two anecdotal reports of spiking in 2019 and 2020, and nine reported crimes involving spiking in 2021.

Councillors at the committee meeting approved a decision to spend £172,512 of the grant on replacing sixteen CCTV cameras in Epsom, which, according to the bid, were outdated and expensive to run. The monitoring costs of the sixteen cameras will be funded by the **Epsom BID** (known as "**Go Epsom**"). The cameras are currently monitored by **Surrey Police**, but EEBC has said that they will now be monitored locally.

The bid states that 'The CCTV will be monitored during busy weekend periods via 24-hour security based in the shopping centre. Security will be able to speak directly to the police to prevent late night incidents occurring or escalating, feedback live information and protect those who appear vulnerable. The CCTV will also be available for investigation purposes.'

Councillors also approved the decommissioning of four CCTV cameras in Ewell and Stoneleigh, after officers found that it was 'unlikely' that the cameras were being used enough to meet an identified pressing need, as set out under the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

The funding of accredited training for staff at Epsom's licensed premises was deemed an 'essential part' of the Safer Streets bid, which cites 'a lack of training and awareness with licenced premises and their staff around VAWG [Violence Against Women and Girls], including drink spiking and identifying vulnerabilities.' The bid also states that there is a lack of nonauthoritarian guardians available at night time, and that police are often unable to assist vulnerable people while also addressing offences.

One respondent to the Night Time Safety survey said: 'There's not always someone nearby or a close location I can trust'. Part of the funding will go towards training and uniform for Street Pastors, an existing group of volunteers from local congregations who offer support to those who are out in the evening. However, they do not feel comfortable being out in the early hours of the morning, and incidents of violence peak between 3am and 4am. Therefore, the bid also suggests supplementing the Street Pastors scheme with a 'Night Angels' initiative, which, being open to a wider demographic of volunteers, might increase the number of people available to offer support during the night.

Councillors also approved plans to provide drink testing and anti-spiking kits at licensed premises.

A communications package will be used to disseminate information about the improvements through advertising and social media.