



## **OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (EPSOM & EWELL )**

### **LOCAL COMMITTEE PROTOCOLS**

**9 June 2008**

#### **KEY ISSUE**

Local Committees are able to adopt local protocols around delegated approval for public engagement. These should be reviewed on a regular basis.

#### **SUMMARY**

The Local Committee [Epsom & Ewell] has a local protocol [public engagement], which is overdue for review.

#### **OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Local Committee [Epsom & Ewell is asked to agree that the:**

- (i) Local Protocol for public engagement is amended, as per annex A, which details the current protocol and the proposed amendment..

## 1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The procedures for the Local Committee are governed by the County Council's constitution. The constitution gives Local Committees discretion to agree certain local variations.
- 1.2 The Local Committee can choose to adopt local protocols that change the:
  - Processes governing public engagement and service performance monitoring within formal Committee meetings;
  - scheme of delegation, allowing Local Committees to delegate power to the Area Director for approving small amounts of local committee funding.
- 1.3 The Local Committee (Epsom and Ewell ) agreed a local protocol governing public engagement on 12 July 2004, making amendments to this protocol. This protocol is attached as Annex A.
- 1.4 The Local Committees are required to regularly review any local protocols. This report outlines the options available to the committee in reviewing the protocols.

## 2 ANALYSIS

- 2.1 Local Committees have discretion to operate more flexibly regarding public engagement. Local Committees must comply with the County Councils standing orders (part 4 ) *except where they draw up local protocols allowing them discretion to make minor variations to working practices.*
- 2.2 Local Protocols must be developed in consultation with the Head of Members Services and formally approved by the Local Committee.
- 2.3 The current Local Protocol for the Local Committee (Epsom and Ewell is attached as Annex A. This protocol has reduced the notification required to present a petition up to the start of the Local Committee meeting and the number of signatures required to ten households.

## 3 OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Local Committee can:
  - Approve the protocol without any changes;
  - Approve the protocol with amendments, as suggested in annex A, subject to the rules within the constitution;

#### **4 CONSULTATIONS**

- 4.1 Public feedback is captured through the Local Committee feedback forms. This information has been used in consultation with local County Councillors.

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

- 5.1 There are no financial and value for money implications in regard to this protocol.

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

- 6.1 The protocol for public engagement ensures that the process is fair, and everyone has the same opportunity to engage with the local committee.

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

- 7.1 There are no crime and disorder implications to consider as part of this report.

#### **8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 The local protocols provide the Local Committee with greater flexibility in the way it works. The public engagement protocol has made it easier for local residents to ask questions, and present petitions.

#### **9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 This Local Protocol aims to facilitate greater public engagement in Committee proceedings by establishing terms more favourable to the public than those laid down in the Constitution of the Council.

#### **10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT**

The Local Committee will be asked to review the protocols on a regular basis.

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| <b>BACKGROUND PAPERS:</b> | Surrey County Council's Constitution<br>Reports to local committee: Standing Orders 12 July 2004 |

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**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S LOCAL COMMITTEE  
(EPSOM & EWELL)**

**CURRENT LOCAL PROTOCOL  
(Public Engagement)**

Local Protocol in Epsom & Ewell agreed at the 12 July 2004 meeting of the Local Committee

**Petitions**

That the extent of support required for a petition to be received be reduced from 100 signatories to representatives of 10 households and the period of notice be reduced from 14 days to 'before the start of the meeting';

That the Committee accepts petitions on the same subject but not in the same terms as a petition submitted in the previous six months;

**The Constitution**

The Local Committee have made no amendments to the following, set out in the County Councils constitution:

**Petitions**

- 65.2 A spokesman for the petitioners may address the Committee on the petition for no more than 3 minutes, but thereafter may not speak further. The petition may be referred without discussion to the next appropriate meeting of the Committee at the discretion of the Chairman.
- 65.4 No more than three petitions may be presented at any one meeting of the Executive or a committee.
- 65.5 The Chief Executive may amalgamate within the first received petition other petitions of like effect on the same subject.
- 65.6 The presentation of a petition on the same or similar topic as one presented in the last six months will not be allowed.

**Public Question Time**

- 66.1 At the start of any ordinary meeting of the Executive or any Committee, any member of the public who is an elector of the Surrey County Council area may ask one question relating to a matter within the Executive's or Committee's terms of reference. Questions will not be allowed on matters which are "confidential" or "exempt" under the Local Government Access to Information Act 1985 or on planning applications. Questions should relate to general policy and not to detail.

- 66.2 Notice must be given in writing or by email to the Chief Executive at least 7 days before the meeting.
- 66.3 The Chief Executive may, having consulted the questioner, reword any question received to bring it into proper form and to secure reasonable brevity. Copies will be circulated to Members of the Executive or the Committee as appropriate.
- 66.4 Questions will be taken in the order in which they are received by the Chief Executive and directed to the appropriate Executive Member or committee chairman. Questions will be asked and answered without discussion. Any Member may decline to answer a question, provide a written reply or nominate another Member to answer it on his/her behalf.
- 66.5 Following the initial reply by the Executive Member or committee chairman, one supplementary question may be asked by the questioner. The Executive Member or committee chairman may decline to answer a supplementary question.
- 66.6 The number of questions, which may be asked at any one meeting, may not exceed six and the chairman may exercise his/her discretion to regard a single question, which has been divided into a number of sub-questions as several different questions within the allowable total number, which may be asked at the meeting. The chairman may also disallow questions, which are repetitious.
- 66.7 Questions, which are received after the first six to be received, will be held over to the following meeting, or dealt with in writing at the chairman's discretion.

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**PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO LOCAL PROTOCOL  
[PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT] PETITIONS:  
at the 9 JUNE 2008 meeting of the Local Committee**

Notice must be given in writing or by an email to the Area Director at least seven days before the meeting.

This amendment is proposed to facilitate greater public engagement in Committee proceedings by establishing terms more favourable to the public than those laid down in the Constitution of the Council, and to enable Officers to provide a written response at the same Local Committee Meeting.

No changes to Standing Orders 65.2, 65.4, 65.5, and 65.6 under the Local Protocols agreed at the Local Committee meeting on 12 July 2004.