

MINUTES: of the meeting of the Mole Valley Local Committee held at 10.00am on Wednesday 22 May 2002 at Mole Valley District Council Offices (Pippbrook)

County Council Members

- * David Gollin - Chairman
- * Helyn Clack - Vice-Chairman
- * Bob McKinley
- * Jim Smith
- * David Timms
- * Hazel Watson

* = Present

PART ONE - IN PUBLIC

[All references to Items refer to the Agenda for the meeting]

31/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

There were none.

32/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 2]

Declarations of interest were advised by David Timms and David Gollin (Item 11 - membership of Schools Organisation Committee); Jim Smith (as Executive member in respect to decisions to advise the Executive); and David Timms, Hazel Watson and Bob McKinley (School governors – Items 7, 11 and 12).

33/02 PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS [Item 3]

No petitions, Members questions or public questions were received in accordance with Standing Order 62.

EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

34/02 PROVISION FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES IN MOLE VALLEY [Item 6]

The Committee received presentations from David Mitchell-Baker (Chair of the Mole Valley Focus Group for People with Learning Difficulties) and Joyce Smith (Ashted Learning Difficulties Group). Both guests provided papers that were circulated to the Committee members, along with other additional papers.

The Committee were then provided with an Adult Services' perspective by Yvonne Waltham (Local Services & Community Care Manager – Learning disabilities) and Stephen Baird (Learning Disabilities Manager).

The discussion served to identify a number of key issues:

- It was agreed that communication and liaison between key stakeholders could be improved
- The transition from childhood to adulthood, and the related support services, is critical for people with learning disabilities

- Transport is a key issue for people with learning disabilities, especially using public transport where support is not routinely available
- Respite and holiday breaks need to be planned with sensitivity to the needs of the clients, especially young people
- In line with the Promoting Independence agenda, people with learning difficulties should be supported in seeking employment

It was agreed that this session was a valuable contribution to an issue to which the Local Committee would return, and officers were invited to provide members with further information.

35/02 SCHOOL TRANSPORT – EXCEPTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS [Item 7]

The Committee were invited to consider the individual cases of exceptional Transport arrangements affecting the District's schools. Paul Mailer, Juliet Ingram and Jean Songhurst of the Schools Planning and Resources team were able to provide clarification on a number of queries. It was noted that a number of the arrangements were the result of past closures of smaller schools.

A number of head teachers representing affected schools were present and Arthur Webster (Ashcombe), Jill Crowley (The Acorns), and Christine Prosser (Scott Broadwood) were invited to speak.

Members had already responded individually to the proposals but it was agreed that a joint response would also be of value. The specific recommendations of the Committee, which will be submitted by the Local Director as a part of the Consultation process on these arrangements, were:

- **Ref 1.** (Affecting The Acorns, Brockham Primary and Ashcombe / Priory). The Committee considered that this was an Age-of-Transfer commitment which was not time limited, and that the arrangement supported the continued viability of the Acorns school, and therefore supported the wider Leigh community. **Recommended that this arrangement is retained.**
- **Ref 4.** (Affecting Ashcombe and Priory). These two schools, though located close to each other, serve a very large area and the small difference in the relative distance to either is not seen as an appropriate basis for forcing a parental decision. This is recognised as a unique configuration in Surrey. **Recommended that this arrangement is retained.**
- **Ref 5.** (Affecting the Ashcombe). Whilst the Committee would like to support this on the basis of parental choice, it recognises that there is no other basis. **Not recommended that this is retained.**
- **Ref 8.** (Affecting The Priory). This was seen as an issue for parents currently receiving the exceptional arrangements who are not Mole Valley residents. The Committee has **no comment** to make on this arrangement.
- **Refs 17 and 18.** (Affecting Scott Broadwood and The Weald). Both of these arrangements are the result of Age-of-Transfer commitments and their termination would have a significant affect on the viability of the Scott Broadwood school and a consequent community impact. The original commitment was not time-limited. **Recommended that this arrangement is retained.**
- **Ref 19.** (Affecting the Priory). The status of the Priory has changed since the arrangement was established and it is now clearly anomalous. **Not recommended that this is retained.**

- **Refs 26 and 28.** (Affecting St Peters). In both cases the exception relates to denominational schools but the pupils affected are not Mole Valley residents. The Committee therefore has **no comment** on these arrangements.
- **Ref 31.** (Affecting Woodville). Agreed that, although the Vale school is closer it is also consistently over-subscribed and that the affected pupils would almost certainly be offered Woodville anyway. **Recommended that this arrangement is retained.**

Jim Smith had to leave at 12.30. The Committee agreed to break for lunch at 1.10 and resume at 1.30.

36/02 **SCHOOL PLACES PLANNING** [Item 11]

Robert Douglas, the School Place Planning Manager, provided an overview of the draft Schools Organisation Plan to support the circulated agenda papers.

Members were advised to treat the projections with a degree of caution since the projected fall-off in the birth rate might prove to be over emphasised, meaning that school place surpluses may not be as great as projected. It was agreed that the wording in the final version of the Plan would include this observation.

The main issues for the District up until 2008 were identified as:

- Primary – Newdigate / Capel / Ockley / Beare Green – a projected surplus but a reassessment of schools' capacity, under sufficiency, is expected to address this.
- Brockham / Betchworth / Leigh – pressure on places at Brockham is likely to continue but the Acorns will be able to provide additional places. Discussions continue and proposals are expected to come forward within the term of the plan.
- Secondary – Dorking. The number of 10 year olds in feeder schools in 2002 / 03 is high and pressure of places will continue. At present Dorking is feeling the effects of pressure on school places in Reigate and Banstead. Measures being taken there should ease the situation.
- Post 16 – Since the advent of the Learning and Skills Council provision of post 16 education takes into account the availability of college places. It is therefore difficult to make the case for school based provision in isolation. Officers from the LEA and LSC are exploring this issue.
- Special education – it was noted that the review of provision has actually been completed.

Specific issues regarding provision in Ashted and Leatherhead were agreed for discussion in the private part of the agenda.

37/02 **UPDATE ON THE LOCAL FUND** [Item 9]

A paper was circulated setting out the principles and criteria for use of the fund. These were agreed.

A specific proposal put forward by Hazel Watson on behalf of the Mulberry Youth Centre was welcomed. This would fund a residential event to enable young people to look in more depth at issues such as self-esteem, rights and responsibilities, citizenship and drug awareness/peer pressure. The Committee

agreed to underwrite this proposal to the extent of £2,134.68 from the Local Fund subject to other funding sources being explored.

38/02 **FUTURE SITE OPTIONS FOR DORKING NURSERY SCHOOL** [Item 8].

This item was noted.

39/02 **LOCAL PRIORITIES FOR SELF-RELIANCE** [Item 5].

The agenda included a paper indicating that the SCC Corporate Plan required each Local Committee to identify a focus for Self-Reliance working, and providing the established evidence for north Leatherhead as the appropriate area within Mole Valley. Bob McKinley, the local Member, drew comparisons with the successful partnership work in north Walton and stated his intention to use his local fund allocation towards the appointment of a similar worker for the area. Kevin Gill (Local Director) advised that an attempt to make an appointment had been unsuccessful primarily because insufficient funds had been accumulated to offer a suitable salary or contract length. His view was that around £120K would be needed for a three year contract, of which SCC might provide a third.

Members agreed that they would support the North Leatherhead Partnership work as recommended, including providing some financial support. However they would consider alternative options for use of the Local Fund before deciding how much might be made available for the north Leatherhead proposal. It was agreed that a decision would be made at the Committee's next meeting on 24 July.

In respect to the second recommendation, to initiate more detailed investigation of the needs of North Holmwood and Box Hill, it was ***agreed that the investigation of needs be undertaken in 2003 /04 with North Holmwood being the initial focus of the two.***

40/02 **HOW FAR DOES THE SCC CORPORATE PLAN REFLECT LOCAL PRIORITIES?**

Members received a report examining the relative priorities set at County and local level, and suggesting a number of issues for which the Local Committee might advise a stronger corporate emphasis to reflect the local situation. The principle areas brought out by the report were:

- Leisure and recreational provision for young people
- Public transport options for general access from rural areas
- Support to small town centre economies
- Support to the voluntary sector, and encouragement of volunteering
- Drainage infrastructures.

Officers were requested to develop specific proposals for priorities and targets for these issues and to report these back to the Committee.

PART TWO - IN PRIVATE

41/02 ADDITIONAL SUPPORT AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMME (ASIP) [Item 12]

Members of the Committee considered proposals relating to the provision of school places in Ashted and Leatherhead, and reviewed the current position of Mole Valley schools receiving additional support under the ASIP programme. The minute of this item is circulated separately to members of the Committee only

[Meeting Ended: 4.06 pm]

Chairman