

HOW FAR DOES THE SCC CORPORATE PLAN REFLECT LOCAL PRIORITIES?

MOLE VALLEY LOCAL COMMITTEE, 22 MAY 2002

KEY ISSUE:

To influence the development of the 2003/04 Surrey County Council Corporate Plan so that it better reflects the local priorities identified in the Mole Valley Community Strategy.

SUMMARY:

Both of these documents are important in shaping how SCC services are developed, targeted and delivered in Mole Valley, and in determining the relative priority given to them and to the different issues within the District.

For this reason it is important that there is a synergy between the two plans and that the issues identified as important in Mole Valley are consistent with the direction the County Council is taking as a whole. County Council services are a key part of the delivery of the Community Strategy but are also shaped by the countywide priorities of the Corporate Plan.

The report explores the extent to which the two plans share common priorities and identifies a number of areas where there is a case for seeking a stronger Corporate Plan commitment to locally identified priorities.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is RECOMMENDED that the Committee should identify any issues that they feel would strengthen the Corporate Plan 2003/04 so that it better reflects the Mole Valley priorities set out in the Community Strategy, and that this is advised to the SCC Executive.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Making Surrey a Better Place

1. The Surrey County Council corporate plan – “Making Surrey a better place” – has recently been published in its third annual edition. The Plan:
 - reminds people of the services the County Council provides
 - reports on progress and achievement in the previous year, and
 - reports on how SCC plans to improve its services in the year ahead, in line with what people have identified as important to them
2. “Making Surrey a Better Place” includes six themes that have emerged from public consultation on a number of topics over the past few years:
 - To learn and develop
 - To live and do business
 - To travel
 - Where vulnerable people are more independent
 - Where people feel safe
 - Where everyone matters
3. Each of these themes includes a number of priorities for action with targets set out for achievement by 2004/05, and more immediate milestones for the current year. Most of these are countywide but some are more specific to individual Boroughs and Districts. The Local Committee has a key role in ensuring that the targets set out in the plan are addressed locally. The Corporate Plan can be seen on the SCC website: www.surreycc.gov.uk (search under “Making Surrey a Better Place”)

Mole Valley Community Strategy

4. The first draft Community Strategy for Mole Valley has been developed by a partnership of local organisations from the public, voluntary and business sectors who are committed to working together to improve the quality of life in the District.
5. An initial report – “Towards a Shared Agenda” – was published in March 2001 setting out the results of research undertaken and the priorities that this identified. The results and proposed priorities were tested with the community through a workshop and surveying and this resulted in 13 key issues being agreed:
 - 1) Affordable housing
 - 2) Traffic congestion, road safety and maintenance
 - 3) Young people
 - 4) Access to services in rural areas and public transport
 - 5) Neighbourhoods with problems
 - 6) Local economy and viability of the town centres
 - 7) Voluntary work
 - 8) Safeguarding the countryside
 - 9) Drainage infrastructure

- 10) Health and welfare
 - 11) Community safety
 - 12) Lifelong learning
 - 13) Waste reduction, re-use and recycling
6. The draft Community Strategy includes detailed action plans, developed by multi-agency groups, for each of the 13 key issues. The strategy is currently out for consultation with summary leaflets distributed throughout the District. The draft Plan can be seen on the District Council website: www.mole-valley.gov.uk (Search under "Shared Agenda")

The need for synergy between the two plans

7. Both of these documents are important in shaping how SCC services are developed, targeted and delivered in Mole Valley, and in determining the relative priority given to them and to the different issues within the District.
8. For this reason it is important that there is a synergy between the two plans and that the issues identified as important in Mole Valley are consistent with the direction the County Council is taking as a whole. County Council services are a key part of the delivery of the Community Strategy but are also shaped by the countywide priorities of the Corporate Plan.
9. The SCC Corporate Plan is renewed annually and initial drafting of the 2003/04 Plan will be commencing in the near future. The Local Committee has an opportunity to consider whether there are issues of local importance for SCC services delivered in Mole Valley that might merit a greater presence in the next Corporate Plan
10. To this end, the remainder of this document provides a brief analysis of the two plans and identifies a number of aspects where there is a significant variance between local and countywide priorities or targets.

COMPARISON OF COUNTYWIDE AND LOCAL PRIORITIES AND TARGETS**Public priorities**

11. The Corporate Plan identifies five key priorities that emerged from public consultation on a number of topics. These are all reflected in the Mole Valley Community Strategy too, but are not the five issues that emerged as the most strongly supported. Locally, traffic issues and public transport featured strongly but a greater emphasis was also given to other issues, such as affordable housing, services for young people, and neighbourhoods with problems.

SCC Corporate Plan public priority issues	Mole Valley Community Strategy key issue
<i>Increasing the amount of waste that is recycled</i>	Waste reduction, re-use and recycling
<i>Protecting our countryside</i>	Safeguarding the countryside
<i>Improving public transport and how it is used in Surrey</i>	Access to services in rural areas and public transport
<i>Improving the condition and safety of Surrey's roads and pavements</i>	Traffic congestion, road safety and maintenance
<i>Improving community safety and reducing fear of crime</i>	Community safety

The six themes

12. **To learn and develop.**

SCC Corporate Plan priorities	Mole Valley Community Strategy key issue
<i>Make the school admissions process fairer</i>	No specific school education priorities identified, though aspects of Young People includes extended use of school facilities
<i>Help all our schools to be successful. target support to schools with the most challenges</i>	
<i>Provide opportunities for young people</i>	Young People
<i>Improve support for children in need</i>	
<i>Improve access to libraries and community learning</i>	Lifelong Learning, and, Access to services in rural areas
<i>A high priority for Mole Valley but not specifically covered in the Corporate Plan</i>	Young People – non academic or vocational support and facilities

Aspects of this relate to the County Council's role as Local Education Authority and are unlikely to offer sufficient partnership scope to be reflected in the Community Strategy. In Mole Valley, school education did not emerge as an issue but there was some concern about learning opportunities post-16, which resulted in Lifelong Learning becoming one of the 13 key issues. The action plan for this issue will be the Community

Learning Plan for the District and this includes an emphasis on electronic delivery of learning opportunities, particularly in rural areas.

There are few specific references to young people in the Corporate Plan and the targets and milestones for this theme relate closely to the Connexions strategy which will provide mentoring support for young people. These relate specifically to training and educational choices. The emphasis given to young people in the Mole Valley Community Strategy is much wider, including facilities and opportunities for leisure, information and support, and opportunities for young people to be engaged in decision making (which is addressed in Corporate Plan theme 6, Where Everybody Matters).

13. To live and do business

SCC Corporate Plan priorities	Mole Valley Community Strategy key issue
<i>Use energy more efficiently in our buildings</i>	The local economy and viability of town centres (Green Business Awards Scheme)
<i>Improve self-reliance for disadvantaged groups</i>	Neighbourhoods with problems
<i>Increase affordable housing and help rural communities</i>	The need for affordable housing
<i>Help keep village shops open</i>	Access to services in rural areas and public transport
<i>Reduce the amount of waste produced and encourage people to recycle waste</i>	Waste reduction, reuse and recycling
<i>Improve our countryside</i>	Safeguarding the countryside
<i>Not included, but a lot being done – Town centre co-ordinator, Small towns initiative, Business Retention Service etc.</i>	The local economy and viability of town centres – support and promotion of local businesses

There is a significant omission in the Corporate Plan in comparison to the Community Strategy in the measures being taken to sustain the local economy generally. This is a particular issue in Mole Valley where the two main town centres face severe competition from other shopping centres in Surrey and beyond. The Community Strategy has a number of specific action plan targets for the retention and promotion of local businesses and encouraging developments that are beneficial to the wider local economy. Despite the fact there is a considerable amount of working being done at county level, this is not reflected in the Corporate Plan.

The rural economy, also a high local priority, is more clearly covered in the Corporate Plan, as is the need for affordable housing. However, the Corporate Plan has set specific targets for new affordable housing in rural areas only, and the numbers targeted are comparatively low compared with what is already proposed for Mole Valley alone. (20 countywide in 2002/03

rising to 70 by 2004/05. The Community Strategy has identified 30 units per annum in Mole Valley alone). The Corporate Plan does set a target for 17% of all housing in Surrey to be 'affordable' by 2004/05 with a milestone in the current year to support the key worker housing strategy. Local findings would suggest that this should be a higher priority for the Corporate Plan and that specific targets could be set for urban units as well as rural ones.

The other aspects of this theme correspond well with the local priorities set out in the Community Strategy.

14. To travel

SCC Corporate Plan priorities	Mole Valley Community Strategy key issue
<i>Improve the condition and safety of Surrey's roads and pavements</i>	Traffic congestion, road safety and maintenance
<i>Deal with traffic problems</i>	
<i>The priority above includes school buses and Dial-a-Ride but there is nothing dealing with public transport for more widely accessible provision</i>	Access to services in rural areas and public transport

A key issue at both County and District level, the Corporate Plan and Community Strategy correspond well on this issue with one exception. There is a well established need to improve public transport, particularly in the rural parts of the District, and this has been linked with rural access to services in the Community Strategy. The Corporate Plan targets Dial-a-Ride and school bus journeys but makes no commitments in respect to more generally accessible public transport. In Mole Valley, the County Council has been an integral part of the process to develop a Rural Transport Initiative, and the Corporate Plan could include a commitment to supporting such activities.

15. Where vulnerable people are more independent

SCC Corporate Plan priorities	Mole Valley Community Strategy key issue
<i>Promote independence for people with disabilities</i>	Should fall within the Health and Welfare but there are no actual commitments in respect to people with disabilities, only aspirations
<i>Promote independence for vulnerable older people</i>	All three of these fall within the Health and Welfare key issue and have specific commitments
<i>Increase social care support so older people can leave hospital as soon as possible</i>	
<i>Increase support for carers</i>	

Most of the Corporate Plan priorities are reflected in the Community Strategy, and underpin the Adult services agenda which is already well

established as an area for partnership working. However there is a commitment countywide in respect to service and funding support to people with disabilities that is not reflected in the local priorities. The Community Strategy key issue for Health and Welfare includes commitments in relation to access to buildings and the Valuing People Strategy, but no specific commitments to individuals.

16. Where people feel safe

SCC Corporate Plan priorities	Mole Valley Community Strategy key issue
<i>Increase community safety</i>	Community safety

The targets in the Corporate Plan are all included in the Mole Valley Community Safety Strategy, which is the action plan for this issue locally. There may be scope to suggest an additional priority for the next Corporate Plan relating to the fear of crime and reassurance, particularly tackling those physical ‘incivilities’ that enhance people’s concerns and fears. This could incorporate targets in relation to major issues such as the disposal of abandoned vehicles and white goods, and other environmental measures, such as street lighting, where the County Council has a key role.

17. Where everybody matters

SCC Corporate Plan priorities	Mole Valley Community Strategy key issue
<i>Continue to improve our efficiency and effectiveness</i>	These are mostly SCC corporate goals rather than related to specific delivery but in most cases the Local Committee will have a key role. In respect to the Community Strategy, these are a set of principles that we would expect to be employed.
<i>Improve satisfaction with our services</i>	
<i>Involve people who live in Surrey in developing services</i>	
<i>Improve access to our services</i>	
<i>Improve customer care standards</i>	
<i>Improve partnership working</i>	
<i>Provide local solutions to local problems</i>	
<i>Improve performance, through the new People First organisation</i>	

Although these represent a set of working principles which are common to both strategies, one important omission in the Corporate Plan targets is the continued commitment to the development and implementation of Community Strategies. This could sit comfortably with either the Partnership Working priority or Providing Local Solutions to Local Problems.

Locally important priorities that are under-represented in the Corporate Plan

18. In addition to the comments in the preceding sections, two of the 13 key issues for Mole Valley are not represented in the Corporate Plan:

- **The need to promote Voluntary work.** The Community Strategy includes a specific key issue designed to support the promotion, recruitment and funding of the voluntary sector. This is recognised as a countywide issue and statutory agencies are well placed to provide support, particularly as there is growing role for the voluntary sector in partnership working and service delivery.
- **Drainage infrastructure problems.** A high priority locally but inevitably this is not an issue that affects the whole county directly and therefore is unlikely to be seen as a Corporate Plan priority.

19. RECOMMENDATION

It is RECOMMENDED that the Committee should identify any issues that they feel would strengthen the Corporate Plan 2003/04 so that it better reflects the Mole Valley priorities set out in the Community Strategy, and that this is advised to the SCC Executive.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:	Making Surrey a Safer Place, 2002/03 Mole Valley Community Strategy
