



Minutes of meeting

Surrey County Council Local Committee (Guildford)

Date: Wednesday 22 June 2011

Time: 7.00 pm

Place: Onslow Village Hall, Wilderness Road, Guildford GU2 7QR

Members present:

Surrey County Council

Mr Mark Brett-Warburton (Guildford South-East) Chairman

Mr David Goodwin (Guildford South-West)

Ms Fiona White (Guildford West)

Ms Pauline Searle (Guildford North)

Mr Keith Taylor (Shere)

Mr Nigel Sutcliffe (Worplesdon)

Mr Bill Barker (Horsleys)

Mr Simon Gimson (Shalford)

Mr Graham Ellwood (Guildford East)

Ms Marsha Moseley (Ash)

Guildford Borough Council (for Transportation matters)

Councillor Christian Holliday (Burpham)

Councillor Diana Lockyer-Nibbs (Normandy)

Councillor James Palmer (Shalford)

Councillor Tony Phillips (Onslow)

Councillor Caroline Reeves (Friary & St. Nicolas)

Councillor Jenny Wicks (Clandon & Horsley)

Councillor Nikki Nelson-Smith (Christchurch)*

Councillor Iseult Roche (Worplesdon) *

* substitute

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

- The use of Queen Eleanors Junior School as a polling station.
- Locating non-Surrey County Council owned grit bins on the public highway.
- The future of the number 18 bus service.
- The introduction of 20mph speed limits in Guildford borough.
- The communication of utilities work to residents.

01/11 Apologies for absence and substitutions [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Tony Rooth (substituted by Nikki Nelson-Smith), Bob McShee (substituted by Iseult Roche), Nigel Manning and Mark Chapman.

02/11 Minutes of the last meetings (9 March 2011) [Item 2]

Agreed and signed by the Chairman.

03/11 Declarations of interest [Item 3]

Declarations of interest were made by:

- Diana Lockyer-Nibbs in relation to Items 12, 13 and 14, because she is a member of the British Horse Society.
- Keith Taylor, Jenny Wicks and Tony Phillips in relation to Item 15, because they represent Guildford Borough Council on the court of the University of Surrey.

04/11 Petitions [Item 4]

At the March meeting of the Local Committee a late petition was received regarding the condition of the Highway on East Flexford Lane and the provision of slip lanes onto the A31 Hogs Back. The Committee noted the response provided to the petitioners (**Annex 1**).

05/11 Written public questions [Item 5]

Four written public questions were received and responded to in writing (**Annex 2**).

- Ms Lori Winch-Johnson regarding winter maintenance in Charlottesville.
- Mr Steven Taylor regarding the approach of the Local Committee to Rights of Way matters.
- Mr Brian Cohen regarding the Local Committee's decision to hold a public inquiry into the need for a Traffic Regulation Order on Silkmore Lane.
- Mr Kevin Greening regarding the Local Committee's decision to hold a public inquiry into the need for a Traffic Regulation Order on Silkmore Lane.

06/11 Written members' questions [Item 6]

There were no written members' questions received.

07/11 Local Committee Protocol [Item 7]

The Local Committee agreed to adopt the protocol attached as Appendix A.

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Reason for decision:

To enable local residents and businesses to engage with, and influence the decisions of, the Local Committee.

08/11 Local Committee Nominations to Task Groups and Partnerships [Item 8]

The Local Committee agreed:

(i) that the membership of the Transportation Task Group for 2011/12 will be Mark Brett-Warburton, Graham Ellwood, David Goodwin, Jenny Wicks, James Palmer and Tony Phillips.

(ii) the Terms of Reference for the Transportation Task Group as set out in Annex A.

(iii) that the membership of the Youth Services Task Group for 2011/12 will be Keith Taylor, Pauline Searle, Sarah Creedy and Caroline Reeves.

(iv) the Terms of Reference for the Youth Services Task Group as set out in Annex B, with the following amendment: 'The Task Group will consist of two County Councillors from the Local Committee and two Guildford Borough Councillors.'

(v) that Mark Brett-Warburton will be the Local Committee representative on the Guildford Local Strategic Partnership.

(vi) that Fiona White will be the Local Committee representative on the Safer Guildford Partnership.

Reason for decision:

It is important that the Local Committee continues to play an active role in local partnerships. The work of the task groups will be invaluable in considering the implications of complex issues where priorities have to be established within limited budgets.

Members amended the draft terms of reference for the Youth Services Task Group to enable any Guildford Borough Councillor to be nominated, because they felt it would be beneficial if the lead councillor with the relevant portfolio could sit on the task group.

09/11 Local Committee Budgets 2011-2012 [Item 9]

The Local Committee agreed to:

(i) Note the actions carried out under delegated authority.

(ii) Divide its revenue and capital budgets for 2011-12 equally amongst the County Council members of the Committee.

(iii) Delegate to the Community Partnerships Manager and Community Partnerships Team Leader (West Surrey) the authority to approve budget applications of up to and

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including £1,000, subject to these being reported to the Committee at the following meeting.

(vi) Approve the applications for expenditure annexed to the report.

(iv) To transfer the community safety budget of £2,500 to the Safer Guildford Partnership and that the Community Partnerships Manager authorize its expenditure in accordance with the Local Committee's decision.

(v) Note that the budget of £12,000 which is ring-fenced for the use of the Community Safety Partnerships subject to domestic abuse outreach being provided, will be paid to the Surrey Community Safety Unit which now manages and administers the funding to the domestic abuse outreach provider in Guildford.

Reason for decision:

The Committee is required to agree arrangements for the allocation of its Budgets.

10/11 Highways Contract [Item 10]

The Surrey County Council Group Manager and the May Guerney General Manager outlined the new Highways contracts. They highlighted that rather than have one contract for all Highways services, a main contractor and a range of specialist contractors have been appointed. This would allow many more highways schemes to be completed in 2011/12 than the previous year.

The Local Committee agreed to note the presentation and requested that a written guide to the new contract is provided for councillors and residents. The Group Manager confirmed that a guide is being produced and should be completed by the end of July 2011.

11/11 Community Pride Fund [Item 11]

The Area Highways Manager noted that the fund is for non-safety work on the public highway. Match funding could be sought from parish councils and residents associations, equally Members could pool their funding. Members questioned if other organisations could complete the works. The Area Highways Manager confirmed that the contract is with May Guerney and they would undertake all works.

The Local Committee agreed:

(i) Funding is devolved to each County Councillor based on an equitable allocation of £5,000 per division.

(ii) Individual Members allocate their funding based on the principles detailed in annex 1.

(iii) That Members should contact the Area Maintenance Engineer to discuss any specific requirements and arrange for the work activities to be managed on their behalf.

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Reason for decision:

The Committee is required to agree arrangements for the allocation of its Budgets.

12/11 Parts of Byway Open to All Traffic 511 Shere/Albury (D224) request to consider a seasonal Traffic Regulation Order Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 [Item 12]

Charlie Hunt addressed the Committee and highlighted that all the residents living in the lane support the recommendation.

Keith Taylor noted that Shere Parish Council also support the proposal.

The Local Committee agreed that the grounds for making a seasonal TRO as outlined are met, and a Notice of Intention to make an Order should be published for parts of Byways Open to All Traffic 511 (Shere) & 511 (Albury) (D224) to prevent damage to the surface and to facilitate the passage of all other class of traffic on the byway during wet conditions, as shown on Drawing Number 3/1/68/H30 (Annex 1).

Reason for decision:

To safeguard the BOAT from further deterioration.

13/11 Byway Open to All Traffic 514 Shere (D260) request to consider a seasonal Traffic Regulation Order Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 [Item 13]

Keith Taylor stated that he would like the possibility of a permanent Traffic Regulation Order being made kept under review. The Countryside Access Officer commented that the Byway would be inspected regularly to start with if an order was made and then as part of the annual review of all byways.

The Local Committee agreed that the grounds for making a seasonal TRO as outlined are met, and a Notice of Intention to make an Order should be published for Byway Open to All Traffic 514 (Shere) (D260) to prevent damage to the surface and to facilitate the passage of all other class of traffic on the byway during wet conditions, as shown on Drawing Number 3/1/68/H29 (Annex 1).

Reason for decision:

To safeguard the BOAT from further deterioration.

14/11 Alleged Public Bridleways between Beech Avenue and High Barn Road, Effingham [Item 14]

Gillian Nicol addressed the Committee to speak in favour of the recommendation. She highlighted that she had first used the route as a bridleway in 1975. She contended that is in an important route to keep open because it connects other bridleways.

Jessica Page addressed the Committee to speak against the recommendation. She noted that in 1976, when she was a Guildford Borough Councillor, she was instrumental in getting the route established as a footpath. She contended that there are posts to show that horses should not be on the route.

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James Wetenhall addressed the Committee to speak against the recommendation. He argued that more local people contend it has not continually been used as a bridleway than say otherwise.

The Countryside Access Officer highlighted that Map Modification Orders are concerned with recognising an existing route. Therefore the suitability and safety of the route could not be considered when making a decision. He noted that the 20 years of use of the route are the years preceding 2008, at which point Surrey County Council put up signs along the route.

The Committee voted 9 for the recommendation and 9 against the recommendation. The Chairman used his casting vote to vote for the recommendation.

The Local Committee agreed:

(i) Public bridleway rights are recognised over the route A-C on drawing 3/1/58/H11 and that the application for a MMO under sections 53 and 57 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to modify the Definitive Map and Statement by the addition of a bridleway is approved. The route will be known as Public Bridleway no. 603 (Effingham).

(ii) Public bridleway rights are recognised over the route B-C-D-E on drawing 3/1/58/H12 and that the application for a MMO under sections 53 and 57 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to modify the Definitive Map and Statement by the addition of a bridleway is approved. The route will be known as Public Bridleway no. 604 (Effingham).

(iii) Legal orders should be made and advertised to implement these changes. If objections are maintained to either or both of those orders, it/they will be submitted to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for confirmation.

Reason for decision:

There was sufficient evidence that public bridleway rights exist.

15/11 Traffic Regulation Order for proposed signalised junction at Egerton Road / Gill Avenue [Item 15]

The Local Committee agreed:

(i) the intention of the County Council to make an Order under Sections 1 and Part III of Schedule 9 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to impose a ban of all vehicles turning right from Gill Avenue into the Surrey Sports Park, as shown on the drawing in Appendix 1, be advertised and that if no objections be maintained, the Order be made.

(iii) that the consideration and resolution of any representations received as a result of advertising and consultation for the proposed Traffic Regulation Order be delegated to the Area Highways Team Manager and the Chairman of the Local Committee.

Reason for decision:

The Traffic Regulation Order is required to implement the proposed signalised junction to maximise capacity and improve safety at the junction.

16/11 Review of parking restrictions in areas outside the Guildford Town Centre Controlled Parking Zone and ad-hoc changes throughout the Borough [Item 16]

Julia Dickinson addressed the Committee to note her concerns that the Howard of Effingham School had not been involved in developing the proposals for the area. The Parking Services Manager stated that the Police had raised concerns about the location and they had worked together to develop a proposal to put out to consultation.

Keith Taylor highlighted concerns regarding the proposals in New Road, Chilworth. He put forward an amendment to remove the proposed double yellow lines towards the eastern end of New Road, Chilworth, and to add double yellow lines to support the enforcement of the advisory school keep clear signs on the north side of New Road, outside Tillingbourne School. This was seconded by James Palmer.

Keith Meldrum addressed the Committee to note his concerns about the amount of enforcement, particularly at Merrow Parade. The Parking Services Manager stated that whilst there are currently few parking restrictions in place, enforcement is carried out at this location.

Members questioned if more Civil Enforcement Officers would be employed. The Parking Services Manager responded to say that five new officers had been recruited in the last few months.

The Local Committee agreed:

(i) the proposals developed for the 18 highest scoring locations identified in ANNEXE 3, and detailed in ANNEXE 6, are formally advertised, with the following amendment: to remove the proposed double yellow lines towards the eastern end of New Road, Chilworth, and to add double yellow lines to support the enforcement of the advisory school keep clear signs on the north side of New Road, Chilworth, outside Tillingbourne School.

(ii) proposals to amend and introduce formalised disabled parking bays identified in ANNEXE 4, and detailed in ANNEXE 6, are formally advertised,

(iii) proposals to amend the order to accommodate newly created vehicle crossovers and new developments, and a small number of technical amendments identified in ANNEXE 5, and detailed in ANNEXE 6, are formally advertised,

(iv) that any unresolved objections that may arise in relation to the formal advertising of the proposals associated with recommendations (i), (ii) & (iii), are decided, in accordance with the County Council's constitution, by the Parking Strategy and Implementation Team Manager in consultation with the relevant divisional member and the Local Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman.

Reason for decision:

The proposed controls will ensure easier traffic flow, particularly around junctions and promote a better balance in the use of kerbside space.

17/11 Proposed on street 'pay and display' parking charges in Guildford [Item 17]

Guildford Borough Councillor Liz Hogger addressed the Committee to note her concerns regarding the suitability of pay and display parking at The Street, in Effingham. There are only six village shops and churn is not an issue. The introduction of charges would make these businesses no longer viable, and enforcement would be costly. She contended that the proposal should be deleted from the list of potential locations for pay and display. The Chairman of Effingham Parish Council, Arnold Pindar, also addressed the Committee and supported the removal of this location.

Maurice Barham addressed the Committee to note that the proposed half an hour free parking would be more beneficial in certain locations, for example outside of doctors surgeries.

Steve Hayward addressed the Committee to note his concerns about the proposals for the Avonmore Avenue area, particularly with regard to the implications for people using Stoke Park for leisure activities.

Guildford Borough Councillor Monika Juneja addressed the Committee to note her concerns about the Merrow Parade proposals because of the implications for the section of land that is privately owned. She highlighted that further engagement with the Merrow Parade Management Company would be required.

The Committee highlighted their frustration and concern about the lack of consultation with Members prior to the publication of these proposals. Members raised specific concerns regarding the viability of a number of the proposals. The Parking Strategy and Implementation Manager stated that officers would work closely with Members through the consultation period.

Members recognised that across Surrey there is a need to review the operation of on street parking. However, in contrast to other districts and boroughs, the Committee highlighted the success of the current management of on street parking in Guildford. The borough makes a surplus of approximately £500,000 per year, which is used to support the operation of the park and ride, as well as to fund regular and methodical parking reviews.

The Committee were not convinced that a proven business case exists to support the introduction of further pay and display locations. Members were sceptical of the potential income for some of the proposed locations, as suggested in Annex 2. Taking into account the cost of also replacing the 80 existing machines, Members contended that it would take a long time for the changes to become cost effective.

Members were concerned that if cashless payment is the only payment method available at some locations, it would penalise those people that do not possess mobile phones and it would cost users more money to park.

Members were very concerned that beyond 2011/12 there is no guarantee that any surplus would be retained by the Committee to fund local projects, including the park and ride.

Members praised the robust, regular and consultative approach that is already in place for conducting parking reviews in the borough. The Committee were unanimous in their

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support for continuing with the gradual review of parking, that to date has created a mature, well managed and profitable operation.

The Local Committee agreed:

(i) Not to approve the statutory advertisement of the amended parking charges and proposals shown on the plan in Annex 1.

(ii) Not to defer the implementation of previously agreed changes to parking restrictions in Woodbridge Hill and Weston Road (east) until consultation had been carried out about on street charges in these locations.

Reason for decision:

Members determined that the business case for implementing the proposed changes was not proven. Guildford has well-managed, established and profitable on-street parking arrangements already in place. The Committee unanimously agreed that it would be better to continue with the comprehensive process that is already in place for reviewing the effectiveness of on-street parking in the borough.

18/11 Annual review of monitoring of applications for Goods Vehicle Operators Licences [Item 18]

Members commended the work of the Transport Development Planning Manager, particularly in relation to the involvement of councillors in the process.

The Local Committee agreed:

(i) There is now an established system in place for notifying and consulting Members of applications in their Divisions.

(ii) Training for Members was carried out in September and November 2009. This was made available to all County Councillors.

(iii) The contents of this Annual Information Report.

Reason for decision:

The requirement to consult County Councillors on operators licence applications in their Divisions has worked well so far.

19/11 Highways Schemes Update Report [Item 19]

Members requested an update on the speed limits that have been under assessment for a long time. The Area Highways Manager committed to reporting back to councillors on this matter.

The Local Committee agreed to:

(i) Approve the suggested use of the £100,000 highway revenue budget for 2011/12.

(ii) Note the planned capital maintenance programme for 2011/12.

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(iii) Note progress on highway improvement schemes, including three developer funded schemes.

Reason for decision:

The Committee needs to determine how its revenue budget will be deployed so that the work can be programmed and completed.

20/11 Environmental Improvement Kingpost and London Road shopping parade, Burpham [Item 20]

The Local Committee agreed that the proposed environmental improvement as shown on the plans attached at ANNEX 1 be approved for implementation by Guildford Borough Council.

Reason for decision

The scheme will make good the whole of the paved surface of the car park that is currently in a poor state and improve the general appearance of the shopping parade.

21/11 Forward Programme [Item 21]

The Local Committee agreed to:

- a) the Forward Programme 2011/12, as outlined in Appendix 1.
- b) Consider any further themes for Member briefings during 2011/12.

Reason for decision:

To enable preparations to be made for future meetings, reflecting members' wishes.

[Meeting ended at 10.25pm]

.....(Mr Mark Brett-Warburton – Chairman)

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The next meeting of the Committee will be on Thursday 22 September 2011 at 7pm, at Pirbright Village Hall.

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Annex 1 Petitions [Item 4]

Principal petitioner/ organisation	Liam Cardiff
SCC Division / GBC Ward	Shalford Division
Summary of concerns and requests	The undersigned give notice to the Council of their concerns over large potholes at the entrance to East Flexford Lane from the A31 Hogs Back. Repairs need to be effected and be incorporated in the provision of much needed slip lanes. Attached is a copy of the Land Registry Proprietorship Register indicating ownership of the land in question.
Response	<p>With regards to the pot holes at the mouth of the junction, a request was made immediately after the March 2011 Local Committee meeting for these to be made safe as a temporary measure. This was because of the comprehensive traffic management required to complete a longer-term solution. Following on from this comprehensive patching work has now been completed at the junction.</p> <p>We have considered your request for slip lanes to be installed, however, I'm afraid that the County Council is not able to do so. I'm sure that you will appreciate we receive more requests for improvements to the Highway than we can fund. Where safety is a concern we always investigate the matter thoroughly, however, there are no records of any accidents at the junction of East Flexford Lane and the A31 in the last five years.</p>

Annex 2 Written public questions [Item 5]

Question from Lori Winch-Johnson, on behalf of the Charlottesville Focus Group

Question

In the March local committee, on behalf of the Focus group for Charlottesville in Guildford, representing interested residents, the Head of the two schools there and the community police, I asked whether the Local Committee could verify that in light of the terrible hazards, injury and disruption, not to mention the fear that gripped those of us living on the high gradients in the Charlottesville area, that in future our roads will be properly gritted were we to experience another heavy snow downfall. The written response reiterated that which we already know - that currently priority one roads take precedence and priority two roads would only be treated if supplies and man power permit.

Since, in Charlottesville, we are a priority two group of roads, having some needs that are obvious such as our high gradients, but not having major A roads or access routes to A and E hospital services, we found in reality that we were left with untreated roads with perilous results that lasted weeks, causing harm, mayhem and concern. Added to which, we had never experienced such conditions before - many of us having lived in the area for decades and

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during severe ice and snow when roads were treated - as well as being in these terrible conditions for far longer than the lower roads in town which had maintained traffic flow that is so crucial for services to continue as roads clear when traffic flows to spread the salt-grit. A police-held public meeting in Charlottesville in mid December yielded an unprecedented number of residents attending to discuss the problems, than had ever been known to attend a police-meeting, such was the registered concern. Many more people wrote to say they would have attended but they could not walk on the icy roads.

The Highways officer, Mr John Hilder, responded in the March meeting to further questioning in light of the written response which did not answer our question fully those of us from the Focus group who attended the meeting considered, as the response merely described priority routes which we, of course, already know only too well. We were delighted, therefore, to hear later in the March committee from Councillor David Goodwin. As a member of the Task Group set up to look at the response made by Surrey County Council's services in the winter, he will, he informed us, ensure that the priority 1 and 2 networks are merged in terms of both being given definite gritting treatment in severe weather, as a recommendation to the Cabinet, and that additional roads will be given a priority three status. We were concerned that this was not fully described in the minutes which mentioned priority two routes would be treated as priority one routes, but we have been told the minutes will not be changed.

Of course, it is then up to Surrey Council's Cabinet to decide whether it accepts the recommendations made by the Task Group or not. The Task Group we are told reports first to a Transport Select Committee on 30th June. It is the recommendation from there that goes on to the Cabinet meeting around 12th July. The decision from then would become policy immediately. We hope very strongly that both the Select committee and the Cabinet heed and agree the recommendations and create policy to safeguard areas such as ours in Surrey which faced such dreadful conditions when left with untreated roads.

In light of this vital and subsequent information Councillor Goodwin has given, I should now like to ask if the Local Committee gives its support to the Task Group's recommendation to be made that priority one and two routes are both treated in light of a heavy downfall, and a third route of other identified roads be created for treating if resources permit, and that we have this viewpoint of the committee minuted in full?

While the sun has shone beautifully for most of spring and we hope for an equally warm summer, we cannot forget the hardship we endured for what amounted to nearly a tenth of the year when our steep slopes were left untreated and no traffic could flow through. We do need to be better prepared for future winters and we seek the Local Committee's support of the Task Group in their aim to prevent such a hardship from occurring in the future. The money set aside for a salt pile, shovels and a gritter machine which have been bought and are stored at the Spike, in lieu of buying another salt box for the roads at an approximate cost of £2,000, have been gratefully received in Charlottesville and may help us treat some paths and bad junctions ourselves. We hope volunteers may help with this and a group of us has signed up to do this sort of voluntary action. However, proper gritting is what the Focus group considers is essential to keep road traffic flowing which, in turn, will keep the two schools open; help access to the Mount Alvernia hospital (it is a private hospital and does NHS work we are told, as well as needing to keep access to the main hospital for emergencies); essential access to the doctors' surgeries, a safe route to the nursery; maintenance of the bus route working to help the elderly in the warden-assisted accommodation and to lessen the many health and safety hazards generally on these high slopes. The roads are not only steep but are also subject to wind chill because they are of a higher altitude which reduces thawing when professional and extensive road gritting is not carried out. Indeed, the ice impacted by several inches for weeks and it was impossible for many people to attempt walking on the icy, steeply sloping roads and

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paths while very few cars could venture in and taxi services suspended travel to Charlottesville. It cost residents and services in Charlottesville much in terms of coping with the strife and difficulties caused by the lack of access we experienced due to the roads not being gritted, both in terms of financial cost and in terms of stress experienced, as we became isolated although being merely two or three roads from Guildford High Street. We urge, therefore, that the Local Committee gives Mr Goodwin and the Task Group its full backing for the first step at the Select Committee in June, for the recommendation to be taken to Cabinet in July and for a policy change on priority routes' treatment. We seek assurance, as we asked in the March meeting, for the view to be recorded fully for subsequent reference.

We really do need to know we face another winter without the peril that we experienced last year and we ask for the Local Committee to pledge its support on record if it does indeed support the Task Group's recommendation which based on sound judgement and a prompt review of the winter response.

Answer

Members of the Local Committee support the work of local volunteers in Charlottesville to help themselves in times of harsh weather. Moreover, we recognise the importance of providing appropriate public services to support your activity.

The Winter Maintenance Task Group has not yet produced its final report, complete with recommendations, supporting evidence and assessment of the viability of its proposals. Without this detailed information Members are not able to give a definitive and informed response. In principle though, Members would welcome a sustainable increase in the number of roads that are regularly treated.

The Winter Maintenance Task Group will present its final report to the Environment and Infrastructure Select Committee on the 30th of June. Members of the Local Committee will then have an opportunity to comment before it is presented to the Cabinet for a decision on the 26th of July.

Question from Steven Taylor

At the start of March Guildford Committee, I asked an informal question, which was whether the Committee was aware of the voluntary work that I and other members of the Trail Riders Fellowship undertake to assist in maintaining byways, and whether the Committee supported such activity. In response to that question the responding Member (Councillor Bill Barker) stated that such voluntary work was valued but then followed this up with a remark, that "we would be pleased if you would refrain from revving up and down the byways afterwards." Given I had asked an honest and sincere question I was somewhat offended by this pejorative remark. Other members of the public also expressed objection to this statement. In response to a follow up question I asked, the Chairman of the Committee agreed that the Committee remains impartial when making decisions on Rights of Way matters. Does the Committee consider that the remark made about 'revving up and down the byway', demonstrates impartiality?

Answer

Members of the Local Committee wholeheartedly support the voluntary work undertaken by the Trail Riders Fellowship, and others, to improve Surrey's byways. The safety of all people using Surrey's byways is paramount. The Committee urges all people to use byways responsibly to ensure that the effort put in by volunteers to improve them is not undone.

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Moreover, the Committee understands the importance of involving local people in decision-making. As part of this, we recognise the importance of creating a welcoming and encouraging atmosphere for local people that wish to have their say on local matters. The Committee regrets that you feel on this particular occasion this was not achieved. We will endeavour in the future to always meet the high standards we set ourselves for engaging with residents.

Question from Brian Cohen

At the Guildford Local Committee meeting in March, in relation to the proposed Traffic Regulation Orders on Fullers Farm Road and Silkmore Lane, the Principal Highways Solicitor explained to the Committee, that: "currently all users of Byways Open to all Traffic, whether on foot, by horse, cycle or in a vehicle, have the right to pass what's called the 'Queens Highway'. It is an ancient right... vehicles are one of the categories of user entitled to use them under the law... to go against officer recommendation, members need very clear, reasonable and defensible reasons based on evidence to enable any legal challenge to be met. You will have read in the report that no grounds are considered by the officer to exist and to meet any of those grounds". The Solicitor also estimated that the costs associated with going to a Public Inquiry could total £20,000. In relation to Silkmore Lane, and in light of such clear legal advice both from the Principal Highways Solicitor and Rights of Way Officials, not to proceed with the making of a Traffic Regulation Order, and in light of over 1000 letters of objection, does the Committee still consider that the expenditure associated with going to Public Inquiry is legally justified, and if so, on what grounds?

The Officer's report presented to the Committee in March noted that, in relation to Silkmore Lane, "the sections at either end that now require maintenance were not repaired in 2005 along with the rest of byway. The intention being to discourage flytippers." Repairs are now planned and as the report states that "when these have been completed accessibility will be improved for everyone." Given the main reasons put forward for making the Traffic Regulation Order on Silkmore Lane, at the March meeting were primarily due to the surface of the byway, would the Committee now consider reversing its decision to make the Traffic Regulation Order?

Answer

Funding has been identified to complete the necessary maintenance work on Silkmore Lane. The work is scheduled to be undertaken during June 2011. A report on the effectiveness of the maintenance work will be presented to the Local Committee in September 2011. Officers will be recommending that, in light of the maintenance work, the grounds for making a Traffic Regulation Order are not met, and that the Committee should review its decision to hold a public inquiry.

Question from Kevin Greening

How can the Committee justify spending up to £20,000 on a Public Inquiry, in relation to the TRO on Silkmore Lane, in the current age of austerity? Especially given that the legal officer told the Committee that there are no legal grounds to make a TRO on Silkmore Lane and given it is going to be repaired?

Answer

Please see the above response to the question from Brian Cohen.