



## **Surrey County Council's Local, Committee in Epsom and Ewell**

**Local priorities for inclusion in the County's  
performance plan for 2004/05**

**Monday 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2003**

### **KEY ISSUE:**

The Council produces an annual performance plan entitled *Making Surrey a Better Place*. This report provides an opportunity for the Local Committee to suggest issues of local importance that should be included in the 2004/05 edition of the plan.

### **SUMMARY:**

The report gives very brief details of the content of the current edition of the performance plan and of the recent mid-term review agreed by the Executive and identifies some of the key issues for Epsom and Ewell. The report then suggests in general terms some issues for possible inclusion in the next edition and invites the Committee to consider these and other priorities.

### **OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Committee is asked to decide

1. Which of the issues identified by the Local Director for making Epsom and Ewell a better place should be approved as the Local Committee's contribution for inclusion in the next edition of *Making Surrey a better place*; and
2. which other issues should be submitted for inclusion in the plan.

## 1. INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

1.1 For the last four years, the County Council has produced a performance plan entitled *Making Surrey a Better Place*. The preparatory work for the 2004/05 edition has now begun and Local Committees have been invited to contribute ideas and suggest issues that are of particular relevance to their areas. To assist the Committee, this report includes a brief summary of the current plan and of the recent mid-term review and proposes a number of issues that might usefully be included in the next edition of the plan.

## 2. CURRENT PLAN

2.1 The current plan is organised around six themes supported by a commitment to best value and service quality. The themes are making Surrey a better place:

- to learn and develop;
- to live and do business;
- to travel;
- where vulnerable people are more independent;
- where people feel safe; and
- where everybody matters.

This report summaries the key priorities in each theme in turn.

2.2 The chapter of the plan relating to **learning and development** identifies the need to improve the educational qualifications achieved by children and young people; help all our schools to be successful and give extra support to schools with the most challenges; continue to support children in care through fostering and adoption services; improve access to mobile libraries and learning in the community; help schools and other services to recruit more staff and keep those that we have; and increase access to and the quality of early education. The Plan acknowledges that, while the educational achievements of children and young people in 2002/03 improved, they did not fully meet the ambitious government-set targets.

2.3 The theme relating to Surrey being a better place **to live and do business** highlights the importance of the environment, including management of the countryside, the reduction of the amount of waste produced and the handling waste that does arise in ways that are both environmentally acceptable and affordable and the need for affordable housing. The costs of housing are seen as having a potentially negative impact on the continuation of Surrey's economic success as key staff may be unable to live and work here. Despite the importance attached to affordable housing, the percentage of new homes in 2002/03 that were affordable fell below the 17% target. Work with Boroughs and Districts and other public agencies is continuing to seek changes in Government policy to enable more affordable housing to be provided.

2.4 The other key issues for the future in this chapter are helping to maintain Surrey as an important international business location and a leading knowledge-

based economy; investing with others in the disadvantaged areas of the County; and agreeing a long-term plan for the development of Surrey to improve the quality of life and protect and improve the countryside and the distinctive heritage and character of Surrey.

2.5 Challenges within the **Travel** chapter include improving the condition and safety of Surrey's roads and pavements, limiting traffic growth both within and through Surrey and achieving a better balance between car and alternative forms of transport, and reducing the effect of the school run on congestion and children's safety. Specific action proposed for 2003/04 includes fixing dangerous potholes within 24 hours, completing 250 traffic schemes to improve flows and reduce accidents, pressing for improved rail services, especially to airports, and bus services, especially by having a school bus contract, and providing more mobile cameras to reduce speeding.

2.6 The part of the plan looking at how **vulnerable people can be more independent** proposes developing services and joint planning with health providers, promoting new approaches to housing for vulnerable people, and preventative measures to reduce the need for high cost residential care. The targets for the current year include making services easier to access for the people who need them, keeping children safe and with their families wherever possible, support for carers and help for older people to leave hospital when they are ready.

2.7 Surrey is one of the safest Counties in England. However, action to address anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse, speeding on our roads domestic violence and vandalism will contribute to making **people feel safe**.

2.8 In the current year, the County will be concentrating on promoting fire safety and education, reducing the numbers killed or seriously injured on the roads, reducing domestic violence, stopping rogue traders from breaking the law, working with the Police and Boroughs to remove abandoned vehicles more quickly and improving our warning systems for civil emergencies, such as flooding, and our ability to respond to them.

2.9 Providing information, making sure that everyone can give their views, recruiting and keeping essential staff and responding appropriately to requests for services are the main ways of demonstrating that **everybody matters**. The specific actions to be carried out this year include launching a new complaints and feedback process, investing in our staff so that they can continue to provide high quality services, improving access to our buildings, campaigning to maintain local amenities such as post offices, enabling the Young People's Parliament to influence our decisions and continuing to develop local committees to make sure that we listen to and act on individual and community concerns.

2.10 In addition, *Making Surrey a Better Place* included local priorities drawn from Local Committees' work programme and service programmes for the area including better facilities for young people, fitting smoke detectors in homes of people thought to be at risk, creating safe routes to schools, reducing crime and the fear of crime, progressing developments at Rosebery School and completing a

new primary school in the Borough and improving communications with local people.

2.11 As well as the process for renewing *Making Surrey a Better Place*, the Executive have also considered a mid-term review to identify key areas over and above maintaining and improving the Council's key services that should be addressed between now and 2005. This review has identified key themes that are to be emphasised over the next two years, viz:

- improving the local street scene;
- working with young people to develop facilities for them;
- making every pound count and keeping Council Tax rises as low as possible;
- demonstrating that the County Council is able to be both truly local, and big enough to handle the major issues, standing up for Surrey's residents; and
- ensuring that people know what we are doing.

2.12 The mid-term review also specifically refers to Local Committees in two respects. First, they are invited to consider seeking the co-operation of Boroughs, Districts and Parishes to improve with the County Council, the quality of the local street scene so that there is a noticeable improvement in the state of our roads and footways. Secondly, Local Committees are invited to consider how engagement with youth in the County can be improved and to devote £10,000 to a project or projects in each of their areas.

### 3. **LOCALLY RELEVANT PROPOSALS FOR THE NEXT EDITION.**

3.1 Officers have brought together the issues that have been of concern to Members over the last year and which continue to be relevant in preparing the following proposals for consideration.

3.2 In relation to **learning and development**, the schools in Epsom and Ewell are, generally, achieving very high standards. Services helping young people to make the most of education have been re-organised in the last year into Multi-Professional Teams providing all of the specialisms for a group of schools to improve co-ordination and support and the Committee will receive a report on their progress at their next meeting. Also, an Admissions Forum has been created to consider improvements in the stressful transfer from primary to secondary education.

3.3 There are continuing concerns, however, about the number of places available locally at both primary and secondary school levels and it would be helpful for the performance plan to include a commitment to recognise the pressure on admissions, particularly from inter-authority demand, and to take action to expand provision where necessary. There is still an opportunity to expand the use of school buildings, which are community assets, outside normal school hours for both education and social uses. Within the self-reliance area, and elsewhere, there is demand for additional adult literacy and numeracy

education and life skills training to enable people to make the most of their opportunities.

3.4 The ambitions last year within the **Living and doing business** theme in Epsom and Ewell remain priorities for the future including the development of affordable housing in ways which preserve the character of the area and the better management of the street environment. This latter aim fits closely with the priorities set by the mid-term review including forming a partnership with the Borough to improve the local street scene.

3.5 The issue of waste is becoming more significant with proposals to penalise waste disposal authorities that fail to reduce their reliance on landfill sites. This can, in part, be achieved through better recycling rates. There is scope to improve access to and management of the civic amenity site in Blenheim Road to support this.

3.6 The issues connected with **Travel** have also changed little from the concerns expressed last year. The growth in the number of private cars which, in Epsom and Ewell, increased by 19% between 1991 and 2001, contributes both to increasing congestion and reducing the viability of public transport. Incentives to use public transport usually take the form of making private car use less attractive through parking charges or restrictions and may include congestion charging in the future. An alternative of introducing price incentives to use public transport could be considered by employers, including the County Council. The review of the Community Transport Strategy, which is currently underway, may identify new and additional ways in which the people without access to either a private car or adequate public transport can travel.

3.7 All Local Committees will be concerned that the Decriminalisation of Parking Enforcement is implemented as efficiently as possible and that the Mammoth Contract delivers the benefits that were envisaged.

3.8 The 2003/04 aims for helping **vulnerable people be more independent** are based on preventative action to reduce the demand for hospital and residential services. However, where health or residential services are needed, they must be of a high quality and reasonably local. In 2004/05, there will be much local attention devoted to the detail of the plans to reorganise acute care. The Local Committee will want the County to press for local care centres to provide a full range of services and that the location of any new acute hospital is accessible.

3.9 The action most needed to ensure that **people feel safe** in Epsom and Ewell relates to reducing the fear of crime rather than crime itself, because recorded crime continues to fall. This can be achieved, to some extent, through improved public spaces including better lighting, CCTV and design and through giving accurate information to counter the perception that crime is very prevalent. The advent of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) locally has increased visible patrolling and the deployment of Neighbourhood Specialist Officers has improved Police communications with the community. The opportunities for improving the monitoring of CCTV images and the use to which CCTV

information can be put might be a priority together with identifying funding for PCSOs and improving fire safety.

3.10 In support of the **where everybody matters** theme, there is scope for the further development of the Local Committee to bring more decision-making over a wider range of services closer to the people affected and reflect local conditions and concerns in establishing priorities. The Local Committees' role in monitoring service performance needs to be developed in a way that helps services to improve and better meet the needs of local people.

3.11 One of the two specific actions for Local Committees from the mid-term review – that relating to improving the street scene has already been referred to in paragraph 3.4. The other suggests that £10,000 from Members' Allocations should be devoted to specific youth projects. While Members will continue to support worthwhile projects as they emerge and may not wish to earmark resources for particular categories of schemes, there are several youth related proposals under development which may commend themselves to the Committee later in the year. In particular, the proposal for a youth café in the town centre has made significant progress and a report should be available for the Committee's meeting in December, which will also be attended by representatives of YELL to outline other projects.

3.12 These ideas can be summarised as:

- Increasing community use of school premises;
- Recognising the pressure on school admissions and moving resources to areas of high demand;
- Increasing adult literacy and numeracy course provision and take up and making life skills training more accessible;
- Increasing affordable housing development in a way which preserves the character of the area;
- Improving the street scene in partnership with the Borough Council;
- Increasing the recycling rate at the Blenheim Road Civic Amenity Site and improving its access and management;
- Encouraging employers, including the County Council, to give positive incentives to staff to travel by public transport;
- Ensuring that the Community Transport Strategy increases access to those without use of a private car or adequate public transport;
- Ensuring the smooth implementation of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement;
- Ensuring that the Mammoth Contract delivers the envisaged benefits;
- Pressing for local care centres to provide a full range of health services and that any new acute hospital is accessible;
- Improving lighting and urban design to enhance public safety;
- Improving monitoring and use of CCTV images;
- Securing funding for Police Community Support Officers;
- Providing accurate information on crime levels and improving support for victims;
- Improving fire safety through education and prevention;
- Developing further the range of services that Local Committees influence or control to improve outcomes for local people;

- Improving the Local Committee's ability to assist services to target service improvements through the monitoring of performance.

3.13 There has not been sufficient time for satisfactory consultation with Members of the Local Committee to gather their ideas. The Committee is, therefore, recommended to include in its response to the invitation to contribute to the next edition of the plan, further ideas from Members that are discussed at the meeting.

#### 4. **CONCLUSION and REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 The Local Committee has been invited to contribute proposals for potential inclusion in the next edition of *Making Surrey a Better Place*. A number of proposals have been suggested for the Local Committee to consider.

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**Background Papers**

**Making Surrey a Better Place 2003/04  
Mid-term review; Executive 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2003**