

My Ref: TG/SCC/003

XX March 2023

County Councillor Tim Oliver,
Leader, Surrey County Council,
Woodhatch Place
11 Cockshot Hill
Reigate,
Surrey,
RH2 8EF

Sending via email and post – tim.oliver@surreycc.gov.uk,

Dear Tim,

RETURN OF ON-STREET PARKING ENFORCEMENT TO COUNTY COUNCIL CONTROL

Further to a resolution at Full Council, I am writing to you in respect of the unilateral decision that was taken by Surrey County Council to return on-street parking enforcement to the control of Surrey County Council. Runnymede Borough Council once again reiterates that it believes it is the wrong decision to return those devolved on street enforcement powers back to the County Council.

On-street parking enforcement services were previously provided by Runnymede Borough Council, along with other districts and boroughs, meaning we could be highly responsive to the needs of residents and the concerns of Councillors, where they were fully resourced.

Whilst I understand the arguments that were put forward by Cllr Furniss in his presentation to the Surrey Leaders Group I [and the leaders of the political groups who are represented on Runnymede Borough Council set out below], nevertheless are concerned that this decision will reduce the capacity and availability of enforcement services. We consider it is vital for enforcement to remain visible and responsive to the issues raised by residents and Councillors who best understand their local area.

At a high level I understand that Surrey County Council have entered into arrangements to ensure that there are 65 civil enforcement officers across all boroughs and districts in Surrey. Noting the geographic breadth of Surrey, would we be able to have assurances that enforcement in Runnymede would not be compromised under the new arrangements? Please could you provide further information regarding the structure and area coverage of enforcement teams, and confirmation that enforcement would be proportionate in terms of population density, while also ensuring that rural areas receive adequate cover, particularly around schools?

Enforcement is also most effectively delivered where officers have local knowledge and are able to deliver targeted focus of resources around areas of high risk at peak periods. I would therefore be grateful for further assurances that efforts will be made to recruit staff from within each borough. Please could you also provide further detail on the planned approach to assessing enforcement need and prioritisation of resource under the new structure?

In addition, within Runnymede Resident Parking Permit schemes are operated in a number of wards including in both Addlestone and Egham and villages across the borough. Residents have subscribed to these schemes, with a minimum charge of £80 for a household permit. Should there be a reduction in enforcement resource in these areas due to the changes, we would encourage Surrey County Council to consider reviewing the costs and charges of these schemes to ensure value for money is retained. Please can assurances also be provided regarding future charges, how these will be determined and how value will be maintained.

In order to support a smooth transition to the new operating arrangements we would welcome a timetable setting out the expected implementation of the new service which we can provide with residents to prepare them for the revised arrangements. While the Initial contract will begin on 1 April, we would welcome more detailed information regarding staff recruitment and any planned community engagement activity.

Finally, I appreciate that subsequent to the decision taken in respect of on-street parking enforcement you have met with a sub-group of Surrey Borough & District Leaders to discuss County strategies and the resolution of County and Borough & District issues. I welcome the positive tone you have brought to these discussions and that there is the opportunity to re-set the relationship between the County and Borough & District authorities. To that end it is our collective hope that Surrey County Council will not take any future unilateral decisions without first consulting Boroughs and Districts, where their services will be directly affected.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Thomas Gracey

Leader, Runnymede Borough Council
Councillor for Woodham & Row Town

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Cllr Isabel Mullens
Leader of the Runnymede Independent
Residents Group

Cllr Malcolm Cressey
Leader of the Independent Group

Cllr Robert King
Leader of the Labour and Co-operative Group

Cllr Don Whyte
Leader of the Liberal Democrats

Cllr Steve Ringham
Leader of the Green and Independent Alliance