

UPDATES AND INFORMATION ON SELECTED ISSUES

**Local Committee for Mole Valley
24 September 2003**

KEY ISSUE:

This report includes a number of updates and information on issues of local interest and importance as a background to the open public forum.

SUMMARY:

Short updates are included on:

- 1 Transportation updates: STAR, Fastway, Public transport
- 2 Youth provision
3. Community safety Vehicles
4. Gatwick runway proposals
5. Parish Plans
6. Rural wireless Broadband projects

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

This report is for information

INTRODUCTION

At this meeting, the Local Committee is including for the first time an extended open public forum for discussion and comment on issues of local importance. To support this session, this report includes a number of information items and updates on a range of such issues.

CONTENTS

The report includes the following sections:

- 1 Transportation updates: STAR, Fastway, Public transport
- 2 Youth provision
3. Community safety Vehicles
4. Gatwick runway proposals
5. Parish Plans
6. Rural wireless Broadband projects

1. Transportation updates

a) STAR

STAR stands for Strategic Traffic Action in Rural Areas. The idea behind STAR was to deliver a range of improvements over the 'Dorking Box' that would aid safety for all road users. Surrey County Council Local Transport Team at Mole Valley has been trying to move various projects forward over recent years.

Over the years much work has been done; blanket 40mph speed limit, traffic calming etc, and a enormous amount of consultation. Recently the Local Transport Team gained tentative approval with Charlwood Parish Council on two schemes - Ifield Road and Perrylands junction with The Street - subject to full consultation with residents, to be undertaken by the Parish Council. Unfortunately the consultation was not sufficiently positive for either scheme to taken forward with confidence.

Currently there is a hiatus in the project since there is only limited funding for STAR on an individual scheme basis, and this is capped from year to year. This situation is worsened by the need to shift budgets around when other schemes within the area run over budget.

To try and put the project back on a more even and secure keel, a bid was made last year for Intermediate Scheme funding (i.e. projects over £500,000, but less than £5 million). Unfortunately, there was not enough money available for any Intermediate Schemes to be funded within the District, but it is proposed to put in another bid this year to the same source.

In the meantime the Local Transportation Service will attempt to do some minor works that will have an effect on traffic speeds. Whenever surfacing schemes are undertaken within the Dorking Rural Box centre line markings will be removed, where it is considered safe to do so, and only edge markings used in a bid to slow vehicles down. The main goal however remains to get the right level of funding so that STAR can be moved forward and meet the objectives that were originally set for the project.

b) Fastway

Fastway, which was launched in Crawley on 1 September, is the first guided bus system in the south east. The first phase of this futuristic transport system links Gatwick with Crawley, with extension to Horley within the next couple of years. Fastway is a public / private partnership between West Sussex County Council, Surrey County Council, Crawley Borough Council, Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, BAA Gatwick, British Airways, Go-Ahead and Metrobus.

Using dedicated bus lanes and specially constructed guideways – raised concrete tracks – Fastway speeds along, bypassing traffic congestion. Its guideways cannot be used by other traffic, ensuring an uninterrupted route for the bus and making journeys much faster. The latest technology, including real-Time passenger information (see below), lets Fastway passengers know just when the next service is coming and ensures efficient operation.

Although the majority of the Fastway route in Surrey is within the Reigate and Banstead Borough area, a short section of the Horley extension of the route will pass through Povey Cross Road, in Mole Valley, and will include a RTPI bus stop. A full update on fastway will be brought to the Local Committee meeting on 10 December.

c) Real time passenger information

One of the technological innovations being used in the Fastway project is Real-Time Passenger information. This is also being incorporated into Arriva buses which run through the District, initially those using the Guildford depot, but with extension to .

The system works by tracking specially equipped buses. The buses report their location and the services that they are operating to the bus stop displays. The times of bus arrival are displayed in the example shown below with a countdown in minutes. The word "Due" is displayed when the bus is less than 2 minutes from the stop. Departure time of future trips is also shown based upon timetables programmed into the display.

All buses have been fitted with the following equipment:

- satellite tracking to locate vehicles to within one metre
- a two radio to link the driver to his depot to assist with improved bus control, as well as improve safety on the buses
- a sign giving details of the next bus stop to be served
- an intelligent traffic signal priority unit to give late running buses priority at Traffic Signals

The next major scheme is planned for Redhill and Reigate and this will be based on Metrobus services and will link to the Fastway scheme which Surrey County Council has managed

Subject to funding it is hoped to introduce a mobile phone service in 2004 / 2005 to enable passengers to obtain the time of the bus via their phone whilst standing at the bus stop.

d) Public transport

The County Council has been reviewing rural bus services and a report is due to be considered by the Executive at the end of September. The report will not be available until after the post date for these papers, but will be made available at the meeting itself. It is not thought that any services covering Charlwood will be affected.

The East Surrey Rural Transport Partnership has also been working with the County Council to look at alternatives to traditional bus services, amongst which are:

- demand responsive transport, using minibuses on which passengers can pre-book journeys with as little as 30 minutes notice. Such a service would not operate on a fixed route but would be able to pick up people from more isolated locations
- Taxi vouchers, recipients of which will be able to make journeys that previously they had never considered, due to lack of appropriate transport. They are permitted to use their vouchers in whatever way gives them maximum benefit

Funding options for both of these schemes are being explored

2. Youth provision in the rural south

Surrey County Council's Youth Development Service puts young people first by:

- identifying young people's needs at critical points in their transition to adulthood
- delivering youth work that intervenes to address identified needs (this is done by the Youth Development Service alone and in partnership, and can be short, medium or long term in nature)
- offering additional and complementary learning opportunities that are distinct from those offered by formal education.

They do this by identifying and then addressing the needs of young people in defined neighbourhoods with youth work staff working together as a team.

Work with young people takes place in a variety of settings including youth centres, specialist centres, schools and colleges, streets and recreation grounds, and through mobile provision. The emphasis is very much on the service being pro-active, flexible and responsive.

Youth services are delivered through two youth centres in the rural south of the District – Beare Green and Capel - together with the Mulberry centre in Dorking. However these are clearly difficult to get to from many of the communities in the south and alternatives need to be considered.

ProjX, which used to be called the Detached Youth Project, has for some time run a youth bus as a mobile youth centre to take into other communities. More recently a smaller vehicle has been purchased for which more of the District will be accessible. At present this is covering the original bus' timetable while that vehicle is off the road, but once this commitment is over, and the new vehicle is fully equipped with laptops, audio-visual kit etc, there will be scope for extending to new areas.

Another means by which activities for young people can be brought into the rural communities is through local people and organisations applying to the Youth Development service for grant funding. The Service has a grant budget of around £300,000 a year to support local activity. Organisations are encouraged to bid for this funding and allocations this year have ranged from as little as £50 to very local groups to as much as £20-30,000 for larger countywide groups such as guides and scouts.

Although the rural south of Mole Valley may benefit from funding spent locally by these larger countywide organisations, there very few local organisations are bidding for this funding, of which around £40,000 is still uncommitted in 2003/04. The main round of bidding for the year ahead starts in early October.

Application packs can be found on the SCC website, or by contacting the Youth Development Service on the helpline number – 01932 570329

3. Community Safety vehicles

The Mole Valley Community Safety Partnership made a successful bid in 2002/03 for Government funding to purchase two mobile community safety vehicles. These act as a mobile information and contact point, as well as providing a regular police presence in communities where there is no police station. They are staffed by Police and sometimes by council staff and aim to

- help reduce crime and the fear of crime
- offer reassurance to local people
- give information and advice on community safety and council issues

One of the vehicles operates primarily in the south of the District and a timetable is set out below. For any more information please call 01306 676858

Community Safety Vehicle Timetable

DORKING

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4
TIME/DAY	TUES 7th OCT	TUES 14th OCT	TUES 21st OCT	TUES 28th OCT
1000-1200	Hookwood	Walliswood/Oakwood Hill	Dorking *	Capel
1300-1500	Norwood Hill	Ockley	Newdigate	Betchworth
TIME/DAY	THURS 9th OCT	THURS 16th OCT	THURS 23rd OCT	THURS 30th OCT
1000-1200	Leigh	Westhumble/Mickleham	Boxhill	Charlwood
1300-1500	Holmwood	Westcott	Beare Green	Brockham

Location of Community Safety Vehicle at Dorking Rural North.

Betchworth - Knights Plant Nursery, Station Road, Betchworth.
Boxhill - Car park off Clump Avenue outside the Cost Cutter shop/cycle dauphin.
Brockham - Outside the village hall.
Westcott - Outside the Holy Trinity Church, Westcott Heath, Westcott.
Westhumble / Mickleham - Ryka's Café.

Location of Community Safety Vehicle at Dorking Rural South

Beare Green - Village hall car park
Capel - Capel Memorial Hall
Charlwood - Outside the Newsagents
Hookwood - Tesco's car park
Leigh - In the Glebe
Mid/South Holmwood - Scott House car park.
Newdigate - Outside the front of the Six Bells pub
Norwood Hill - The Fox Revived car park
Oakwoodhill/Walliswood - Scarlet Arms pub car park
Ockley - The Inn on the Green car park

* **Dorking Town** – Sainsbury's car park

We are here to help and advise!



4. Gatwick runway proposals

The Government has been carrying out studies in each region of airport capacity to inform the Airports White Paper due out later this year. Last year it published the results of these studies in a series of packages of runway options for the south east airports. No options for runways at Gatwick were included in that consultation because of the existence of a legal agreement precluding the construction of a runway before 2019. However, the decision not to include Gatwick options was successfully by a judicial review last November. The Government announced that it would not challenge the judicial review and announced a second edition of the consultation to run until the end of June and specifically focussing on runway options for Gatwick.

At its meeting on 10 June, the SCC Executive agreed a response to this consultation which restated the County Council's concern that:

- Gatwick and Heathrow's role as major international airports should be safeguarded, but that
- Support for the 2019 Gatwick legal agreement is confirmed and further expansion at Gatwick opposed on regional planning, operational, surface access and environmental grounds

The Local Committee had earlier agreed a statement of its own position, which it forwarded to the Executive:

"Mole Valley Local Committee is extremely concerned that there will be major infra-structural issues for the District if the impending review overturns the 1979 legal agreement over Gatwick and expansion is thus enabled. The Executive is urged to take every step to make clear the County Council's opposition to further runway development at Gatwick and to seek the continuation of this legal agreement."

Mole Valley District Council also responded to express total opposition to any additional runway, and further representations and comments were sent in by local communities throughout the District.

Since the closure of the consultation period there has been no more information and responses are now being considered by the Government. The Government proposes to publish its conclusions in a White Paper by the end of the year.

5. Parish Plans

Frequently Asked Questions about Parish Plans

What is a Parish Plan?

Parish Plans are local action based plans, which address a wide range of issues affecting the local community. The plan is based on information provided through survey research, consultation and community participation. The difference between this and any other plans is that the community themselves set the questions and the methods of consultation and the focus is on the action.

Who should be involved?

The whole community should be consulted. Everyone's view is valuable. Also, there are lots of parts to play in the process such as distributing questionnaires, organising drop in events, being part of a group to carry out identified actions etc

Why do a PP?

Lots of reasons. It usually helps to make the community a closer one by identifying local issues that the community can work on together to solve.

It is a very good time to do a PP because local authorities have been given a new duty by the Government to formulate "Community Strategies", which are like district wide Parish Plans. They have been told to consult local communities in order to do this and so they are now listening to local communities who have already started the process through a PP.

Furthermore, the results from a PP can be used as evidence to support other grant applications to carry out actions identified in the PP. Rural communities are constantly changing, your own plan of action will help you to shape the future of your community driving rather than responding to change.

Who pays?

There is a Parish Plan Grant to cover the cost available from the Countryside Agency, although there is a great deal of competition for these limited funds. Surrey Community Action can provide advice on other sources of funding.

Who else is doing one?

There are PPs going on all over the country. 15 other communities in Surrey have already started. Godstone, Leigh, Buckland, Tatsfield, Woldingham and Crowhurst.

What will it achieve?

Things achieved in the past have included:

Environmental measures – pond clearing, cycle paths, other environmental improvements made, even a bus route changed.

Social – new sports and social clubs started in the village

Safety – community safety measures established including a village constable being employed

Housing - Affordable housing needs of village identified

Transport – local transport schemes set up.

Village shops refurbished or improved

Plus an increase in funds flowing into the parishes for projects, increased community activity and spirit and a renewed interest in Parish Council affairs, including new candidates standing for election.

How long will a PP take?

It can take up to a year and there will seem to be times when nothing is happening but the steering group will be working hard behind the scenes.

Parish plans should be:

- Comprehensive and holistic – considering social, environmental and economic issues.
- The plan should be produced by the whole community – the action plan is delivered by the community
- The plan should state what you hope to achieve, when, why, who and how

**Abby Thomas
Head of Communities Team
Surrey Community Action
September 2003.**

6. Rural wireless broadband

Many rural areas are not currently served by BT or any cable TV operators, which means that broadband internet access is denied to the residents in these areas. Apart from the benefits of more flexible internet use, broadband is also an important tool in enhancing the electronic access to services in the more remote parts of the County.

The Surrey e-Partnership is a strategic partnership made up of public sector organisations in Surrey, sanctioned by the 2010 network, with a commitment to a joint vision of electronic service delivery. The partnership has committed to make public information and services available via a full range of media, giving citizens the flexibility to make contact and access services whenever and from wherever they prefer.

In support of this Surrey County Council, on behalf of Surrey e-Partnership and supported by Surrey Economic Partnership, has made a successful grant application to the South East Economic Development Authority for £50,000 to support community wireless broadband projects in rural areas in Surrey. One of the projects currently supported with a grant for £25k is Newdigate.net. This community based company is located in Newdigate and is developing an infrastructure that will provide a wireless broadband and community services to homes and business in the local and surrounding area.

Wireless schemes provide a credible alternative to wired broadband provided by BT. This technology has become very important in providing broadband services as BT does not consider that there is sufficient demand at many rural exchanges to justify their becoming enabled to deliver broadband. Until a specific level of demand is generated within the exchange's area, this will remain the case and in many rural areas, this level is unlikely to be achieved.

Broadband will play a very important part in future electronic service delivery allowing the people in Surrey to gain access to information and public and educational services efficiently and effectively.

The results of the Newdigate experiment will need to be monitored before any extension of this programme can be undertaken.

The wireless option relies on 'line of sight' between radio masts to relay the signal. In the more hilly parts of the rural south this may be problematic. An alternative solution, which is currently being tried in Farley Green is based on satellite technology instead.

Recent information indicates that the 'trigger' level for Norwood Hill exchange, which would be the one that would service Charlwood, may be reached during October, enabling broadband provision in that area. For more information, go to:

www.adslguide.org.uk/availability/btprereg