



Minutes of meeting

GUILDFORD LOCAL COMMITTEE

Date: THURSDAY 20 OCTOBER 2005

Time: 2.00 pm

Place: COUNCIL CHAMBER, GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL,
MILLMEAD HOUSE, GUILDFORD GU2 4BB

Members present:

Surrey County Council

Mr John Ades (Ash)
Mr Bill Barker (Horsleys)
Mr David Davis (Shere)
Ms Sarah Di Caprio (Guildford South-East)
Mr David Goodwin (Guildford South-West)
Mr Mike Nevins (Worplesdon)
Mr Eddie Owen (Guildford East)
Mr Tony Rooth (Shalford)
Ms Pauline Searle (Guildford North)
Ms Fiona White (Guildford West)

Guildford Borough Council (for Transportation matters)

Mr Keith Chesterton (Stoke)
Ms Vivienne Johnson (Christchurch)
Ms Liz Hogger (Effingham)
Ms Marilyn Spier (Merrow)
Mr Sheridan Westlake (Merrow)
Mr Tony Phillips (Onslow)
Mr Nigel Manning (Ash Vale)
Ms Jenny Wicks (Clandon & Horsley)
Ms Diana Lockyer-Nibbs (Normandy)
Mr Terence Patrick (Send)

The following issues were raised during the informal public questions session:

- Signs and timetables at Spectrum car park (Peter Hattersley)
 - Traffic survey and congestion at Merrow (Peter Hattersley)
 - Campaigning by the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association to reduce street clutter (Peter Hattersley)
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All references to Items refer to the Agenda for the meeting.

IN PUBLIC

80/05 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

There were no apologies for absence.

81/05 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (15 September 2005) [Item 2]

Agreed and signed by the Chairman.

82/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

Eddie Owen declared a personal interest in relation to Item 8 as he is a member of the School Organisation Committee.

83/05 PETITIONS [Item 4]

No petitions were received.

84/05 WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS [Item 5]

A question had been received from Auriol Earle, on behalf of the Guildford Society. (Both question and answer are appended to these minutes.) A DVD of the 'Save our Streets' Campaign was shown.

85/05 WRITTEN MEMBERS' QUESTIONS [Item 6]

Two questions had been received from Sheridan Westlake and Terence Patrick. (Both questions and answers are appended to these minutes.)

GENERAL MATTERS

[LIGHT GREEN]

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

FOR DECISION

86/05 CONSULTATION ON THE SOUTH EAST PLAN [Item 7]

Members made various comments:

- The preferred option (as outlined in the report) is supported, with some caveats.
- There should be no deletion of Guildford's Green Belt.
- The alternative option of an increased allocation of housing to Guildford borough is strongly opposed.
- GBC's Urban Capacity Study will give a more realistic figure of the number of houses that could be allocated in Guildford town.
- There should be protection for countryside beyond the Green Belt as well as Green Belt land.
- There should be guarantees of and further funding for provision of infrastructure.
- The density of housing proposed should be lower than 30 dwellings per hectare.

87/05 CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF ST FRANCIS WESTBOROUGH SCHOOL [Item 8]

Members made various comments:

- Parents who attended a recent meeting at the school wanted the school to remain open.
- The failures of management identified in the OfSTED reports can be rectified.
- While there may be vacancies in nearby schools, these vacancies may not match the profile of children potentially needing places.
- There is a good atmosphere in the school; parents praise the work of the staff; the school is a central part of the community.
- Special language provision is very good at St Francis.
- Planning for school numbers is not always reliable.
- SCC's funding formula should be revised to reflect the greater needs of schools in more deprived areas.
- During the review in 2000 of primary schools in North Guildford, St Francis was offered a degree of protection from closure.
- There would be considerable traffic (congestion) problems in getting children to other schools.
- The quality of the education offered at the school is the paramount consideration.
- The school has started to receive applications for entry in January 2006.
- There needs to be a changed perception of the school.

- Places at nearby schools may not be acceptable to some parents because of particular family circumstances.
- The options of amalgamation or federation may be effective in addressing the management failures at the school.

Many Members indicated that they support the option to keep the school open.

88/05 LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK [Item 9]

Those Members that participated in events during the week reported that they enjoyed meeting young people who they found to be very interested and enthusiastic to learn more about local democracy.

Some Members felt that:

- the Local Committee should be more proactive in engaging with young people, particularly via schools.
- local democratic fora in Guildford are not hearing the majority or the diversity of views of residents.
- Local Committee meetings are welcoming, but could be better advertised.
- the work of the Local Strategic Partnership should be given more and wider publicity, perhaps using new media.

89/05 MEMBERS' REVENUE BIDS [Item 10]

Members agreed the following bids:

Fiona White: £2,100 for increasing the after-school use of astroturf facilities at Kings College School.

David Davis: £2,500 for Young Enterprise Programmes to be run in infant and junior schools in Shere.

90/05 FORWARD PROGRAMME [Item 11]

Members commented on items that have already been programmed, and called for a number of further items to be included in the Forward Programme.

TRANSPORTATION MATTERS

[LIGHT BLUE]

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

FOR DECISION

91/05 PIRBRIGHT VILLAGE SAFETY SCHEME [Item 12]

Dr Ansell, a Pirbright resident, addressed the Committee, and described the problems experienced by her and some other residents.

Mike Nevins thanked officers for their speedy response to the issues raised and proposed an extension of the recommended 7.5 tonne weight limit to Fox Corner and other points of entry to the village; HGVs should be directed via the M3 rather than roads through Pirbright. He argued that imposing a weight restriction only on Cemetery Pales would lead to HGVs using Fox Corner instead.

The Senior Local Transportation Manager responded that such a blanket ban would displace traffic to other rural areas and was likely to receive objections from the Freight Transport Association.

Members agreed:

- (a) that recommendations (i), (ii) and (iii) be agreed, and that the suggested 7.5 tonne heavy goods vehicle (HGV) ban should be progressed immediately.
- (b) that investigation of an area-wide environmental HGV ban should be investigated with a further report being brought to the Committee.
- (c) that the cost of the above be borne by the £50,000 already allocated to Phase 2 of the Pirbright Village Safety Scheme. The effect of this decision will be to defer other elements of the scheme until 2006/07.
- (d) that recommendation (v) be rejected.

[David Davis, John Ades and Terence Patrick left the meeting during the discussion.]

92/05 A281 HORSHAM ROAD, SHALFORD: PROVISION OF CROSSING IMPROVEMENTS [Item 13]

Members agreed the officer recommendations.

93/05 EFFINGHAM COMMON ROAD, EFFINGHAM JUNCTION: PROPOSED PEDESTRIAN REFUGE [Item 14]

Liz Hogger proposed that further investigation be carried out into a different site for the pedestrian refuge, at the other end of the layby. Bill Barker indicated that he would propose £1,000 from his allocation to fund this investigation.

Members agreed that further investigations be carried out into a new site for the pedestrian refuge.

94/05 PARK LANE, NEW INN LANE, MERROW LANE, MERROW: PROPOSED 50 MPH SPEED LIMIT [Item 15]

Members agreed the officer recommendations.

95/05 SPEED MANAGEMENT STRATEGY [Item 16]

The Senior Local Transportation Manager advised that he hoped that the Speed Management Plan for Guildford would be prepared by April 2006 and brought to the Committee annually for review.

Members agreed the officer recommendations.

[Meeting ended 5.15 p.m.]

.....(Mr Bill Barker - Chairman)

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Q1 STREET FURNITURE IN CONSERVATION AREAS

English Heritage's 'Streets for All' manual gives guidance on the design and maintenance of street furniture and encourages whenever possible the removal and rationalisation of redundant items particularly in conservation areas. Does SCC's Transportation Service support the principles behind this guidance and will it ensure that they are adopted when future projects are undertaken?

A Surrey County Council (SCC) fully supports the objectives of the Streets for All manual in seeking to reduce street clutter, particularly in sensitive areas such as Conservation Areas. In designing highway improvements or maintenance schemes, we seek to minimize the amount of street furniture wherever possible.

There are certain legislative or practical reasons why it is not always possible to achieve as much as we would wish. The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions direct the signage that is permitted or required on the public highway, for example to control parking or designate a speed limit. Failure to provide these signs would weaken the effectiveness of parking restrictions or speed limits, and may even result in some drivers escaping prosecution.

Some work has been undertaken by other local authorities to combine the use of street lights with, for example, traffic signals, thereby reducing the number of items of street furniture overall. This has health and safety implications as separate contractors undertaking maintenance of signals and street lighting need to have access to shared electricity supplies as well as each others' equipment.

SCC's Guildford Local Transportation Service (among others) has embarked on a series of Town Centre Accessibility Studies which are designed, amongst several other objectives, to identify redundant street furniture. These studies have to date concentrated on the town centre, particularly the High Street. The opportunity presented by the remodelling of North Street related to the Friary Redevelopment will also mean that this area's streetscape is also reconsidered.

SCC officers do seek to work closely with Guildford Borough Council colleagues in the development of highway schemes, particularly those in conservation areas. GBC officers are invited to all programming meetings in order to gain their input. In the past there were equivalent meetings organized by GBC to discuss environmental projects affecting the highway, but these meetings have not taken place for some time.

SCC's maintenance schemes seek to replace materials on a like-for-like basis. Representations have been made in the past to enhance materials. Since any increased costs this would only be affordable at the expense of other schemes in the programme, current SCC policy is that any enhancement can only be allowed if additional funds are made available from other sources.

Item 6: Written Members' Questions

CLLR. SHERIDAN WESTLAKE, GBC MEMBER FOR MERROW

Q1 TREES IN TRODDS LANE, MERROW

Would the Guildford Local Transportation Director make a statement on what work the County Council is undertaking to clear dead and overgrown trees on Trodds Lane, Merrow, particularly near the traffic calming street furniture, and what meetings have taken place with local residents on this matter?

A This matter has been the subject of extensive correspondence between Cllr. Westlake and the Guildford Local Transportation Service since December 2003. The alleged problems are lack of maintenance of trees, many of which have high canopies and extend over the highway. There have been concerns that they may be dangerous, either as a result of dead branches falling onto the road, or as a result of obscuring of highway sightlines.

In July 2004 a qualified arboriculturalist carried out a visual survey of the trees in question. His report recommended a number of actions, including cutting back of low branches, killing of ivy, removal of self-sown saplings or holly at the bases of some trees, removal of dead wood and in some cases complete felling and removal of the stumps. All of the works recommended as urgent have subsequently been carried out, although some less urgent works have not in order to conserve funds. The residents wish to see further works carried out.

The County's own arborist has been approached to either confirm that all necessary action for the time being has been taken or to recommend any further work.

Independently of the above, the County Council has carried out a highway tree safety survey on principal roads across the County as a whole. Insufficient funds are currently available to carry out all of its urgent recommendations, so officers cannot advise carrying out non-urgent works in one road where more serious problems exist on others, and prioritisation must therefore take account of the extent of the problem in each area.

Item 6: Written Members' Questions

CLLR. TERENCE PATRICK, GBC MEMBER FOR SEND

Q2 ROAD MARKINGS

As the Guildford Borough Council's portfolio holder for Health and Safety, I am becoming increasingly concerned about the marked deterioration of the white road markings on many of the Borough's roads.

Indeed, there are many places in the Town Centre, where white lines, which are supposed to be visible to motorists in the interests of road safety, are not being maintained and will soon disappear altogether, unless urgent action is taken.

Many 'Stop' lines at important road junctions and roundabouts are rapidly becoming invisible and traffic lanes are fading at locations like:-

- Guildford's gyratory system
- Outside Debenhams in Millbrook
- At the busy junction of the A320 Woking road and Slyfield Industrial Estate
- The roundabout at the end of Onslow Street and Woodbridge Road
- Outside the Castle Car Park in Sydenham Road

On the A246 between Boxgrove Road traffic lights and Mellow, the cycle lanes, which must have cost the Surrey County Council thousands of pounds to install, have virtually disappeared in some places, making this stretch of road a dangerous hazard for cyclists.

If this vital maintenance cannot be undertaken using existing budgets, surely it is time to make other budgetary arrangements to ensure that such road markings are properly maintained on the Borough's busiest roads?

Can I also remind the Surrey County Council's Highways Dept and their contractors Ringway, that they both have a duty and an obligation to local Council Tax payers to regularly maintain the white lineage on the Borough's roads, in the interests of the safety of all road users?

A White lining is assessed as part each road's periodic safety inspection. All of the roads mentioned in the question receive a 3 monthly inspection and therefore we are able to monitor the situation closely. The vast majority of lining and signing is there to provide guidance to the motorist; very little is a legal requirement. In reality "stop" and "give way" signs and lines are only lines which are safety related.

At present we share a road marking gang between three local transportation offices (Guildford, Waverley and Woking). In practice this means that each office has the use of the gang for one week each month and the fourth week is used to catch up with work prevented by wet weather during the other three weeks.

As Members are aware revenue maintenance funding is extremely limited and officers must constantly make difficult decisions as to whether to remark a line, renew a sign or even clean it when funding is so restrictive and therefore we have to extract as much as we can from our signs and lines before we intervene.

An order has been issued for the gyratory markings to be relaid. This has been delayed because of the need to organise traffic management and carry out the work at an appropriate time of day to avoid disruption. Health and safety requirements dictate that we are no longer able to place our workforce on the carriageway in this sort of location without adequate (and therefore expensive) protection. Arrangements have been made

Item 6: Written Members' Questions

to inspect the approaches to Burnt Common Roundabout especially the approach from the A3 north bound, but this too will need traffic management. Officers believe the markings at Clandon crossroads to be serviceable for a little longer. Castle car park is maintained by GBC.

Appended to this answer is the financial summary from the annual Maintenance Plan for 2005/06 agreed by this Committee on 21 July 2005. This overall budget is cash limited. If the Committee is minded to spend more on road markings, and would indicate which other activities could be reduced, officers would be pleased to advise regarding the consequences.

In addition we have a successfully bid for additional funds for the replacement of signage and road markings on the A31 Hogs Back and the A25 /A246 Clandon crossroads amongst other roads.

Activity	2004/5	2005/6	Difference
CAPITALISED MAINTENANCE			
Surface Dressing Schemes	63000	60000	
Provision of New Signs	74000	70500	
	11000	10500	
Total	148,000	141,000	-7,000
REVENUE MAINTENANCE			
Repairs			
Surface Dressing Schemes	57000	60000	
	226000	150000	
Sub-Total	283,000	210,000	
Patching and Minor (C/ways)	415000	530000	
Drainage	70000	70000	
Footways and Cycleways	169000	125000	
Fences and Barriers	16090	35000	
Sub-Total	670,090	760,000	
Total	953,090	970,000	16,910
ENVIRONMENTAL MAINTENANCE			
Grass Cutting	130000	135000	
Verge and Tree	163000	143000	
Residual Cleaning	20000	12000	
Weed Control	52000	60000	
Total	365,000	350,000	-15,000
DRAIN CLEANSING			
Gully Emptying	120000	120000	
Other Drain Clearing	56000	51000	
Total	176,000	171,000	-5,000
AIDS TO MOVEMENT			
Signs & Road markings			
Road Mk	100910	94000	
Elect. Main	27,000	25000	
Total	127,910	119,000	-8,910
WINTER MAINTENANCE	87000	61000	-26,000
STREET LIGHTING	132000	128000	-4,000
DAMAGE TO COUNTY PROPERTY	45500	40000	-5500
TOTAL ALLOCATION	2,034,500	1,980,000	-54,500