

Minutes: of the meeting of Surrey County Council's Local Committee in Epsom and Ewell held at 19.00 on Monday 9 October 2006 at the Ebbisham Centre, Derby Square, Epsom.

Members Present – Surrey County Council

Mr Chris Frost (Epsom & Ewell South East)

Mrs Jan Mason (Epsom & Ewell West)

NRM Petrie Esq MBE (Epsom & Ewell North East)

Jean Smith (Epsom & Ewell North) (Chairman)

Mr Colin Taylor (Epsom & Ewell South West) (Vice-Chairman)

Members Present – Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Cllr Brian Angus (Ewell)

Cllr Pamela Bradley (Ewell)

Cllr Robert Leach (Auriol)

Cllr Nigel Pavey (Stamford)

Cllr Michael Richardson (Woodcote)

PART ONE

IN PUBLIC

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

60/ **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]**

06

Apologies were received from Cllr Graham Dudley. Cllr Robert Leach substituted for Cllr Graham Dudley.

61/ **MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING [Item 2]**

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The minutes of the meeting held on 31 July 2006 were agreed. The Chairman and Members expressed high praise for the work done for the Local Committee by Kirsty Light – Local Committee & Partnership Officer over the last four years and wished her every success in her new position.

62/ **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]**

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No declarations of interest were made.

63/ **PETITIONS [Item 4]**

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No petitions were received.

64/ WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTION TIME [Item 5]

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Written public questions were received from Mrs Amanda Heaton and Mr Barrie Taylor. The questions and answers were circulated at the meeting (attached as an annexe to these minutes).

65/ MEMBERS WRITTEN QUESTION TIME [Item 6]

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Brian Angus, Chris Frost and Jan Mason submitted written questions. The questions and answers were circulated at the meeting (attached as an annexe to these minutes).

66/ ADJOURNMENT [Item 7]

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

67/ LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP – TOWN CENTRE SUB-GROUP [Item 8]

06

The Officers introduced the report.

The Borough Chief Executive clarified the membership of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Town Centre Sub Group; the members of the group are the Borough Chief Executive, Area Director Surrey County Council, Local Transportation Manager Surrey County Council, Borough Inspector Surrey Police, Chairman of the Epsom & Ewell Business Partnership, Chairman of PubWatch, a representative from the Town Centre Panel and a representative from The Mall Ashley.

The Police Divisional Commander gave an update on progress being made with the targets surrounding Anti Social behaviour. The monitoring of CCTV has been moved to Walton. Police are now able to issue penalty notices of £80, which releases more Officer time. There has been a steep rise in violent crime, which has occurred partly as a result of an increase to the range of crimes that are categorised as a violent crime and better reporting. The Police alone cannot address the issues surrounding the increase in violent crime; it is an issue that needs be considered in partnership with all the statutory agencies.

The Local Transportation Manager updated the committee on the progress surrounding the targets on congestion. At present a review of all the junctions in the Town Centre is being conducted, to look at any means by which congestion could be eased. The new Waiting Restrictions are due to come into force imminently. The Virtual Messaging System for the car parks should be in place by November.

A Member asked if the idea of a TaxiWatch scheme had been considered that could be run along the same lines as PubWatch.

The Officers responded that this idea was currently being investigated.

Members enquired about the Police's ability to deal with obstructive parking.

The Divisional Commander responded that obstructive parking was a Police matter as was anti-social driving. The Roads Policing unit can now be deployed more widely, into specific neighbourhoods. A new post of Road Police Community Support Officer has been created and if the Town Ward Police panel makes anti-social driving and obstructive parking a priority then the Borough Inspector can request for road PCSO's and the Roads Policing Unit to be deployed to those priority areas.

A Member asked what work is being done to remove high level graffiti.

The Officer responded that considerable work was being done to address the problem of graffiti, which included working closely with British Transport Police. Not as much progress had been made with the removal of high level graffiti because it has been difficult to source vehicles that can be used to remove high level graffiti. However, the right vehicles have now been sourced.

The Officers stated that at present the statutory agencies locally provide few services to people using the Town centre at night. The group is considering adjusting car parking rates and introducing night time ambassadors, either in a enforcement role or with a more tourist approach of guiding members of the public to their destination or modes of transport home to clear the Town Centre more efficiently. These proposed measures will increase the contribution towards late night activities in the Town Centre by the public services locally.

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the report.

68/ 06 **GROUNDWORK PRESENTATION [Item 9]**

The Officer introduced the report.

The Officers explained why the Longmead Estate had been selected by Rosebery for environmental improvements. Rosebery Housing have employed Groundwork Merton to assist in the environmental improvements programme for Longmead, particularly with the consultation element of the work.

Several large scale consultation exercises have been carried out and on-going engagement is continuing, particularly with young people. At present the solutions and proposals that are being developed are:

- Traffic – different ways of dealing with speeding, garage provision and permitting parking on green spaces
- Safety and security: lights, gating alleyways
- General up-keep
- Provisions for young people including play provision, lighting the Multi Use Games Area, mini-moto vehicle training
- Youth work specifically with girls

A Member asked if all social landlords would face the same pressure to deal as Rosebery to look at environmental improvements.

The Officer responded that all social landlords would experience the same levels of pressure.

It was then

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the report.

69/ 06 **TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ACT 2004 – STREET WORKS AND ROAD WORKS [Item 10]**

The Officer introduced the report.

A Member asked how was the emergency work carried out by utility companies managed, as the utility companies do not require permission from the County Council.

The Officer responded that the Council had to rely on the integrity of the contractor to carry out the work to a high standard.

A Member asked if the road works carried out by Surrey and the utility companies could be coordinated better to prevent additional congestion in the Borough.

The Officer responded that this will improve with the introduction in 2007 of an independent body within Surrey to coordinate the road works plans of Surrey County Council and the utility companies.

It was then

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the report.

70/
06 **PEDESTRIAN FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS IN EWELL VILLAGE [Item 11]**

The Officer introduced the report.

Members expressed dissatisfaction with the length of time it had taken to complete the scheme.

The Officer responded that Officers echoed the concerns and feelings about the scheme that Members expressed.

A Member raised the issue of widening the footpath in Spring Street.

The Officer responded that widening the footway would have a high cost attached to it and according to the contractor would require an 8-14 week road closure. The Officer suggested that the footpath widening could be discussed in the context of the Local Transport Plan and that the social/ environmental benefits need to be weighed up with the cost benefit impact.

It was then

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the report.

71/
06 **VEHICLE CROSSOVERS [Item 12]**

The Officer introduced the report.

A Member enquired why the report did not set out any possible solutions to the backlog of work that currently exists in the East regarding vehicle crossovers.

The Officer responded that there were few solutions to the backlog, as there are not enough staff in the East to deal with the backlog. Vehicle crossovers are not a statutory requirement and therefore are a lower priority.

A Member asked if charges could be brought in to cover the costs of the work associated with vehicle crossovers.

The Officer responded that this was not possible. An income could not be generated and if an income was generated then it could not be used to recruit additional staff.

The Chairman then proposed, and was seconded by the Vice Chairman, that a recommendation was put forward to the Executive requesting additional staff.

It was then

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the report and agreed to pass a recommendation to the Executive:

“There is a considerable and unacceptable backlog in the Eastern Area in dealing with applications for crossovers. At the present level of staff resources, officers have advised us that this backlog will increase in the foreseeable future. The Members of the Local Committee in Epsom & Ewell, both County and Borough, therefore urge the Executive to increase the number of staff dealing with crossovers in order to overcome this problem and to restore public confidence in the County Transportation Department. It is emphasised that this increase in staff should not be found from transferring staff from other duties.”

72/
06 **MINOR HIGHWAYS/ LOCAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT [Item 13]**

The Officer introduced the report.

It was then

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the report.

73/
06 **MEMBERS' ALLOCATIONS [Item 14]**

The Officer introduced the report.

It was then

RESOLVED

Funding from the Members' Allocation budget:

- i) £4,000 towards the mental health outreach project run by the Epsom & Ewell Citizens Advice Bureau (each Members agreed to contribute £800);
- ii) £1,100 towards improving the 6th form registration at Epsom & Ewell High School (Jan Mason);
- iii) £2,500 towards the removal of Japanese knotweed from the Hogsmill river (Jan Mason);
- iv) £500 towards the Ruxley Gymnastics Club (Jan Mason); and
- v) £1,318 towards new flooring at the Stephen Woods Centre (Jan Mason);

Funding from the £35k capital allocation grant:

- i) £10,000 towards the purchase of a Rough Terrain Vehicle for Epsom Common Association.

74/
06 **FORWARD PROGRAMME [Item 15]**

The Officer introduced the report.

It was then

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the report.

Meeting Ended: 9.45 p.m.

Chairman

Surrey County Council's Local Committee in Epsom & Ewell
9 October 2006
Public Question
Amanda Heaton

Question:

“Every day I travel from Stoneleigh Park Road to the Royal Marsden Hospital, Sutton and I have noticed that the traffic is far heavier than it has ever been.

The traffic starts to build up along Ewell by Pass and turning left into Cheam Road can take a good 4 to 6 minutes. Today my journey took 35 minutes to do a 4.6 mile journey and I left home at 7.30 a.m.

One of the problems may be that on the Cheam Road you have the set of lights just before East Ewell Station, you then have commuters turning right into Ewell East Station, moving on 10 yards ahead you have the pedestrian crossing. All these together cause an enormous backlog of traffic. Can I also ask – has the traffic light sequencing been changed?

Another problem I have noticed is that people are queue-jumping when wanting to turn left into Cheam Road, rather than use the filter lane they go up to the lights and turn left there – causing even more problems. Also people tend to move into the middle of the crossroads on the Ewell by Pass, thus blocking oncoming traffic. Would a yellow grid box help to keep this section clear?

I must also mention that the traffic coming from the other way – from Cheam Road to the Ewell by Pass – even at 7.30/ 7.45 a.m. is queuing back up to Northey Avenue.

Would it be a good idea for the council to monitor this traffic to see what the problems are and how to rectify them?”

Officer Response

Under normal traffic conditions, the major road network in the Borough is already under considerable strain and is often required to function beyond its capacity. The current extensive roadworks on the A243 Chessington Road, between junction 9 of the M25 and Malden Rushett, and also on the M25 between junction 8 Reigate and junction 10 Wisley have diverted considerable additional traffic flows on to this network causing addition congestion.

At the meeting of this Local Committee on 10th April 2006, Members approved the commissioning of Route Studies on the A24, A240, A232 as part of the programme of Integrated Transportation Schemes to be funded from the 2006/07 Local Transport Plan for Epsom & Ewell. As part of this work the Road Traffic Accidents and Congestion will be investigated on these routes, which include Cheam Road and the Ewell By Pass. Hopefully these studies will provide a range of improvement measures that can be developed and implemented in subsequent years.

In the meantime the functioning of the traffic signals mentioned will be checked to ensure that the timings are still correct.

Surrey County Council's Local Committee in Epsom & Ewell
9 October 2006
Public Question
Barrie Taylor

Q 1) Agenda Item 11 - Pedestrian Facility Improvements in Ewell Village:

- a. How much has been spent on this scheme to date?
- b. How does this compare with the original estimates?
- c. What has happened to the agreed proposals to widen the dangerously-narrow pavement in Spring Street?
- d. If this essential safety work is no longer to be carried out or is being postponed, why?
- e. Who has been consulted and who has made the decision to radically alter these the long-standing, previously-agreed proposals?
- f. What will be the estimated cost savings achieved?

Officer Response

The accounts for this scheme are not yet closed. Therefore no details of costs are available at this time. In making any future cost comparisons with original estimates, any amendments to the original design will need to be taken into consideration.

The estimated cost of the scheme to widen part of the footway in Spring Street by approximately 300 mm is approximately £50,000.

The constructor has indicated in his Method Statement for the scheme that he requires a full closure of Spring Street in order to carry out the work. The constructor estimates that he will require this closure for between 8 and 14 weeks.

There are insufficient funds available to carry out the scheme in the current financial year.

When considering the programme of Local Transportation Plan schemes to be undertaken in 2007/8, Members will take account of the social and environmental impact posed by the implementation of the scheme and the cost benefit that it provides.

Q 2) Installation of lights in Snakey Alley Ewell (minutes of the Local Committee meeting 31.07.06 – page 8 refers)

- a. What is the total final cost of this project and how does this compare with the original estimates?
- b. With the lights being on every night of the year from dusk to dawn — currently approximately from 6.30pm to 6.30am - do officers believe that this excessive and costly consumption of energy is achieving (or contributing to) the frequently-stated objective of the scheme, namely to provide a Safe Route to and from Glyn School?

Officer Response

The accounts for this scheme are not yet closed. Therefore no details of costs are available at this time.

Surrey County Council is fully committed to achieving the objectives of its programme of providing Safe Routes to School for its school children. It is also fully committed to achieving a reduction in the crime and disorder presently experienced by the Community.

The street lighting scheme in Snakey Alley provides an excellent example of both agendas being met to the benefit of local school children and the Community as a whole.

**Surrey County Council's Local Committee in Epsom & Ewell
9 October 2006
Member Question
Brian Angus**

Q1) “Given your drastically reduced levels of project staffing, what percentage of this year’s budget will you be able to implement/spend?”

Officer Response

At present it is anticipated that the entire 2006/07 Capital works budget for Epsom & Ewell will be spent in the current financial year.

**Surrey County Council's Local Committee in Epsom & Ewell
9 October 2006
Member Question
Chris Frost**

Q1) "Please could we receive a list of Highways staff dealing with matters in Epsom & Ewell, together with their phone numbers and the generic e-mail address? If any phone numbers should not be released to the public then that should be indicated on the list."

Officer Response

Question withdrawn. See e-mail Frost/Williams & White 06/10/06.

Q2) "Why did local Councillors not receive details of the current programme to introduce yellow lines before or at the same time at the police were notified, and when is the work scheduled for completion?"

Officer Response

Officers confirmed to the meeting of the Committee on 31st July 2006, that, as planned, the measures to implement the scheme would be put in place in September/October.

Members briefing sheets issued by the LTS on the 2nd October and 9th October advise that the works were imminent/in progress.

The only involvement with the Police in respect of these traffic orders has been as part of tri-partite officer level meetings (SCC/EEBC/Police) regarding the operational issues surrounding Decriminalised Parking Enforcement.

Implementation should be complete within 1-2 weeks, weather permitting.

Surrey County Council's Local Committee in Epsom & Ewell
9 October 2006
Member Questions
Jan Mason

Q1) Speeding along Dual Carriageway, Chessington Road

“At the January 06 meeting of the Local Committee it was agreed to increase the speed limit on the new section from Hook Road Arena to Ruxley Lane to 40 mpg. The Police had made this recommendation to the Committee. It was agreed to put in 40 mph repeater signs along the carriageway. This would enable the Police to enforce the speed limit.

However, at the last Police Consultative meeting in September, the issue of speeding along this section was raised again, and questions were asked regarding why Surrey County Council Transportation Team had not implemented the scheme.

Would Officers please confirm when this will be carried out.”

Officer Response

An instruction for the necessary signing work to be carried out was issued to the County Council's constructor shortly after the Local Committee approved the revised speed limit in January 2006. Therefore officers are disappointed at the length of time that it has taken in order to have the signs erected.

The work forms part of a larger programme of signing works that is currently being carried out across Epsom & Ewell. The 40mph terminal signs are now in place. The necessary repeater signs will follow shortly.

Q2) Traffic Lights at Chessington Road Junction with Ruxley Lane

“At the January 2006 meeting of the Local Committee, it was requested by members that the timing sequence at these lights be looked at again. These lights, together with the newly installed lights at Gilders Road, Chessington, (RKB) have resulted in tailbacks in both directions in rush hour periods.

Have Officers contacted Royal Borough of Kingston to look at these new lights?

Have our Officers looked at the timings, etc. at the Ruxley Lane, Chessington Road junction?”

Officer Response

Officers have raised this problem with the Traffic Engineering Manager for the Royal Borough of Kingston (RBK). RBK in turn have raised the matter with Transport for London (TfL) who manage the traffic signals. TfL have monitored the traffic signals and found that the timings comply with the "Design Standards for Signal Schemes in London".

The view of Surrey County Council officers is that there is still scope for improvement in the operation of the signals and they will request that RBK carry out further studies with a mind to reducing the congestion in Chessington Road.

The operation of the traffic signals at the junction of Chessington Road with Ruxley Lane has been checked and found to be working satisfactorily, albeit this is sometimes nullified by the congestion at the junction due to the queuing from Gilders Lane.

Persimmon has indicated that, at their request, BT are shortly to connect the signals on the hospital cluster to Network Management Information System in Leatherhead. This will facilitate fault identification and diagnostic checks.

Q3) Leatherhead Road, Malden Rushett Closure

"Traffic in and around Epsom has caused considerable delays to motorists. Were our Officers notified of the closure of the Leatherhead Road at Malden Rushett from September until the end of this month? I am certain that the delays at present have resulted from this closure."

Officer Response

There were detailed pre-contract discussions between all concerned in these major highway works, including Surrey County Council officers, to ensure that the impact of the scheme on the Community would be minimised as far as possible. The timing was selected to avoid The Derby, The Chessington World of Adventures events and other major Statutory Undertakers works in the area.

**Informal Minutes of Public Question Time at
Surrey County Council's Local Committee
In Epsom & Ewell
9 October 2006**

Robert Walker, Congestion on Hook Road

Mr Walker asked if it would be possible to consider measures to be put in place along Hook Road to ease the congestion and the danger presented by the heavy lorries that use the road. Mr Walker asked specifically if a 20 mph zone could be considered and what measures could be implemented along Hook Road to ease the problems mentioned above.

Officer Response

The Officer responded that the issues mentioned about Hook Road are well known. To find solutions for Hook Road to ease congestion and reduce heavy vehicle usage will be problematic because of the proximity of residential property, the high level of off street parking and that speeding has not been identified as an issue due to the congestion. To implement a 20 mph zone, the road has to be engineered to prevent vehicles being able to exceed 20 mph. If the road is not engineered in this way then the police cannot enforce the speed limit. The Kiln Lane Link would provide some relief to the issues but the scheme has been deferred until at least 2011. The Officer agreed that Hook Road would be considered in the Local Transport Planning process for the new financial year 2007/08 to see if the situation along Hook Road could be improved for the residents.

Barrie Taylor, Snakey Alley

Mr Taylor asked why had only 3 Members out of a Committee of 10 accepted his invite to visit the site and look at the lighting scheme that has been implemented. Mr Taylor requested that an independent enquiry into the scheme be instigated.

Councillor Response

A Councillor responded that he had visited the site at the request of Mr Taylor and was entirely satisfied with the scheme implemented by the Local Transportation Service. One Councillor responded that the type of lighting installed was too high and needed to be more subdued.

Officer Response

The Officer responded that he would take up the matter with the lighting engineer for the area.