



# THE TRANSPORTATION TASK GROUP

## SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)

18<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2008

### KEY ISSUE

This report seeks confirmation of nominations to the Transportation Task Group following changes in Membership of the Committee, as well as confirmation of the Task Group's Terms of Reference. It also puts forward criteria for the prioritisation of Minor Improvement Schemes for approval by the Committee.

### SUMMARY

The Task Group deals with Transportation matters which require detailed discussion outside meetings of the Local Committee. Such matters include the development of the Minor Improvements and Speed Limit Programmes, the Park & Ride strategy, the Guildford Intermediate Scheme and the Local Transport Plan.

### Report by

LOCAL HIGHWAYS MANAGER

### Surrey Atlas Ref.:

N/A

### GUILDFORD B.C. WARD(S)

N/A

### COUNTY ELECTORAL DIVISION(S)

N/A

## OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to agree:

- (i) that the current membership of the Transportation Task Group is confirmed, or amended if the Committee so decides, having regard to paragraphs 3 and 4.
- (ii) that the Terms of Reference for the Transportation Task Group as set out in **ANNEXE A** be approved.
- (iii) that the criteria for prioritisation of Minor Improvement Schemes as set out in **ANNEXE B** be approved.

## PURPOSE OF THE TASK GROUP

- 1 In recent years, a Task Group of Local Committee Members has met as required to consider transportation-related matters which require informal discussion prior to meetings of the full Local Committee. These meetings are informal, and the Task Group has no decision-making powers, but the meetings enable detailed discussion in a manner which is not possible during formal meetings of the Local Committee. The recommendations of the Task Group are then reported to the full Local Committee for formal discussion and decision.
- 2 Matters which have been discussed in the past include:
  - **The Minor Improvements Scheme and Speed Limit lists:** This annual meeting takes place in the autumn each year, and enables detailed consideration to be given to each scheme on the list, and proposals put forward for adding to the list.
  - **Development of the Park and Ride strategy for Guildford.** The Task Group has recently commenced a series of meetings whose outcome will be a strategy document setting out the approach of the two Councils to the future development of Park and Ride.
  - **The Guildford Intermediate Scheme.** The Task Group has effectively acted as a Steering Group for this group of projects, including the bus lanes, park and ride schemes and proposals for the Guildford gyratory.
  - **The Local Transport Plan programme,** as required for submission to the government.
  - **Other matters requested by Members.** In the past, this has included a detailed presentation on maintenance issues.

- 3 While the Task Group has no decision-making powers, it is helpful if the membership of the Task Group is broadly representative of the Committee as a whole, both politically and in terms of balance between the urban and rural areas of the borough. Having said that, the role of the Task Group is primarily strategic, since one of its principal purposes is to decide which projects represent good value for money in terms of Local Transport Plan objectives and strategies. Its members therefore act in the interests of the borough as a whole, rather than representing the interests of their divisions and wards.

### MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK GROUP

- 4 On 6 June 2002, the Committee resolved that the Task Group should comprise the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and one other County Member, together with GBC's Lead Member for Environment and two other Members from GBC. Over the past year the Task Group comprised Cllrs. Barker, White and Goodwin for the County Council, and Cllrs. Wicks, Patrick and Phillips for the Borough Council.
- 5 In view of the changes in the membership of the Committee following revised GBC nominations to the Local Committee, the Committee is asked to re-nominate Members to the Task Group. In the light of the resolution above, the Task Group should comprise Councillors Barker, White and Wicks plus one further County Council Member and two GBC Members.
- 6 Having said that, the revised GBC nominations to the Local Committee do not affect the current membership of the Task Group. It may therefore be the view of the Committee that no changes are necessary to the Task Group membership.

### TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 7 It was resolved at the meeting of the Committee on 27 September 2007 to adopt formal Terms of Reference for the Task Group in order to assist the Committee in understanding the work of the Task Group and ensure greater transparency of decision-making for members of the public.
- 8 Under Surrey County Council's (SCC) Constitution, any Committee that establishes a formal Task Group should adopt clear Terms of Reference that set out the purpose, membership, relationship to the full Committee, and the role of officers supporting the Task Group.
- 9 The adopted Terms of Reference are attached as **ANNEXE A**. These have been updated slightly since last year, and the Committee is invited to confirm its approval of these for the year ahead.

### PRIORITISATION CRITERIA FOR THE MINOR SCHEME PROGRAMME

- 10 Each year many requests are received for schemes to be added to the list of minor improvements and speed limits. Those with merit are reviewed by the Task Group which in turn recommends to the Local Committee which schemes should and should not be added to the forward programme.

- 11 This category needs careful handling, as it is easy for this part of the list to become extensive, and this leads to frustration for customers who perceive little progress in respect of 'their' project. It is important that schemes are only added to the list if they stand a reasonable chance of commencing within the next, say, three to five years. The Task Group is therefore the first 'filter' through which worthwhile schemes must pass.
- 12 Officers produce a report to the Task Group setting out details of each requested scheme, its purpose and with a very broad estimated of its cost. The officer report also sets out the predicted benefits of each scheme in terms of Local Transport Plan (LTP) objectives and strategies. It goes on to rate each project in terms of its Annual Rate of Return (ARR) and its Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR).
- 13 ARR figures represent the likely savings in personal injury collisions which could be delivered by each scheme, and are reasonably objective. These are re-assessed each year, however, and since accident numbers fluctuate, a scheme's position on the list can change from year to year. The BCR figures are more stable, since a scheme which is of benefit, say, to pedestrians is unlikely to change from year to year. There is, however, a degree of subjectivity in calculating these.
- 14 The officer recommendations to the Task Group are based solely on the ARR and BCR figures, and the Task Group, and through it the Committee, is invited to follow these as a sound, fair and defensible methodology.
- 15 Each year when budgets for the forthcoming year are known, the Task Group meets to decide which agreed schemes should have funds allocated to them. At the meeting of this Committee in June 2002, a set of criteria were agreed to assist with this difficult choice. These are included in **ANNEXE B**. Their objectives are to give priority to those schemes on which work has already commenced. Otherwise we raise expectations and fail to deliver, and if the scheme is delayed for long, we may need to reconsult / redesign etc, adding to the cost.
- 16 Depending on the balance of funding left after these projects are included, funds are allocated to new projects from the list in order to produce a balanced programme of feasibility, design and construction projects, which then feed from one year into the next. If we do too much feasibility in one year because this part of each project is relatively cheap, we may end up with two or three years where only construction projects take place, and communities becoming frustrated that we will not even look into their problems. Prioritisation of these new projects is again recommended on ARR and BCR figures.
- 17 It is therefore necessary to have three sets of criteria:
- (i) To decide which newly-suggested schemes should be added to the forward programme.
  - (ii) To decide at the start of each year from those schemes on which feasibility and/or design work has commenced, which should proceed to the construction stage.

(iii) To decide at the start of each year which schemes from the list on which no work has yet begun should proceed to the feasibility and design stages.

18 These are complex decisions, and since they are made against a background of fluctuating budgets and high public demand are difficult to achieve. Criteria for each of these categories are shown in **ANNEXE B** and the Committee is invited to approve these as a sound basis for future management of the programme.

### **CONSULTATIONS**

19 All schemes are subject to appropriate public consultation as they are developed.

### **VALUE FOR MONEY & FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

20 There is no specific budget set aside for the Task Group but Members should be aware that significant officer time and costs are incurred in producing information for them.

### **EQUALITIES & DIVERSITY, CRIME & DISORDER AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS**

21 This report has no such implications

### **CONCLUSIONS & REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

22 The work of the Transportation Task Group has been invaluable in considering the implications of complex issues where priorities have to be established within limited budgets and taking into account the wishes of local residents expressed through public consultation.

### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT**

23 If agreed the Terms of Reference will be adopted as part of the Committee's agreed local practices and the Task Group will continue to meet as required.

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#### **LEAD OFFICER**

DEREK LAKE  
LOCAL HIGHWAYS MANAGER

#### **TELEPHONE NUMBER**

01483 517501

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Guildford Local Committee Reports:  
6 June 2002, 10 July 2003 & 21 July 2005

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**ITEM 10 : ANNEXE A**

**TRANSPORTATION TASK GROUP - TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 1 The Local Committee will annually (at the first formal meeting after the beginning of the municipal year):
  - determine the role, appointees and lifespan of the Transportation Task Group
  - review the operation of the Task Group over the previous year
  - agree criteria for consideration by the Task Group and make those criteria available to all Members of the Committee.
  
- 2 The Task Group shall exist to advise the Local Committee and make recommendations to its parent Committee; it has no formal decision-making powers. The Task Group will:
  - unless otherwise agreed, meet in private
  - where appropriate develop an annual work programme
  - formally record its actions
  - if it wishes, respond to an officer report and submit its own report to the Local Committee.
  
- 3 Officers supporting a Task Group will consult that Group and will give due consideration to the Group's reasoning and recommendations prior to the officer writing their report to the parent Local Committee.
  
- 4 The Transportation Task Group will contain six members of the Local Committee: three County and three Borough Councillors, chosen by the Committee (i.e. both SCC and GBC Members) as required whenever the membership of the Committee changes, e.g. following local elections or revised nominations to the Local Committee.
  
- 5 Included in the membership of the Task Group will be the chairman and vice-chairman of the Committee and the GBC Lead Member for Environment. The other Members will be chosen with a view to ensuring as far as possible that the Task Group is broadly representative of the Committee as a whole, both politically and in terms of balance between the urban and rural areas of the borough.
  
- 6 The role of the Task Group is primarily strategic, since one of its principal purposes is to decide which projects represent good value for money in terms of Local Transport Plan objectives and strategies. Its members will therefore act in the interests of the borough as a whole, rather than representing the interests of their divisions and wards.
  
- 7 The Task Group's function is to consider any transportation-related matters that require informal discussion prior to meetings of the full Local Committee. This will include the Minor Improvements Scheme and Speed Limit lists, the Park and Ride strategy, Guildford Intermediate Scheme, the Local Transport Plan programme and other matters requested by Members.

**ITEM 10 : ANNEXE A**

**TRANSPORTATION TASK GROUP - TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 8 The Task Group will on an annual basis assess local needs and report their prioritised schemes to the next available meeting of the Local Committee for formal agreement.
- 9 When required by a Local Committee decision or advised by the Local Highways Manager the Task Group will consider the nature, extent and format of consultations on schemes.
- 10 The Task Group will take into account the results of consultations and the outcome of this will either inform the Local Highways Manager's implementation of an agreed scheme or, when required by the Local Committee, inform the Local Highways Manager's recommendations for its decision.
- 11 Recommendations to the Local Committee will be supported by a summary of the reasoning behind the Task Group's position and reflect any professional advice of the Local Highways Manager.

**Schemes for inclusion in the Minor Schemes and Speed Limits programmes**

Schemes will be added to the Minor Schemes and Speed Limits lists on the basis of their predicted value for money, as measured by their Annual Rate of Return (ARR) and their Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR).

**Schemes to proceed to the construction stage**

Schemes will have funds allocated to them in the following priority order:

- (i) **Committed schemes.** Projects which have already been committed by virtue of contractual arrangements having been entered into, or legal orders advertised, will take the highest priority.
- (ii) **Phased schemes.** Projects which must be carried out across two or more financial years, by virtue of their size, cost, complexity, or the need to avoid working on the network in too many locations simultaneously, will receive second priority, where they have already been commenced.
- (iii) **Time-limited projects partly funded by external sources.** Where such funding opportunities (e.g. from developers) would be lost if the project were not to proceed or be delayed, schemes will receive an appropriate degree of priority.
- (iv) **Schemes where public expectations have been raised.** Where a project has already been the subject of public consultation or widespread local debate, funding will be provided ahead of other schemes where expectations are not running as high.
- (v) **Schemes which can be carried out simultaneously with other works** (e.g. maintenance), thereby avoiding the need to work on the same length of road on more than one occasion.
- (vi) **Schemes on which a feasibility study has been completed** or a Design Brief has been issued.

**Schemes to proceed to the feasibility and design stages**

Each year once budgets are known, projects on which no work has yet commenced are selected for feasibility work to begin. As above, officers' recommendations are based on ARR and BCR figures, together with the need to deliver a balanced programme of schemes covering the range of LTP objectives (road safety, walking, cycling, public transport etc.).