

MINUTES: of the meeting of the Mole Valley Local Committee held at 10.00 on Wednesday 20 November 2002 at SCC Mid Surrey Area Office, Leatherhead

Surrey County Council Members

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

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

PART ONE - IN PUBLIC

90/02 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

No apologies for absence were received.

91/02 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 2]

Declarations of personal interest were received from Hazel Watson in respect to Item 6, in her capacity as Chair of the Mole Valley Detached Worker project and management committee member of High Ashurst, and in respect to Item 7 as a member of the Society of Friends. David Timms also declared an interest in respect of Item 6 as a governor of Starhurst School.

92/02 PETITIONS [Item 3]

No petitions were received.

93/02 PUBLIC QUESTIONS [Item 3]

No public questions were received.

94/02 MEMBER QUESTIONS [Item 3]

No Member questions were received.

95/02 MINUTES OF THE LOCAL COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2002 [Item 4]

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

96/02 CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT [Item 5]

The Committee welcomed Janet Forster (Area Manager, Surrey Children's Service, North East/Mid Surrey) and congratulated her on the quality of information contained in the report. The discussion highlighted a number of issues for Children's services, especially in Mole Valley, amongst which were:

- There is a significant shortage of qualified social workers and the service faces real problems with recruitment and retention. This is especially severe in Mole Valley.

- The service is also operating under severe financial constraints. As a result, officers are having to concentrate on the most acute cases and staff stress levels are rising.
- There is a particular shortage of foster carers. Although advertising is used to recruit new carers, most come through word of mouth.
- The service is increasingly having to use costly private agencies in the absence of 'in-house' provision.

In the light of this information, the Committee developed and agreed a revised set of recommendations as follows.

Agreed that the Committee

- i) welcomes the report and commends the officers on its clarity and value;
- ii) will express to the Executive their concern that the Service as a whole is under-resourced and faces severe problems of recruitment and retention, particularly in the Mid Surrey Area. The Committee will also seek to identify and support initiatives that improve this position locally;
- iii) welcomes the continuing development of a more effective system for quantifying and assessing the service delivered in Mole Valley and the enhancement it will bring to their ability to support and scrutinise;
- iv) will actively encourage opportunities to improve recruitment prospects through improving key worker access to social housing, particularly that held by the District Council
- v) will seek opportunities to support and promote foster caring in the District through individual networking, and will welcome proposals from officers at a future meeting on how Local Committee funding might be used to best effect .

97/02 YOUTH SERVICES IN MOLE VALLEY [Item 6]

The Committee welcomed Anthony Durno (Youth Area Manager, Mid Surrey), John Cawdell (Head of Leisure, Mole Valley District Council) and Richard Leary (Detached Youth Worker). The Committee also welcomed the continued recovery of Graham Taylor, Youth Development Worker for Mole Valley.

Anthony Durno advised the Committee that the Executive were keen for Local Committees to influence the development of the Youth Service Plan and District Plans. He highlighted some of the key issues for Youth services, such as:

- Difficulties with staff recruitment and retention, and constraints on resources;
- The need to overcome public resistance to the development of some youth facilities and activities (such as skate-parks);
- The likelihood that the proposed re-alignment of resources may disadvantage Mole Valley, which is comparatively well-served;
- The need to ensure that the work delivered in future under Connexions supports local priorities as well as national targets. Much of what is currently done reflects the Connexions ethos and supports higher risk groups, but the remaining work should provide an attractive means for getting young people engaged in the first place;
- Connexions will embrace 80% of current activity. This includes work undertaken by other departments of the County Council and supported voluntary activity too.

John Cawdell provided a brief update on Mole Valley District Council activity and highlighted particularly the progress towards the establishment of a Youth Council, which now has representatives from the 6 secondary schools and will be meeting for the first time on 12 December.

The Committee regretted that there was insufficient time to explore these issues in greater detail on the day and resolved to seek another opportunity to do so.

Agreed that the Committee:

- i) welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Youth service Plan for 2003/04;
- ii) will contribute to the production of a District Plan for the Youth Development Service which reflects the priorities already agreed in the Mole Valley District Community Strategy; and
- iii) requests officers to set up a half day workshop for members and officers to develop the detailed input to the District Plan, as well as examining the links between SCC services, District Council services and Connexions, and examining specific proposal for an enhanced mobile youth service in the south of the District.

98/02 MEMBERS' LOCAL FUNDS [Item 7]

Agreed that the Committee:

- i) approves the bid for £1,960 from the Members' Local Allocation for peer group activity;
- ii) notes the award of £400 for the Butter Hill Friend's Meeting House;
- iii) approves the bid for £2,000 from local community safety funding for the East Surrey Domestic Violence Forum;
- iv) additionally approves bids to the members' Local Allocation - tabled at the meeting – for £2,000 to Bookham Scouts for the erection and purchase of gates, and for up to £500 for initial survey work towards three potential cyber-café sites in Dorking.

99/02 FORWARD PROGRAMME [Item 8]

This was noted. Members were reminded that the Transportation meeting had been re-instated for 11 December and would be concentrating on the Capital programme and ranking.

100/02 URGENCY ITEM – WASTE TRANSPORT TASK GROUP

The Chairman agreed that the County Council membership of the Waste Transport Task Group, set up at the 23 October meeting, should be raised as an urgent item since this had yet to be resolved and the group needed to start working.

Agreed:

- i) that the three nominated County Council members of the Waste Transport Task Group would be Helyn Clack, Bob McKinley and Hazel Watson.

[Meeting Ended: 13.17]

Chairman