



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE  
(ELMBRIDGE)**

**HAVE YOUR SAY ELMBRIDGE EVENTS  
6 DECEMBER 2010**

**KEY ISSUE**

Local authorities are making decisions about the future shape of public services and it is essential to involve local people in the debate.

**SUMMARY**

The report provides information about two Have Your Say Elmbridge events, which took place in November 2010 and were attended by members of the Local Committee. The events contributed to making local government more transparent in its decision-making and performance.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Local Committee (Elmbridge) is asked to:** Note the contents of this report.

## 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A key element of the coalition government's Big Society agenda is to give communities the information needed to come together and solve problems. Part of the way to achieve this is to make local government more transparent regarding its decision-making and performance.
- 1.2 Elmbridge Borough Council has already responded to the transparency drive and publishes details of payments to suppliers, councillor allowances and expenses, and officer pay bands on its website. This is in addition to quarterly publication of performance against the Council's Corporate Plan and annual performance figures.
- 1.3 Given the challenging financial situation, it is essential to involve local people in the decisions made about future services. During August to October 2010, a variety of consultative activities were undertaken to seek views and opinions as to whether the proposed Top Priorities 2011-12 for the Council are supported by the wider community and stakeholders. These included consultation with the Residents' Panel and Business Panel, web consultation and consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. In addition, the Council hosted two Have Your Say Elmbridge events during November 2010 with participation from Surrey County Council and Surrey Police Authority.

## 2 ANALYSIS

- 2.1 The aim of the Have Your Say Elmbridge events was:
  - To outline to Elmbridge residents how public services spend their money and the spending challenge.
  - To increase transparency of public bodies by giving residents the opportunity to meet councillors and officers in person and have their questions answered.
  - For the Council and its partners to listen to residents' concerns and feed this into their service planning.
  - To promote different ways in which local people can have their say.
  - For Elmbridge Borough Council to consult residents on its proposed 2011-12 priorities.
- 2.2 The two events took place on 15 November at Walton Centre for the Community and 23 November at Claygate Centre for the Community. At the time of writing this report, the second event had not taken place, therefore the following analysis is based on the outcome from the first event.
- 2.3 Over 60 members of the public attended the event on 15 November as well as approximately 20 borough and county councillors. The first part of the meeting enabled residents to speak individually to councillors about local issues. This was followed by presentations on the future of services by members of the panel as follows:
  - Cllr John O'Reilly, Leader, Elmbridge Borough Council

- Mr Ian Lake, Cabinet Member for Transport, Surrey County Council
- Peter Williams, Chairman, Surrey Police Authority

2.4 The event then opened for a question time session with the panel. A variety of topics were raised by members of the public. These are summarised below:

- Support for the voluntary sector
- Drainage
- What back office functions are felt to be appropriate for sharing with other organisations
- Disabled transport
- Business rates
- Greenbelt policy
- On-street parking
- Training long-term unemployed people to help deliver council services
- The future of library services
- Development and infrastructure needs
- Traffic crossings in Walton High Street
- Affordable housing
- Bus services
- Information about the Local Committee

2.5 Notes of the questions and answers from the meeting are available to download from Elmbridge Borough Council's website at [www.elmbridge.gov.uk/haveyoursay](http://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/haveyoursay). The Local Committee may wish to refer specifically to the issues raised regarding Surrey County Council services and take these into consideration in relation to future decision-making.

2.6 Feedback from attendees was positive and everyone who completed an evaluation form said they wanted to attend similar events again in future. It is felt that the events provided an opportunity for debate to take place on public services, how they are funded and the level of services provided, as well as demonstrating transparency.

2.7 The Council is grateful to Surrey County Council and Surrey Police Authority for participating in the events. It was beneficial to answer residents' questions on a wide range of issues and this demonstrates the close partnership working between the three organisations.

2.8 The Have Your Say Elmbridge events were run in parallel with the pan-Surrey Have Your Say event which took place on 18 November at Salesian School in Chertsey.

2.9 The Have Your Say Elmbridge events are part of Elmbridge Borough Council's continuing engagement with the local community, such as through regular consultations, roadshows, business engagement and

encouraging residents to contact the Council to report problems and comment on issues.

### **3 OPTIONS**

3.1 None for the purposes of this report.

### **4 CONSULTATIONS**

4.1 None for the purposes of this report.

### **5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None for the purposes of this report.

### **6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 None for the purposes of this report.

### **7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 None for the purposes of this report.

### **8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 The Local Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

### **9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

9.1 The report is provided for information and to update the Local Committee following its members' participation at the Have Your Say Elmbridge events.

### **10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT**

10.1 The results from the consultation at the Have Your Say Elmbridge events were considered by Elmbridge Borough Council's Cabinet on 24 November.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS:** None.