

COUNCIL MEETING

18 JULY 2019

ITEM 8 – QUESTION FROM MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 13

The following Question to the Leader of the Council has been registered by Councillor Neathey:

'Most of our residents have little idea which tier of local government performs which function and, those that do, are often left disappointed with Surrey County Council. RBC increasingly has to fund services that historically would have been considered the responsibility of Surrey County Council. Given all of this, does the Leader of the Council agree with me that the time has come for the Secretary of State to 'invite' a proposal of reorganising local government in what is currently Surrey into unitary authorities in order to service all of our residents' needs more effectively?'

ITEM 15 – NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER STANDING ORDER 15

Motion from Councillor Gillham:

Environmental Impact Assessments

'In light of the encouraging conversations and the current awareness within both this council and the country at large, we submit that this Council must now commit to an environmental impact assessment be undertaken when a decision is made, funding agreed or actions taken. This assessment must ensure that we are able to be held to account when such impact is not treated with the importance it deserves and requires.'

Motion from Councillor R. King:

Labour and Cooperative Motion: RBC request for amendment to Surrey County Council item 204/16, Part Night Lighting Program

Streetlighting is a vital part of public safety and the adequate provision of lighting at night provides residents not only an emotive benefit of feeling safer but impacts on the safety of highways, public footpaths and recreational spaces.

The Labour and Cooperative Party members are proposing and seconding this motion because we believe the current streetlighting switch off is unnecessary and that RBC, as with many other aspects where Surrey has withdrawn, should act as a shield to defend residents against austerity. It will leave residents both practically safer and perhaps, just as importantly, feeling safer.

This Council notes:

- *Surrey County Council (SCC) item 204/16 has been resolved due to the budgetary pressures of SCC, as a cost saving initiative and in order to reduce its carbon emissions in accordance with meeting its obligation to the Climate Change Act 2008 and the later Paris Climate Accord 2015.*
- *Concerns have been highlighted in other parts of Surrey including neighbouring Spelthorne borough with a petition against the decision having reached 3,400 signatures.*
- *Whilst the switch off on selected routes between the hours of 1am to 5am has not directly impacted many of the non-working age residents, it does discriminate against shift workers including but not limited to NHS, airport and night-time economy workers.*
- *It has also had a negative impact on the public's perception of safety which SCC later responded to by quoting research from Dr Green et al. at LSHTM.*
 - *The research was unable to robustly prove direct impact on the reduction on street lighting to a rise in criminal activity BUT the findings of the research were limited by the geographical scope and cannot reasonably be considered as definitive.*
 - *The research did however find a positive correlation with the reduction of streetlighting and the perception of public trust in government.*
- *SCC has also quoted a report from Surrey Police.*
 - *This report has a more robust regression analysis however it is limited by only covering the initial switch off*
 - *Also within the confines of the methodology, a spike in crime that citizens would rightly be very concerned and consider significant would not be large enough to count as statistically significant within the study. (increases of 20%)*
 - *There has been no regression analysis on fear of crime and the switch off*
- *In regards to public safety concerns:*
 - *Since the switch off, total notifiable offences in Runnymede have risen from 3586 in 2014/15 to 6337 in 2018/19*
 - *Residential burglaries rose from 148 in 2014/15 to a peak of 546 in 2017/18 and a still high 316 in 2019*
 - *Regardless of whether some or none of the above changes in crime are due to the light switch off, it is likely to contribute towards a public fear of crime especially in anti-social behaviour hotspots like Addlestone and Egham Hythe,*
 - *RBC currently has an economic policy of developing the night time economy which could be undermined by public safety concerns.*

Whilst the night economy areas are currently exempt, there will be public safety concerns regarding residents' journeys home particularly if they have made the responsible choice to walk home after consuming alcohol

- *Runnymede has a large student population who have expressed concern about the switch off*
- *In regards to environmental concerns:*
 - *The primary environmental impact of street lighting is from a carbon emissions perspective based on electricity consumption.*
 - *To achieve the scale of carbon emissions reductions required to meet the obligation to the Climate Change Act, most public sector activity will, in the near future, need to be powered by renewable energy regardless of what time of day they operate.*
 - *The secondary environmental light pollution impact*
 - *Technology exists that can allow streetlights to be motion sensor activated with dimmer transition to avoid startling effects caused by sudden light changes*
- *Neighbouring Spelthorne Borough Council has co-funded the reinstatement of street lighting since June 2017 as a recognition of the impact this had had on local residents directly and indirectly.*
- *SCC is about to use a PFI style contract to replace all street lighting in Surrey.*

Therefore this Council believes that:

- *It is reasonable to assume that street lighting is a factor in public safety and crime reduction*
- *That it is economically important to the development of the night time economy to ensure that the street lights are on at night*
- *RBC should be an advocate of all residents including shift workers and other working age residents as well as students who may wish or need to be on our streets between 1am to 5am*
- *Many of our residents are rightly concerned about the current arrangements*
- *That RBC has a responsibility to advocate for and find a solution to our residents' concerns regardless of whether it is directly our responsibility or not*
- *Any changes to the current arrangement should have a medium-term plan to ensure environmental concerns are addressed.*
 - *Technology such as solar PV, smart grids, large scale battery storage, LED lighting and sensor lighting will need to be ubiquitous in order to meet climate change targets no matter how costly they are and so street lighting should be part of that technological shift*

- *The cost of running streetlights all night long is not likely to be substantial when compared to RBC's total expenditure*
- *The cost of running streetlights all night long is not likely to be substantial when compared to other forms of expenditure that subsidises what historically would be considered SCC responsibilities.*
- *The cost of running streetlights all night long can be significantly reduced and managed if suitable technological solutions are deployed*

Therefore, this Council resolves that:

The Community Services Committee review this policy and form a report and recommendation for full council this report should consider the following options.

- ***If RBC should enter into negotiations with SCC for a deal to fund the streetlights being switched back on all night.***
- ***A phased approach to such a switch back on (rather than all in one go) is agreed should it focus on***
 - ***Crime and anti-social behaviour hot spots (such as Addlestone and Egham Hythe)***
 - ***Areas that RBC believes are important 'spill out' from night time economy areas***
 - ***Areas that RBC believes are likely to have large numbers of shift workers or students***
- ***RBC to SCC to voice a formal request for the PFI contract renegotiation to include***
 - ***Roads presently affected by the night time switch offs to replace their lighting units over the attrition of the asset, with motion sensitive LED lighting units, in order to keep the benefits of reduced emission due to lower electrical usage and lower cost to the public purse.***
 - ***To switch to a zero-carbon energy supply for all street lighting in Runnymede including, if necessary, purchasing renewable energy assets, smart grid technology including battery storage.***

Motion from Councillor Neathey:

Labour and Cooperative Motion: RBC formal policy of opposition to cuts by Surrey County Council to Egham Fire Station night services

Firefighters are an invaluable/ part of our public service and provide an all hazard emergency response. They attend floods, road traffic collisions, chemical spillages, provide response services from industrial disasters to terrorist attacks, as well as of course fight fires.

The Labour and Cooperative Party members are proposing and seconding this motion because while there are fewer fires at night, invariably when they do occur more lives are at risk. The proposed cuts by Surrey County Council to fire services out of Egham Fire Station are dangerous and should be opposed.

This Council notes:

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) has experienced brutal cuts since 2010, with over 17% of firefighter posts slashed. Despite a report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) voicing serious concerns about the service's effectiveness and efficiency in keeping people safe, Surrey County Council (SCC) have proposed further cuts to the service.

The proposals would see:

- 70 firefighter posts axed, cutting firefighter numbers by 22% since 2010*
- A reduction of 7 fire engines and fire crews at night, totalling 28 firefighters*
- A total reduction of approximately 50% in fire cover in Surrey*
- Most worryingly for residents of Runnymede Borough Council (RBC) is that Egham Fire Station would be closed after 18:00*

Therefore this Council believes that:

- As representatives of residents we have a vital role in voicing their concerns using an institutional voice*
- All cuts to Surrey Fire Services by SCC should be opposed*
- and Particular focus should be put on defending Egham Fire Station*

Therefore, this Council resolves that:

RBC will adopt a policy to actively condemn these cuts whereby RBC will write to SCC to voice a formal objection to any cuts to Egham Fire Station and the Mayor or Leader of Runnymede Borough Council will write an open letter (sent to the local paper) to the leader of SCC voicing RBC member's concerns. This letter will permit Group leaders to co-sign.

In addition The Chief Executive will write to all SCC Councillors in Runnymede advising them that RBC's official position is to condemn and oppose these cuts (and urging them to vote accordingly at Surrey County Council meetings)