



**LOCAL COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE
TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT CONTROL**

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S LOCAL COMMITTEE
(MOLE VALLEY)**

22ND NOVEMBER 2006

KEY ISSUE

To note the response of Surrey County Council's Executive to a report from the Local Committee (Mole Valley) on the Transportation Development Control service.

SUMMARY

On 21st June 2006, the Local Committee received a report on the Transportation Development Control Service (**Annex A**). The report included an update on the structure of the service.

At this meeting, it was resolved that the Local Committee register its concern with the County Council's Executive regarding the decision to discontinue routine Transportation Development Control officer attendance at District Council planning committee meetings.

A report was included on the agenda of the Executive Committee meeting on 10th October 2006. The Chairman of the Local Committee attended to present the concerns raised by members. The Executive Committee's response to the report is attached as **Annex B**.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee is asked to:

- (i) Note the response from the County Council's executive committee.

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**LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY) REPORT TO THE
EXECUTIVE**

TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

KEY ISSUE

The local committee recently considered the restructuring in Transportation Development Control, and its impact locally.

SUMMARY

The local committee received a report on 21st June 2006 updating members on the Transportation Development Control service restructure resulting from the impact of the County Council Policy and Productivity Review and Business Delivery Review. This report is attached as annex A.

Following the restructure, routine Transportation Development Control officer attendance at District Council planning meetings has been discontinued.

The local committee were concerned by this decision and agreed to register this with the County Council's executive.

RECOMMENDATION

The Local Committee requests that the Executive agree that a formal protocol should be drawn up (in consultation with District and Borough Council colleagues) regarding Transportation Development Control attendance at planning meetings.

This could include:

- Guidance on when officers will/won't be able to attend meetings;
- The process for requesting attendance;
- Agreement on the availability of report papers ahead of meetings.

**EXTRACT OF MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON 10TH
OCTOBER 2006**

**234/06 REPORTS FROM SELECT COMMITTEES, LOCAL COMMITTEES AND
ANY OTHER COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL (Item 5)**

(a) TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

The Executive Member for the Environment tabled a response to the report of the Mole Valley Local Committee. The Chairman of the Mole Valley Local Committee, Mr Jim Smith, was invited to address the Executive to present his Committee's report. Mr Smith explained the Local Committee's concerns and welcomed the Executive's response which addressed the key issues raised by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the response set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes be agreed.

APPENDIX 1 - TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

Response to the report of the Mole Valley Local Committee:

Earlier this year, the Local Committee for Mole Valley requested an update on the impact of the Policy and Productivity Review (PPR) and Business Delivery Review (BDR) on Transportation Development Control (TDC) and in particular why TDC no longer regularly attend local planning committees. That report, attached to this paper, clearly sets out the impacts those reviews had on TDC, which have led to a refocusing of priorities and the introduction of new ways of working in order to make the best use of the resource available.

The team works in a demanding, pressurised and at times contentious field. Resources are very constrained, and one aspect of the reviews is that the team has lost 12 posts from a total of 35. It is therefore impossible to provide the service in the same way as before. The work has been refocused to fulfil our statutory and legal requirements, and to make more efficient use of the resource, through, for example, the use of standing advice, as we are encouraged to do in government guidance. It is not a statutory requirement to attend local planning committees.

The District and Borough Councils were informed by letter from the Head of Service, Roger Hargreaves in April 2005, with my full approval, that TDC officers would be unable to regularly attend Local Planning Committees. It also set out a clear protocol that the Transportation Development Control Manager would consider any invitation for an officer to attend committee for significant development proposals with major transportation implications. This is the existing protocol and officers do attend committees when it is important to do so. In the view of officers it is working well. As it happens, the last time the Mole Valley Officer attended Planning Committee following such an invitation in February of this year, the proposal concerned was approved without the Officer having to speak.

Members should be in no doubt that a requirement to increase committee attendance would impact on its statutory and legal obligations. Members should also be aware that no other statutory consultee within the planning process, including the Environment Agency and the Highways Agency, attend District and Borough Planning Committees. Transportation Development Control, as the County Highway Authority, is the only statutory consultee to attend.

I appreciate that not having a TDC officer always present at the local planning committee causes frustrations at times, especially amongst Districts and Boroughs that have been used to this service. I would ask the committee to accept that TDC is focussing its efforts where it can be most effective, particularly in fulfilling our statutory responsibilities, and that substantial efficiency gains have been made.

It may be helpful to the local committees and to the local planning committees to explain more fully what Transportation Development Control is seeking to achieve. With the Executive's agreement I suggest the following:

- Paragraph 43 of the recently adopted TDC Good Practice Guide explains the circumstances in which TDC officers will consider invitations to attend local planning committee. This will be amplified to more fully set out the current protocol, including the points made by Mole Valley Local Committee, and a copy sent to all Local Committees and Planning Committees.
- Similarly, a very short information and guidance note setting out Transportation Development Control's role and how it is exercising it will be circulated.
- The Service will provide Briefings on the role of Transportation Development Control, where requested by the local planning authorities.

David Munro
Executive Member for the Environment
10 October 2006