

Draft Minutes

Minutes: of the meeting of Surrey County Council's Local Committee in Epsom and Ewell held at 19.00 on Monday 29th November 2004 at the Ebbisham Centre, Epsom.

Members Present – Surrey County Council

Mr Chris Frost (Epsom and Ewell South East) NRM Petrie Esq. MBE (Epsom and Ewell North East) (Vice Chairman)
Mrs Jan Mason (Epsom and Ewell West)
(Chairman)

Members Present – Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Cllr Pamela Bradley (Ewell) Cllr Nigel Pavey (Stamford)
Cllr Graham Dudley (Cuddington) Cllr Michael Richardson (Woodcote)

P A R T O N E

I N P U B L I C

[All references to items refer to the agenda for the meeting]

126 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS (Item 1)**
/04

Apologies were received from Cllr Jean Smith, Cllr Colin Taylor and Cllr Alan Carlson.

127/ **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 2)**
04

No declarations of interest were received.

128/ **PETITIONS (Item 3)**
04

No petitions were received.

129 **WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (Item 4)**
/04

A written public question was received from Mr Stephen Dyke, the question and answer were circulated at the meeting and are attached as an annexe to these minutes.

130 **MEMBERS WRITTEN QUESTION TIME (Item 5)**
/04

No questions were received.

131 **ADJOURNMENT [Item 6]**

/04

The Committee agreed to adjourn for up to half an hour for questions from the public. 3 questions were received from members of the public and are attached as an annexe to these minutes.

132 **YELL PRESENTATION [Item 7]**

/04

The Committee received a presentation from YELL (Epsom & Ewell Youth Forum).

The members of YELL explained what YELL is, how it works, the structure of the group and the relationship with both the Surrey and UK Youth Parliaments.

The members of YELL gave more detailed information on how the funding received from the Local Committee (£5,000) at the beginning of the financial year had been used to enable YELL to meet its targets.

The young people explained that the majority of the funding had been spent on developing an animated website for YELL. The website is a means by which different groups of 11 – 19 year olds can exchange information with one another and with YELL. Some of the funding has gone towards providing music events and opportunities for under 18s. The young people asked if the Committee could help find and secure venues where new bands could perform.

The Committee responded that efforts would be made by Members to help find suitable venues where young bands could perform.

YELL commented on the late night bus that has been running since the summer and stated that they felt that it was too expensive for young people and that young people would still choose to walk rather than pay to use the bus. Transport is a big issue for young people and YELL requested that members look into the possibility of reduced fares for young people up to the age of 18.

The Members' of the Committee thanked YELL for an exceptional presentation. A Member stated that the new website was excellent and humorous and that it would grab people's attention. The Members of the Committee assured the young people that they would take forward their views and concerns.

133 **YOUTH CAFÉ [Item 8]**

/04

The Officer introduced the report.

Members enquired if it would be possible to see more detailed figures for the costs of running the Youth Café at Starbucks.

The Officer responded that more detailed running costs could be shared with Members.

Members expressed concern that attendance figures had dropped dramatically since the Youth Café first started operating. Could Officers consider re-advertising and re-launching the Youth Café.

The Officer responded that the steering group was considering running the Youth Café only from the upstairs of Starbucks, with the ground floor of Starbucks being open to all ages. The Officer explained that the upstairs of Starbucks has a capacity of 50 people, which is approximately the level of attendance. When the Youth Café first started and large numbers of young people were attending, this caused problems because young people were queuing to get in and parents felt less safe dropping their child off in the Town Centre as they did not know if their child would be able to get in to the Youth Café.

The young people from YELL stated that if the ground floor of Starbucks was open to over 18s the original purpose of the Youth Café would be lost. The original aim was to provide somewhere specifically for young people where they would feel safe and by introducing older people the feeling of safety would be reduced.

A Member stated that the Youth Café had become an important feature of the town centre on a Friday night, and by diluting the vision to allow over 18's entrance it may reduce the popularity of the scheme. As the Youth Café is such an important part of the town centre should it not be funded centrally.

The Officer responded that the Youth Café does receive central funding in the form of the youth workers based there on a Friday night. The funding being asked from Members allowances would secure the youth café up until April 2006. The business plan projection was based on both levels of Starbucks being used by the Youth Café and did not rely on generating additional revenue by opening the ground floor to the general public. There would be no changes without further consultation and agreement from young people using the café.

It was then

RESOLVED

That the Committee agreed to support the continuation of the Epsom Youth Café and make a contribution of £2,000 from Members' allowances.

134
/04

ADULTS & COMMUNITY CARE [Item 9]

The Officer introduced the report.

A member enquired about what fall prevention work is being carried out in the Borough.

The Officer responded that the Borough does not have a high level of fall incidents, but that they can result in avoidable hospital admissions. The service is working in partnership with the PCT to ensure those at risk receive advice and equipment where appropriate to improve their safety at home. Hip protectors will be available in appropriate cases.

A Member enquired about the progress of the Bourne Hall Cottage scheme.

The Officer replied that the scheme was now back on course and that building work would be completed by the end of the year.

Members enquired about the Performance Indicators attached to the report.

The Officer explained that the performance indicators shown in the report were the core ones that the Executive had requested that Adults & Community Care report on. In total Adults & Community Care report on over 50 Performance Indicators to the Department of Health.

A Member enquired about the cost of domestic care provided by the County Council and the fact that recently a large increase had occurred.

The Officer responded that County Council had put up its charges for domestic care; the new cost is a more realistic cost to include all the overheads that the County Council experience. The direct payment system would mean that a service user would receive the funds directly and could then choose to use private domestic care, which may prove cheaper.

Members congratulated Officers on improvements to the service in the last year.

It was then

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the report.

135
/04

SURREY FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT [Item 10]

The Officer introduced the report.

A Member expressed concern that as the population and density of Epsom is increasing the need to retain the two pumps for the Borough is critical. There is concern that frequently Epsom has access to only one pump as the second pump has been sent to an incident outside of the Borough.

The Officer explained that the service had been experiencing low staffing levels due to the restructuring. Staffing levels have now recovered and since September all but 1 day Epsom has been staffed for 2 pumps. The Officer expressed confidence that this would be maintained in the foreseeable future. The Epsom station is part of a county service and, where necessary, support would be given from outside the Borough.

A Member thanked the Fire Service for its assistance with operation Cubit. The Member enquired why did Epsom & Ewell frequently have higher averages than that of the Surrey and national averages in some of BVPI categories, was this because the statistics included incidents that Epsom crews attended outside of the Borough.

The Officer replied that the figures are only Borough figures. The reason Epsom & Ewell features more highly in some of the categories, for example the BVPIs per 10,000 population, are not comparable with other Boroughs as Epsom & Ewell is urban in nature and other areas like Waverley are rural. BVPI 143ii injuries from accidental dwelling fires per 10,000 population, is high in comparison to the other Boroughs because the crews in Epsom & Ewell are recording people who have refused hospital treatment but still suffered from smoke inhalation. Other areas only record people who are taken to hospital.

Members suggested it would be helpful if, in the future, the performance figures could also be expressed in a form that showed performance on the basis of all the work undertaken by the Epsom Station, to include that outside the Borough boundary.

It was then

RESOLVED

That the committee agreed:

- i) that the service within Epsom & Ewell be noted;
- ii) that the achievement of the personnel at Epsom Fire Station be supported;
- iii) that the initiatives by the service to reduce hazards of fire and other incidents in the community, especially where there are those most vulnerable be endorsed;
- iv) that the initiatives by the service to undertake collaboration/ partnerships that may realise economy of scale or effort and influence in the community be endorsed; and
- v) that the Committee recognise following the evaluation of these initiatives, further funding may be required in order for them to be successfully implemented.

136 **COUNTRYSIDE & PLANNING [Item 11]**
/04

The Officer introduced the report.

A Member enquired about the recent planning appeal the Borough Council had made against the hospital. Epsom Hospital had been given planning permission to extend providing that the car park was increased from a single storey to two storeys. The County Council had not backed the Borough Council's appeal to get the hospital to build the additional storey on the car park. The Member wanted to know why he had not been informed of the County Council's decision not to back the Borough Council's appeal.

The Officer stated that it was normal practice for the local County Councillor to be informed of the County Council's plans in regards to planning appeals. The Officer stated that he would notify his colleagues at County Hall that the County Councillor had not been kept informed of the County Council's actions

It was then

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the report.

137 **MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES [Item 12]**
/04

It was then

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the report.

138 **FLEXIBLE FORWARD PLAN [Item 13]**
/04

It was then

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the report.

Meeting Ended: 22.10

Chairman

Surrey County Council's Local Committee in Epsom & Ewell
29th November 2004
Written Public Question
Stephen & Helen Dyke

Closure of Mencap Residential Care Home at 28 The Parade, Epsom

Q1) 'The Mencap run residential care home at 28 The parade Epsom, is due to close in the next 2 months. This will leave 5 adults with learning disabilities needing new accommodation. Mencap have to close the home because of a shortfall in funding due to vacant rooms. The move will be distressing for the residents and alternative accommodation may be 2 or 3 times as expensive as The Parade. How can the social services department justify not re-negotiating with Mencap the funding supplied to the existing residents in order to prevent this distress, pressure on their department and expense to the public purse?'

Officer Response

Mencap has announced its intention to close the residential home at the Parade in part due to the number of voids and loss of money, but also due to the changing nature of accommodation required for people with learning disabilities. The Parade currently has eight beds and only five residents. The issue of voids has continued to be a problem for the past 18 months.

This decision to close has come despite our service working together with Mencap to identify suitable people to fill not only the Parade but voids in other Mencap homes across East and Mid Surrey. It was identified some considerable time ago that Mencap would need to reconfigure to ensure a sustainable future. With this in mind Mencap intended to look at the Parade becoming a supported living project for younger learning disabled people.

Currently, the Parade caters primarily for people with a mild to moderate learning disability and within Surrey many new service users requiring accommodation are choosing supported living. This form of accommodation is highlighted in the Valuing People white paper.

In recent research completed in Surrey by Laing and Buisson we have an oversupply of residential accommodation for people with moderate needs and yet an undersupply of accommodation for people with complex needs and challenging behaviour.

In summary, the Parade is not able to accommodate people with challenging behaviour but could be a resource for those who are able to live more independently. Mencap, therefore, made the decision to close as a residential home and is seeking to change to supported living. This will require the agreement of the Commission for Social Care Inspection.

Some of the existing residents will be able to continue at the Parade as supported living tenants. There are some, however, who will need to be re-assessed and may require alternative residential accommodation. We understand that change is difficult and it is our intention to work closely with Mencap in order for the transition to be made as smoothly as possible.

**Informal Minutes of Public Question Time at
Surrey County Council's Local Committee
In Epsom & Ewell
29th November 2004**

Mr Stephen Dyke, Closure of Mencap Residential Care Home at 28 The Parade

Mr Dyke asked would the County Council consider re-opening negotiations with Mencap to keep the home open. The cost to Adults & Community Care to re-home the residents could be as much as £400 per week more compared to what Mencap currently charge, which would mean an additional £100,000 per year for the County Council. The County Council's response to the issue prejudices the assessment of the residents and states that they will be assessed as having mild to moderate learning disabilities. The families feel that the residents will be assessed as having higher needs.

Officer Response

The Officer responded that because the home is not fully occupied, the financial viability of the home is brought in to question. The assessment of the residents has not been completed yet and every effort will be made to place the residents in appropriate accommodation, depending on the outcome of the assessments.

Chairman of the Local Committee Response

Members requested that the results of the assessments be reported back to the Local Committee with an update on the situation.

Mr Barrie Taylor, Magazine Provision at Libraries

Mr Taylor asked why had libraries stopped subscribing to magazines and asked that the Committee support the re-introduction of magazines to libraries.

Officer Response

The Officer responded that the Library service had stopped subscribing to magazines, because it was felt that it was now an under used service, as most publications are available on the Internet. The savings made by not providing magazines would be reinvested into the provision of books.

Councillor Response

Councillors requested that the Committee write to the Executive member for Community Services stating that the Committee would support the re-instatement of magazines to libraries.

Jeff Bull, Concerns re: Fire Safety at the Ashley Centre

Mr Jeff Bull expressed concern about possible fire hazards in the Ashley Centre. Mr Bull stated that since the increase of franchises in the Ashley Centre and the number of cafes and market stalls outside of the centre, there were now no clear passages for people out the centre. The rear entrance of Dickens & Jones has been shut and the exit/ entrance near café Mocha only has 1 set of double doors working, meaning that the Ashley Centre only has only 1 fully operational entrance/ exit. Mr Bull would like the Officer to address his concerns.

Officer Response

The Officer responded that he understood Mr Bulls' complaints about the stalls inside the Ashley Centre, but that the stalls are at an acceptable level for people to be able to evacuate the building safely. The building was constructed to specifications that should ensure that any fire should be contained within the unit in which it occurred. The centre has two atria that act as smoke holding areas and there is a smoke holding layer in the centre, which would mean that in the event of a fire people would not have to be evacuated in a smoke filled environment. The Officer agreed to arrange an immediate investigation of the closure of Dickens & Jones rear entrance.