



**LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK  
16<sup>TH</sup> - 20<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2006**

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL  
LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)**

**28<sup>th</sup> September 2006**

**KEY ISSUE/DECISION:**

Details of activities planned for Local Democracy Week 2006.

**OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is asked to:

- (i) note the activities planned for the week and indicate whether they are able to participate in either or both events.
- (ii) suggest any alternative activity for promoting local democracy
- (iii) consider any projects or ideas that might be put to the Guildford Youth Council for funding from the new Youth Opportunities Fund.

## LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK - BACKGROUND

- 1 The Local Government Association (LGA) has been running the Local Democracy Week (LDW) initiative for several years. For the last four years the campaign has focussed on the theme of young people, and it is likely that this will remain a target group for the campaign. It is the only national campaign that promotes the role of local government to young people. The campaign has the broad aims of promoting local democracy and encouraging participation in the processes of local and national decision-making.
- 2 Last year, the campaign was extended over the whole year to run events associated with the General and local elections in May 2005 and to join up with parallel events and initiatives (e.g. UK Youth Parliament annual sitting in July, British Youth Council annual conference in August).
- 3 The Local Democracy Campaign 2006 aims to:
  - make councils more relevant and useful to young people
  - encourage young people to 'take part take power'
  - make Local Democracy Week bigger and better than before
  - increase councillor involvement in citizenship teaching in schools
  - get councils to devolve power, wherever appropriate, to local people
 (More details can be found on the website: [www.localdemocracy.org.uk](http://www.localdemocracy.org.uk).)

## LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK - GUILDFORD

- 4 In previous years years the SCC Local Committee (Guildford) has had a limited involvement in LDW:
- 5 In 2002 the Local Committee had a stand at a Local Democracy 'fair' at the Guildhall
  - In 2004 the Committee held a 'Question Time' debate with the subject "Why Democracy? - does it make any difference?" at Pirbright Village Hall for an hour immediately preceding its formal Committee meeting there.
  - In 2005 individual Members made visits to the local schools in their divisions, joining assemblies, civic classes or school council meetings.
  - In previous years SCC and GBC Councillors have participated in separate activities. For this year, officers of both councils have been co-ordinating events and inviting both GBC and SCC Councillors to participate.
- 6 Two events are planned for LDW 2006 in Guildford: visits to schools and a Guildford Youth Council event.

**LDW 2006 - VISITS TO SCHOOLS**

- 7 Officers have approached schools in Guildford for both GBC and SCC Councillors to visit and join assemblies, civic classes or school council meetings. Councillors will be able to present to the schools a copy of the Electoral Commissions 'Local Democracy Cookbook' which contains factsheets about electoral systems, and 'recipes' for games, activities and exercises to be used by young people to provoke discussion and engagement in the democratic process. Most visits have thus far been scheduled for 19<sup>th</sup> October.

**LDW 2006 - GUILDFORD YOUTH COUNCIL (GYC)**

- 8 The GYC is supported jointly by both councils, GBC providing a venue for meetings and a small annual budget, and SCC providing Youth Worker time to support the Youth Council members and recruit further members from across the communities of Guildford. Membership of the group is now at about 25-30 young people, and recent recruitment efforts have ensured that more of Guildford's young people are represented including young people from Ash and North Guildford. While recruitment is usually from schools and youth groups, direct approaches to young people have been made and it is hoped that young people educated in different settings (e.g. at home or at the Guildford Pupil Referral Unit) might feel able to join the group soon.
- 9 Guildford Youth Council has been involved in a number of projects in recent years, including the writing and production of a directory of services for young people, and the recent 'Battle of the Bands' music competition. Further projects are planned including: a youth café, links to the 2012 Olympics, and a youth leisure activities day.
- 10 Central Government has recently made available new funding nationally for young people. This 'Youth Opportunities Fund' allocation for Surrey is worth £2.1million over the next 2 years, to be distributed via the Surrey Youth Parliament and the Youth Councils and Fora in boroughs and districts. For Guildford Youth Council this means £65,000 over the next 2 years.

The funding is subject to the following conditions:

- £30,000 must be spent on projects
  - £35,000 must be spent on capital items
  - Only young people (between 13 and 19 years old) can submit applications
- 11 The Youth Council members will be undertaking training to support them in taking the decisions about how the funds should be allocated. This training will be completed immediately prior to LDW and Members (from both GBC and SCC) are invited to the Guildford Youth Council meeting on Wednesday 18th October from 4.30pm.

- 12 Members of the Youth Council are keen to hear from adults what 'Local Democracy' means to them, and exchange ideas about encouraging young people to participate in elections. Members of the Youth Council are also inviting adult Councillors to suggest projects and ideas for the spending of the new Youth Opportunities Fund.
- 13 Members may wish to consider projects where the funding streams of Guildford Youth Council and the Local Committee (revenue allocations or capital pot) might come together to support a joint project. (The Guildford Youth Council is represented at Guildford Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and at a recent meeting described the need for equipping community centre venues in the borough with music equipment to encourage young people to practice and perform music; this is the subject of a bid for capital funds on the agenda of this Committee meeting.)

### LOCAL DEMOCRACY IN GUILDFORD

- 14 Election turnouts in the Guildford area are one measure of local democracy and people's engagement in the structures of decision-making that affect their lives. Tables below show recent turnout figures for County, General and Borough council elections.
- 15 Turnout in all types of elections has increased in Guildford in recent years, in line with increases nationally. However the national turnout figure for previous General elections has been significantly higher: 78% in 1992, 71% in 1997. The average General election turnout between 1945 and 2001 was 75%.

**County Council Elections**

| <b>Divisions</b>     | <b>% Turnout 2001</b> | <b>% Turnout 2005</b> |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Ash                  | 59.57                 | 60.36                 |
| Guildford East       | 68.36                 | 72.53                 |
| Guildford North      | 59.51                 | 60.8                  |
| Guildford South      | 60.85                 | -                     |
| Guildford South-East | -                     | 70.36                 |
| Guildford South-West | -                     | 64.24                 |
| Guildford West       | 48.07                 | 51.21                 |
| Horsleys             | 68.17                 | 72.64                 |
| Shalford             | 65.37                 | 67.48                 |
| Shere                | 69.14                 | 72.6                  |
| Worplesdon           | 62.82                 | 66.63                 |
|                      |                       |                       |
| <b>Average</b>       | <b>62.43</b>          | <b>65.89</b>          |

Note: turnout in the recent by-election in Ash division was 27.7%.

## General Elections

| Constituency          | % Turnout 2001 | % Turnout 2005 |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Guildford             | 62.9           | 68.3           |
| Woking                | 60.3           | 63.4           |
| Mole Valley           | 69.5           | 72.5           |
| Surrey Heath          | 59.5           | 62.9           |
| <b>Average</b>        | <b>63.05</b>   | <b>66.78</b>   |
|                       |                |                |
| <b>United Kingdom</b> | <b>59.17</b>   | <b>61.28</b>   |

## Borough Council Elections

| Wards               | % Turnout 1999 | % Turnout 2003 |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Ash                 | 30.47          | -              |
| Ash South & Tongham | -              | 49.69          |
| Ash Vale            | 31.52          | 45.46          |
| Ash Wharf           | -              | 48.81          |
| Burpham             | -              | 55.51          |
| Christchurch        | 52.56          | 67.64          |
| Clandon & Horsley   | 36.49          | 58.59          |
| Effingham           | 54.78          | 68.84          |
| Friary & St Nicolas | 31.6           | 46.57          |
| Holy Trinity        | 36.92          | 55.8           |
| Lovelace            | 44.06          | 57.5           |
| Merrow              | -              | 59.49          |
| Merrow & Burpham    | 41.52          | -              |
| Normandy            | 43.14          | 62.14          |
| Onslow              | 33.35          | 41.57          |
| Pilgrims            | 34.93          | 58.41          |
| Pirbright           | 41.96          | 50.89          |
| Send                | 38.23          | 58.28          |
| Shalford            | 43.52          | 59.38          |
| Stoke               | 30.47          | 49.93          |
| Stoughton           | 27.32          | 47.27          |
| Tillingbourne       | 45.48          | 62.26          |
| Tongham             | 33.22          | -              |
| Westborough         | 25.46          | 46.95          |
| Worplesdon          | 38.2           | 54.43          |
|                     |                |                |
| <b>Average</b>      | <b>37.87</b>   | <b>54.79</b>   |

## IMPLICATIONS

- 16 By participating in these activities Members will raise the profile of both councils and promote the engagement of Guildford residents, and particularly young people, in the local democratic processes and structures that have a direct impact on their quality of life.

- 17 Members may wish to propose other activities to promote local democracy to other groups besides young people, either for this year, or for Local Democracy Week 2007.

### **CONSULTATIONS**

- 18 SCC Officers have been liaising with GBC officers and SCC colleagues in the Communications Service and Youth Development Service to co-ordinate activity between the two councils and across Surrey. The Youth Worker supporting the Guildford Youth Council is welcoming the involvement of elected Members in its work and hoping that the publicity of the event will attract more young people to join the Youth Council.
- 19 Some Members have already indicated their interest in participating in Local Democracy Week activities.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 20 The Committee is asked to:
- (i) note the activities planned for the week and indicate whether they are able to participate in either or both events.
  - (ii) suggest any alternative activity for promoting local democracy
  - (iii) consider any projects or ideas that might be put to the Guildford Youth Council for funding from the new Youth Opportunities Fund.

### **CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 21 Local Democracy Week provides an excellent opportunity for elected Members to engage with young people and encourage their awareness of and eventual participation in local democratic processes e.g. consultations and elections.
- 22 It is also an opportunity for Members to promote their work as County Councillors in their local areas, and raise awareness of the services of the County Council.
- 23 Members' support for the Guildford Youth Council will help attract more young people to the Youth Council and make it more representative of young people from the different communities in Guildford.

### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

- 24 Events during Local Democracy Week will take place and be publicised through local media and council websites.

- 25 The Local Committee is to host a public engagement event on the subject of 'Youth services and facilities in Guildford' at Kings College, on Monday 6th November 2006 at 7pm.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS:** Report to SCC Local Committee (Guildford) 20th October 2005: Item 9 - Local Democracy Week

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