

**Minutes of the meeting of Surrey County Council's
Local Committee in Elmbridge held at
4.00pm on Monday 7 December 2009 at
Elmbridge Civic Centre, Esher**

Members Present – Surrey County Council

Mr Michael Bennison (Vice Chairman)	Mr John Butcher
Mr Nigel Cooper	Mr Peter Hickman
Mrs Margaret Hicks (Chairman)	Mr Ian Lake
Mr Ernest Mallett	Mr Thomas Phelps-Penry
Mr Roy Taylor	

Members Present – Elmbridge Borough Council

Cllr David Archer	Cllr Chris Elmer
Cllr Barry Fairbank	Cllr Timothy Grey
Cllr Alan Hopkins	Cllr John O'Reilly
Cllr Karen Randolph	Cllr Chris Sadler
Cllr David Tipping	

PART ONE

IN PUBLIC

**35/
09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were no apologies for absence received.

**36/
09 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2009, were confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the following amendment.

Minute number 25/09 to read:

Victoria Elbourne addressed the Local Committee.

**37/
09 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor David Tipping declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 9 as a committee member of the Cobham Conservation Heritage Trust.

**38/
09 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcements:

1. Surrey County Council has signed a contract that will transform the county's street lighting system with the biggest roll-out of new energy saving technology in the country. It is expected to save Surrey taxpayers at least £12 million. The deal will see private sector consortium Skanska Laing install bright white lights to replace the current inefficient orange glow street lamps. Individual lighting columns will be remotely controlled from a new control centre near Guildford.

In the first five years of the contract all of the county's 89,000 lights will be upgraded – 70,000 being replaced and 19,000 refurbished. This will lead to savings of around 60,000 tonnes of carbon and 150 million kilowatt hours over the 25-year contract. A substantial proportion of the cost to get the project up and running is being funded by a Private Finance Initiative grant from central government worth £73.9m, with the day to day running and maintenance of the system covered by the council's existing street lighting budget.

2. Surrey County Council officers have continued to negotiate strongly with Southern Gas Networks (SGN) for a less disruptive schedule for the installation of the new gas supply pipe along Seven Hills Road.

SGN's original schedule would have seen Seven Hills Road closed from the end of December for about seven months, but knowing the inconvenience this would cause for local residents and other road users, the council has worked with SGN to rearrange its timetable so that as far as possible the road is only closed during the school holidays, when there is less traffic.

The new pipe is required to run from the A3 adjacent to the Seven Hills Hotel along Seven Hills Road to the junction with Queens Road to reinforce the gas supply to the areas of Hersham, Walton on Thames and Weybridge for the autumn of 2010.

The new programme for the works will be to carry out the crossing of the Byfleet Road over the new year holiday period and extend the new pipe into both sides of the Seven Hills Road. This work will require the closure of Seven Hills Road, starting on 28 December but this will be removed allowing full use of the roads again by 4 January.

The associated traffic management for the closure is complex and the signed diversion route will be as advertised.

Access for pedestrians, equestrians and residents will be maintained as will access for emergency service vehicles in an emergency situation only.

DRAFT VERSION – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT MEETING

In order to meet the completion date of 1 October 2010, SGN will need to close the road for a further 2 weeks from 29 March until 11 April and then again for an extended period beginning on 20 June and continuing until 29 August 2010.

There will also be a need to carry out other associated service connections and replacement of other pipework, some of which will require local traffic control, but will not close the road. All movement of plant, machinery and materials is planned to take place early evenings so as not to add to the traffic movements during peak times.

SGN has identified the number of teams needed to meet this programme and agreed to monitor progress. SGN has committed to maximise its work output during the scheme and intends to extend the hours of work as much as possible but is not contemplating working between the hours of midnight and 6am at any time. At the moment there is no 24 hour work planned but SGN has agreed to consider this should circumstances indicate that it would reduce the overall time of the scheme.

Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for Transport, Ian Lake, said: "We have had robust discussions with SGN to ensure that this work is really essential and that it will cause our residents as little disruption as possible. The original schedule was unacceptable but we have worked closely with SGN to ensure that as much as possible of the work requiring a road closure is done during the school holidays, and that every effort is made to minimise disruption at all other times. We will continue to monitor the work closely throughout the project to make sure it goes as smoothly as possible".

SGN has agreed to investigate further the impact on local schools, businesses and residents of these works and will be contacting all those involved.

39/ 09 PETITIONS & LETTERS OF REPRESENTATION

There was one letter of representation submitted as follows:

Manor Road, Walton-on-Thames

"We the undersigned wish to support the RA's proposal to have Manor Road equipped with a "Emergency Service Only" road barrier outside the Swan PH effectively marking it a "No Through Road" and ridding the district of this dangerous rat run. We appeal to Surrey Highways and our own Elmbridge Borough Council to support this proposal on road safety and environmental grounds."

There were 20 signatories on the letter of representation.

DRAFT VERSION – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT MEETING

The lead representative, Mr Mole Kenny, spoke to the letter of representation for three minutes.

The Chairman announced that a formal response would be given at the Local Committee in March 2010.

40/ 09 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were four public questions received as set out in Annex A with the answers.

A supplementary question was asked on public questions one and two.

41/ 09 MEMBER QUESTIONS

There were two Member questions received as set out in Annex A.

A supplementary question was asked on Member question two.

42/ 09 DRIVE SMART

The Chairman announced that the Agenda order would be changed to take Items 17 and 13 next.

Superintendent Rachel Tills gave a presentation on the Drive Smart initiative being led by Surrey Police and Surrey County Council.

The Drive Smart initiative is intended to tackle anti-social driving issues such as parking, tailgating and use of mobile phones when driving.

Included in the presentation were details of the additional 9,000 hours of activity being dedicated to the initiative in the first year, and the delivery of additional speed-watch groups throughout the County.

Members were invited to have quarterly updates at Local Committee meetings if required.

43/ 09 D6827 OAKEN LANE, CLAYGATE LETTER OF REPRESENTATION

The Local Highways Manager presented the report following the submission of a letter of representation to the July Local Committee meeting. It was proposed that the recommendations in the report be aligned to the Drive Smart initiative.

The Local Committee debated the issues highlighted in the report.

RESOLVED:

- i) To note the previous background and history and in particular that associated with the Wingham Court development.
- ii) To note the vehicle actuated signs previously erected along Oaken Lane.
- iii) Support further speed enforcement by Surrey Police along Oaken Lane and note the enforcement already carried out recently.
- iv) To agree the proposed works detailed in the report and support the conclusions and recommendations.

**44/
09 WALTON PROPOSED CONTROLLED PARKING SCHEME:
CONSIDERATION OF FORMAL OBJECTIONS**

The Parking Projects Manager presented the report.

Annex A was circulated prior to the meeting, published on the Surrey County Council website and tabled at the meeting.

The Local Committee asked various questions and sought clarification on the consultation process and enforcement of the scheme when in place. It was confirmed that the scheme would be enforced under the current agency agreement with Elmbridge Borough Council.

The Parking Projects Manager confirmed a further report on the scheme, with regard to parking permit schemes in Sandy Way, Thames Street, Harvey, Dale and Mayo Roads would be presented in March 2010.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the recommendations in Annex A be agreed;
- ii) That the County Council makes amendments to the existing traffic regulation orders and introduces new traffic regulation orders as necessary for the recommended parking controls to be implemented;
- iii) The recommended parking controls be implemented.

**45/
09 TILT ROAD PROPOSED CONTROLLED PARKING ZONE:
CONSIDERATION OF FORMAL OBJECTIONS**

The Parking Projects Manager presented the report.

Annexes A and B were circulated prior to the meeting, published on the Surrey County Council website and tabled at the meeting.

Councillor Tipping proposed that single yellow lines around the cemetery access be trialled and suggested these be operational between the hours of 10am-11am, Monday to Friday.

DRAFT VERSION – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT MEETING

Councillor Tipping proposed the following amendment, which was seconded by Mr Mallett

That single yellow lines be implemented around the access to the cemetery.

It was confirmed the parking zone in Tilt Road would be reviewed in 6-12 months.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the scheme be implemented as detailed in Annex A with the following amendment:
Single yellow lines be implemented around the access to the cemetery.
- ii) That the County Council makes the necessary amendments to the existing traffic regulation orders and makes a new traffic regulation order for the Tilt Road controlled parking zone.

**46/
09 CLAREMONT LANE PARKING CONTROLS:
CONSIDERATION OF FORMAL OBJECTIONS**

The Parking Projects Manager presented the report. Three further objections had been received on which a verbal update was provided at the meeting together with the officer responses to those objections.

Annex A was circulated prior to the meeting, published on the Surrey County Council website and tabled at the meeting.

The Vice-Chairman thanked the Chairman of the Local Committee for her role in progressing parking controls in Claremont Lane.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the recommendations detailed in Annex A be approved unaltered;
- ii) That the County Council amends the necessary traffic regulation orders for the recommended parking controls to be implanted;
- iii) That the recommended parking controls are implemented.

**47/
09 B376 ST GEORGES AVENUE, WEYBRIDGE**

The report was presented by the lead Engineer for information.

It was reported that a temporary concrete block would be in place as a safety barrier throughout the duration of the work.

RESOLVED:

DRAFT VERSION – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT MEETING

- i) To note the report for information.

48/09 A3050 TERRACE ROAD, RIVERNOOK CLOSE AND SUNNY SIDE, WALTON-ON-THAMES LETTER OF REPRESENTATIONS

Mr Phelps-Penry declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item as the lead representative and withdrew to the public gallery.

The Local Highways Manager presented the report following the submission of a letter of representation to the July Local Committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

- i) Subject to statutory procedures, the speed limit on the A3050 Terrace Road be reduced from 40mph to 30mph from the existing 30mph termination point to the east of the roundabout with D3801 Waterside Drive to some 50 metres east of the junction of B389 Walton Road, on A3050 Hurst Road.

49/09 A245 STOKE ROAD, STOKE D'ABERNON PETITION

The Local Highways Manager presented the report following the submission of a petition to the September Local Committee meeting.

Mr Butcher moved that the Committee report be referred back to a later meeting. Councillor Tipping seconded the motion.

Councillor Tipping declared a personal interest in this item as a Governor of Parkside School.

Mr Butcher made a statement setting out his concerns in relation to Stoke Road.

For the purpose of this statement, Stoke Road was considered in three sections as follows:

1. From the end of the present 30mph limit near the northern junction of Stoke Road and Tilt Road to Fairmile Lane – a distance of about 800 yards.
2. From that point to the entrance to the Chelsea Football Club training ground – a distance of about 750 yards.
3. From that point to the end of the present 40mph limit, near to the junction with Woodlands Lane – a distance of about 400 yards.

These concerns were as follows:

- Second section of Stoke Road particularly difficult and there was a fatality approximately four years ago.

DRAFT VERSION – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT MEETING

- The period over which accidents were considered is too short.
- None of the three speed-readings were taken in the second section of the road.
- Following a recent Cabinet meeting, it has been announced that the Speed Management Policy of Surrey County Council will be revised. A decision on Stoke Road should be deferred to take account of this.
- The concerns set out in the petition are in accordance with the Leaders priorities i.e. decision making at a local level and reducing speeding.

RESOLVED:

- i) To refer the matter back to the Local Committee after further investigation had taken place.

50/ 09 C153 MOLESEY ROAD, HERSHAM PETITION

The Local Highways Manager presented the report following the submission of a petition to the September Local Committee meeting.

The Local Committee members were disappointed that no resolution could be found on the issue. However, it was stressed that there was a lack of Highway space available to introduce further pedestrian measures and there was only 175 metres between the current facilities in place.

RESOLVED:

- i) To note the contents of the report and agree that based upon the lack of pedestrian personal injury collisions since 1987, and the difficulty in locating further pedestrian measures, that there is no benefit at this time in pursuing this issue further.

51/ 09 A309 HAMPTON COURT WAY: PROPOSED CYCLING FACILITY

The Local Highways Manger presented the report on the scheme. Maps of the proposed scheme were available for inspection at the meeting.

The Local Committee asked various questions on the scheme for clarification.

RESOLVED:

- i) To approve the proposal of extending the existing cycle way along the A309, Hampton Court Way from Summer Road to the Scilly Isles, Esher, both on and off road.

DRAFT VERSION – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT MEETING

- ii) Approve the erection and use of regulatory signs to diagram numbers 955, 956 and 957, in accordance with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002.

52/09 ELMBRIDGE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The Area Director for North Surrey gave a presentation on the report.

RESOLVED:

- i) To note the activities of the Elmbridge Community Safety Partnerships between July 2009-October 2009.

53/09 CONSULTATION ON SURREY MINERALS PLAN

The Planning Policy Manager presented the consultation on the Surrey Minerals Plan. It was reported that the proposals would have a limited impact on Elmbridge. The Surrey Minerals Plan core strategy and primary aggregates documents had been formally submitted.

The two proposals relevant to Elmbridge were:

1. The Addlestone Quarry which was identified as a potentially suitable location for a temporary aggregate recycling facility; and
2. Hamms Court Farm and Watersplash Farm where temporary recycling facilities had been proposed.

The Local Committee agreed that should Members wish to respond to the Consultation, they could do so on an individual basis.

RESOLVED:

- i) To note the minerals core strategy and primary aggregates documents published by the County Council prior to submission to the Government for independent examination.

54/09 MEMBER ALLOCATIONS

The Member Allocations report was presented to the Local Committee.

RESOLVED:

- i) To note the Criteria and Guidance Note for the use of Members' Allocations as set out in Annex A and B.
- ii) To note the allocations approved under delegated authority by the Area Director in consultation with the Chairman.
- iii) To note returned funding of £938 for CCTV St James Church, Weybridge to Mr Lake's allocation.

DRAFT VERSION – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT MEETING

- iv) To note returned funding of £5,000 for Waiting Restrictions Advertising in Weybridge to Mr Lake's allocation.
- v) To approve the funding of £1,500 towards St Mary's Parish Church, Walton-on-Thames clock restoration to be funded from Mr Phelps-Perry's allocation.

The meeting finished at 7.02pm

SCC LOCAL COMMITTEE IN ELMBRIDGE – 7 DECEMBER 2009

AGENDA ITEM 6

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Question 1: Councillor Macleod

Process for Amending Parking Orders

Will the Elmbridge Local Committee consider how to make the process for amending local parking orders more effective, transparent and responsive to local needs? There is often very good awareness in local communities of the need for specific minor localised parking restrictions to improve safety or amenity. However the current process within Surrey appears to be disconnected from that, and hence is failing to respond to local needs. It works in ways which are incomprehensible to the local community – for example in Weybridge by putting excessive parking restrictions along Portmore Park Road, to the great inconvenience of St Charles Borromeo School, while failing to put restrictions around dangerous junctions (for example at the end of Wey Road, and at the end of Grotto Road). Greater transparency and two way communication in the parking order amendment process would make it more effective in resolving specific local parking issues.

Officer Response:

Surrey County Council, as the local highway authority receives many requests for new parking restrictions or changes to those which already exist. Many people have their own views, often tailored to suit what would be most beneficial for their circumstances. While the intention is to develop solutions that are universally popular, this is often not possible and compromises have to be made.

To ensure a good level of service across the whole of the county, a specific parking group has been established within Surrey Highways. The group's responsibilities include assessing any requests for changes to parking. If residents have any concerns, they are encouraged to contact the parking team directly (tel. 0300 200 1003, website www.surreycc.gov.uk or e-mail parking@surreycc.gov.uk) or advise their County Member.

In general, ad hoc requests are considered on an annual basis, in accordance with the timetable and funding priorities of the Surrey County Council Local Committee (Elmbridge). Before any recommendations are brought to the Committee, they are considered by a joint County / Borough Member parking enforcement task group. This group does not make decisions, but provides guidance to Officers.

DRAFT VERSION – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT MEETING

Reports are then presented to the Local Committee, and if approved the intended changes formally advertised in the local press. Any interested party has the option to make representations or objections, all of which are fully considered before the final decision to proceed or otherwise is made.

Question 2: Ms Macleod

Bus Service from Weybridge Town Centre to Weybridge Station

What progress is being made in response to suggestions for improved bus services between Weybridge town centre and Weybridge station, potentially operating in collaboration with businesses in Brooklands? Enhanced services on this route would be very welcome indeed, and of great benefit to the community.

Officer response:

Bus services in the Weybridge area are currently being examined as part of Phase 1 of the County Council's Bus Review (seen www.surreycc.gov.uk/busreview). Some initial proposals for changes to services have been made as a basis for public consultation which runs until 31st January 2010.

One of the proposals is to extend, in partnership with Arriva, service 436 (Woking-Byfleet-Weybridge Station) so that it runs through to Weybridge town centre. The suggested frequency would be every 30 minutes, thus doubling the current offering between the station and Weybridge town. Consideration is also being given to whether it would be affordable and sustainable to run additional journeys on this service at peak times between Weybridge and the Brooklands area, so that less reliance need be made on bespoke shuttle services from the station, provided by various employers at The Heights. However, this will depend on further liaison with the various businesses, including the need for some external funding. Any changes to bus services would not occur until September 2010

Question 3: Ms Lord-Taylor

Oaken Lane (Agenda Item 13)

The pedestrian count (2.11) was carried out on one day during the half term break - 28th October. This means there were no pedestrians walking to Claygate Primary School up to Church Road and Dalmore Avenue; none to Rowan Prep; none to the nurseries (Noddys, Jigsaw and Montessori); none to the school bus stop to cross to the East side for St Pauls bus; no school run traffic to impact the crossings and traffic flow. In addition the free flow speed check (2.8) was carried out between 10.00 and 13.00 hours which is not the peak traffic or pedestrian time and one of the police speed checks (2.12) was carried out in the summer holidays with none being done since the start of this

DRAFT VERSION – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT MEETING

School Year. Given that I believe this will have materially effected the results of the survey, would it be possible to repeat these parts of the investigations on a 'normal' day and would you then review your conclusions and recommendations again to consider some of the other alternatives that were initially proposed, such as road markings to indicate crossing area; chicane at the Torrington Road crossing; which would be of greater benefit to the pedestrian population?

Officer Response:

There were a significant number of surveys required for this Committee, and all the necessary surveys requiring to be carried out during term time were undertaken during this period. In this particular circumstance the pedestrian survey was intended at attempting to locate the pedestrian desire lines rather than the numbers and in this respect the data clearly shows that the majority of residents cross to the south of The Avenue. It is hence recommended to ameliorate the situation with dropped crossings and tactile paving at these popular crossing locations.

The speed data collected by way of radar speed gun on the 1 October was done to supplement the 24 hour 7 day survey carried out between the 13 October and 19 October, and this data shows a close correlation to data collected over the longer period.

The table shown in paragraph 2.12 of the report was provided by Surrey Police directly, and has merely been included in the report for completeness. Any comments on the data or enforcement should be addressed to Surrey Police.

Taking all the data collected and collision data into account together with the background information, the problem is clearly one of excess speed which as stated in paragraph 1.16, is a police enforcement issue as driving in excess of the posted limit is a criminal offence.

Paragraph 1.15 explains that, although Surrey County Council, as the highway authority, introduce traffic management measures such as VAS and traffic calming, it does so in accordance with Government aims to reduce personal injury collisions by 40% by 2010. It is only fair and equitable that this is done where high numbers of personal injury collisions are regularly occurring ahead of locations where there are few, or even perceived accidents, in order to best utilise its very limited funding.

Question 4: Mr Ernest

Oaken Lane (Agenda Item 13)

DRAFT VERSION – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT MEETING

It is clear that there is an issue with traffic driving too fast on Oaken Lane, and although there have been no reported accidents I believe it is dangerous. I also agree with the idea that specific traffic calming measures (tables, humps etc.) are not liked. However, one straightforward solution would be a mini-roundabout at the junction of Oaken Lane and The Avenue. I believe this could be done with minimal impact on the ancient hedgerow: the two mini-roundabouts at the top of Oaken Lane do not seem to have required major restructuring of the road boundary, and I believe the same could be true of a new mini roundabout at the junction of Oaken lane with The Avenue. I would appreciate it if the LC could reconsider this, as traffic has increased significantly since the last review in 1995.

Officer Response:

The introduction of both mini and large roundabouts is a function of traffic flow arriving at the junctions, together with both existing personal injury collisions data, and an understanding of traffic congestion predictions on traffic flows.

In order for roundabouts to work effectively it is a requirement that all arms have where possible very similar traffic flows. This ensures that traffic is slowing down on all approaches, as traffic circumnavigates the traffic control device, and provides the working mechanism for an effective working roundabout, in traffic safety terms.

Where unequal flows exist then vehicles using the main flow route very quickly realise that the likelihood of a vehicle exiting the low usage side road exits, and drive through the control measure without any change in speed or direction. This has the consequences that when a vehicle does emerge from the side road, that there is a very high risk of a collision occurring.

All schemes constructed on the public highway are independently safety audited for compliance to regulations, together with design checks to ascertain whether any further risk potential has been introduced into proposal.

It has been shown that roundabouts, as with any form of traffic control, generate some 3-4 collisions per annum. Introducing a roundabout at this location could statistically increase collisions, where currently they do not exist.

The available highway is also insufficient to provide the deflection required, on entry to a roundabout, to ensure its minimum design criteria, without further land take and the removal of the ancient hedgerow.

AGENDA ITEM 7

MEMBER QUESTIONS

Question 1: Councillor Fairbank

Highway Hedges & Trees

There are a number of locations in Long Ditton where highway hedges are extensively overgrown and in others (particularly Ewell & Fleece Roads) where highway trees are overgrowing small front gardens causing distress to residents.

I understand that responsibility for the maintenance of these trees and hedges rests with Surrey County Council.

Can I please be informed as to when the maintenance work will be carried out to address the existing problems and why this has not already happened as a matter of routine?

Officer Response:

Surrey County Council is responsible for the maintenance of trees and hedges on the Highway.

Please be aware however that many trees and hedges bordering the Highway are in fact on private land and are the responsibility of the land owner or resident to maintain.

As a service we have a very limited budget for work of this type, and attempt to prioritise and batch the work in order to obtain the best value for residents.

Flailing of hedges is done once per year in the winter months. This helps to reduce the environmental impact of removing potential habitat for wildlife. This year's programme has already been priced and we are currently waiting for conformation of the start date.

Funding is very limited, so sites for flailing are selected and prioritised on a safety basis. When putting together the works programme, consideration is always given to all the reports received from members of the public and where possible these locations are included. It is likely however that the demand for this type of work will exceed the available resource and inevitably some residents will be disappointed.

Smaller scale work, suitable for hand cutting can be undertaken by the Elmbridge Community Gang, and prioritised in close liaison with Divisional Members. This is limited resource and it is necessary to be realistic about the scope of work, which can be undertaken via this process.

Current SCC policy regarding Highway trees is very clear. Only essential safety work on dead, diseased or dying trees will be undertaken. This work is ongoing and takes place year round. There is no programmed routine for pollarding or a reduction programme for Highway trees.

DRAFT VERSION – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT MEETING

Where trees are overhanging private property residents are legally entitled to cut the trees back to their boundary. We would recommend that all tree works are undertaken by an approved tree contractor.

Question 2: Councillor Grey

Long Ditton Sign

As part of his 2008/09 allowances, Mr. Peter Hickman proposed to use £1,250 to pay towards the erection of a map of Long Ditton commissioned by the Long Ditton Residents Association (LDRA). That proposal was agreed by this Committee.

The LDRA sought planning permission from Elmbridge Borough Council for the erection of the map on Fleece Road, Long Ditton. As part of the process, Elmbridge consulted Surrey County Council (SCC) in their capacity as the Highways Authority. SCC raised no objection to the proposal. The proposal was thereafter granted permission and was specific in its requirements. In November 2009. It required SCC as Highways authority to issue a licence. Following meetings between officers of SCC, Mr. Peter Hickman and representatives of the LDRA, the licence was refused by SCC based primarily and/or solely on a new policy regarding “decluttering” of the street scene. The policy appears to have come into existence over the Summer of 2009, well after the planning permission was granted and after Cllr Hickman’s contribution to the project was agreed by this democratically constituted committee.

In the circumstances is it not considered constitutionally unreasonable and irrational that the decision of a Committee of democratically elected representatives chosen by our community, should have its decisions altered, amended or overlooked, by application of policies retrospectively, with seemingly no legal authority for such, and which emanate from non-elected officers of the Council?

Officer Response:

The allocation for the expenditure of funds from County Councillor Peter Hickman’s personal allowance was agreed at the March 2009 meeting of the Local Committee. By allocating these funds, the Local Committee agreed only to the expenditure. This agreement in no way included permission or approval for the erection of the sign on public highway.

Planning permission is also an independent and separate form of permission, and the approval was specifically for the grant of consent to display advertisements. The Planning approval received from Elmbridge Borough Council dated 29th January 2009, to application 2008/2755, clearly stated in the informative 2 the following:-

DRAFT VERSION – SUBJECT TO APPROVAL AT THE NEXT MEETING

2 LICENCE: WORKS ON HIGHWAY

The permission hereby granted shall not be construed as authority to carry out works on the highway. The applicant is advised that a licence must be obtained from Surrey County Council's East Surrey Highway Services (0300 2001003) before any works are carried out on any footway, footpath, carriageway, verge or other land forming part of the highway.

The applicant is advised that the proposed map is shown to be positioned on land that forms part of the publicly maintained highway. Permission to erect the map is required from the Highway Authority pursuant to Section 115 (B and E) of the Highways Act 1980.

Care has to be taken when erecting furniture on the public highway to ensure that sight lines are not obstructed and that the blind and disabled are not inhibited or obstructed. The public highway is also saturated with underground apparatus installed and provided by the Statutory Undertakers, to supply services to residents and businesses. There is a real Health and Safety implication to ensure that this plant is accurately located prior to the highway being excavated, and that contractors are qualified and approved to carry out such works.

Hence further to permission for a license for works on the highway, searches and surveys need to be carried out to ascertain the location of underground plant, and accordingly it is not always possible to introduce furniture at the most ideal locations.

Surrey County Council and its Highway Service, is keen to follow best practice nationally, which is not to litter the street scene with clutter and to be circumspect with the use of regulatory signage, which was additionally echoed by David Munro, when he held the Highway portfolio.

This particular sign would be classified as none regulatory sign, as it is not a mandatory sign required on the highway.

The Highway Service is currently reviewing all signage and is keen to reduce, as mentioned earlier, non-regulatory signage which clutters the street scene and makes for an untidy and confused environment.

Based upon this and the support of the previous portfolio holder, it was agreed to place an embargo on the authorisation of all none regulatory signage until the end of March, in preparation for a signage review, followed by a revised policy to cover this type of highway signage.

If the sign could be erected on a private wall then this would resolve many of the current problems together with future maintenance and liability issues as the sign would remain in the ownership of the LDRA.