

MINUTES: of the meeting of the Mole Valley Local Committee (Generic) held at 10.00 am on Wednesday 11 September 2002 at Surrey County Council Mid Surrey Area Office, Leatherhead

County Council Members

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

PART ONE

IN PUBLIC

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

62/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

No apologies for absence were received from Members.

63/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS [Item 2]

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

64/02 PETITIONS AND QUESTIONS [Item 3]

No petitions had been received and no questions submitted by Members of the committee or public.

65/02 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING, 22 MAY 2002 [Item 4]

The minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

66/02 THE LIBRARY SERVICE IN MOLE VALLEY [Item 5]

Sally Parker, Mid Surrey Area Library Manager, introduced the papers and noted that, since planning for next year's budget was about to start, this was an opportune time for the Committee to consider the library service. There was an extended discussion of specific and general issues and points arising included:

- Use in Surrey libraries shows a slight decline but not as severe as the national trend. Use of junior resources is increasing. Sally will provide Members with a more detailed information on issues and trends
- Public satisfaction levels are consistently high but the lowest levels are generally recorded against opening hours. There are severe resource implications in extending hours but redistributing existing hours is another option. A follow up to the most recent results is being planned to further explore dissatisfaction with opening hours
- Mobile library services, which are run countywide from the South West office, have been affected by the age of some of the vehicles. Two of these, including the main one serving Mole Valley, are scheduled for replacement this year and consistency of service should be improved

- Publicity for mobile services was thought to be patchy and members felt that greater use of local outlets such as village shops and halls might improve awareness of the service
- The design of the Dorking library building is not convenient for development of services and the location is away from the town's main pedestrian thoroughfare. There are also concerns about accessibility under the provisions of the Disability Act
- Service to rural communities might be enhanced through outreach in conjunction with other services
- Ashted and Bookham libraries are both heavily used but there is little scope for extending either building to meet demand.

The Committee resolved that there were four areas they would like to see emphasised in the future direction of the service in Mole Valley:

- Improvements in Mobile Library services with the flexibility to respond to new opportunities
- More appropriate and accessible premises for Dorking Library
- More partnership between libraries and other services in delivery to rural communities, or where existing premises do not allow for expansion of service
- Review of opening hours to ensure they are appropriate to need even if resources do not allow extension.

The Committee also extended an invitation to Chris Phillips, manager of the Library mobile service, to attend a future meeting.

Jim Smith congratulated the Library service on the provisional "Good" rating advised the previous day by the Audit Commission.

67/02 **THE DRAFT SPATIAL STRATEGY FOR SURREY** [Item 6]

The Committee received a presentation on the draft strategy from Les Andrew, Principal Planner. It was clarified that this strategy deals with both the built and natural environments and is essentially identifying where development could take place. The more detailed consideration of what kinds of development would be permitted – such as the proportion of affordable housing - would be dealt with by the new structure plan.

The discussion raised a number of general points, including:

- All development should include appropriate upgrading of the infrastructure, and this should also include retrospective enhancements to reflect the increased demands of existing development work
- The impact on Mole Valley of developments elsewhere needs to be recognised, especially in relation to drainage and flooding
- Affordable housing in rural areas needs a greater emphasis
- Restrictive parking policies could inhibit developments outside town centres, especially in the absence of a robust public transport network.

The Committee also made a number of detailed comments on the draft strategy and instructed officers to draw these together to be submitted as part of the consultation.

68/02 DISPOSAL OF LAND AT MICKLEHAM [Item 7]

The Committee was advised that the pieces of land in the Mickleham area scheduled for disposal had been added to the portfolio managed by Surrey Wildlife Trust. The Committee welcomed the outcome as its preferred solution.

However, the Committee also expressed its concern that the principle of consulting local Members prior to land disposal, which was agreed by the Executive earlier this year, was not followed in this instance.

It was RESOLVED that David Gollin should express the Committee's concerns in writing to the Leader of Surrey County Council, and that Kevin Gill should also do so to the Chief Executive.

69/02 PROVISION FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES IN MOLE VALLEY [Item 8]

The agenda papers included a series of papers providing more information on services for people with learning difficulties in Mole Valley, including information on existing day care facilities, and data on current and projected demand at the key point of transition from child to adult support.

The Committee took the opportunity to discuss with officers the extent to which current and projected demand would be met and it was agreed that, while most people were receiving a service of some kind, individual needs were not necessarily being met fully. This was primarily to do with lack of resources – staff and financial – but in some cases people's needs fell outside the scope of the services available.

The Committee sought advice from officers on what specific problems the Local Committee might seek to offer help. Three issues were identified:

- Provision of, and access to transport. The service currently has to provide individual transport arrangements at considerable expense
- The lack of local provision within the District, meaning that people currently need to travel elsewhere
- Difficulty in securing dedicated supported housing for people with learning difficulties, who are currently competing with other vulnerable people for a limited pool.

The Committee requested Officers to provide more detailed information on these issues.

70/02 SCHOOLS TRANSPORT EXCEPTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS [Item 9]

The Committee noted that the Executive had reaffirmed its original decision to terminate all existing transport anomalies, which were reviewed at the Local committee meeting on 22 May. This is a disappointing outcome but Members acknowledged that procedures are in place to assist in any individual cases of hardship that might arise.

71/02 UPDATE ON MEMBERS' LOCAL FUND [Item 10]

Members noted that two further schemes had been approved under Chairman's discretion since they were below the £500 minimum level agreed

for Committee decision. This brings the total fund committed to date to £71,214. The two schemes are:

- £200 towards a neighbourhood watch scheme at The Grange, Bookham
- £328 towards costs of entertainments for residents of Keswick sheltered housing.

Members have received favourable comments about the clarity of the process from recipients of funding.

72/02 FORWARD PLAN OCTOBER 2002 – FEBRUARY 2003 [Item 11]

This was noted.

[Meeting Ended: 13.00 pm]

Chairman