

**MINUTES:** of the meeting of the Mole Valley Local Committee held at 14.00 on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008 in the Council Chamber, Pippbrook, Dorking

**Members Present - Surrey County Council**

Timothy Ashton, Chairman  
Tim Hall – Vice Chairman  
Helyn Clack  
Stephen Cooksey  
Jim Smith  
Hazel Watson

**Members Present - Mole Valley District Council**

Valerie Homewood  
David Howell  
Chris Hunt  
David Sharland

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

**PART ONE - IN PUBLIC**

**37/08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]**

Councillor Paul Elderton and Sylvia Sharland were temporary substitutes for Councillors Mrs. Ann Howarth and Mrs Jean Pearson respectively.

**38/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 2]**

There were no declarations of interest.

**39/08 MINUTES OF THE LAST [Item 3]**

The minutes were agreed and signed as a correct record of the meeting, which took place on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

**40/08 PUBLIC WRITTEN QUESTIONS [Item 4A]**

There were no public written questions.

**41/08 MEMBER QUESTIONS [Item 4B]**

Sixteen Member questions were received. The questions and answers are set out in annex a to the minutes. There were several supplementary questions with regards to clarity. Members asked for an informal discussion on grass cutting at the next Informal Committee in February.

There was some further debate around the South Street Bus Stand. Stephen Cooksey requested a further formal report be brought to the March Local Committee; the Chairman agreed to this request and asked officers to do the necessary arrangements.

It was raised that the last question submitted by Valerie Homewood with regards to fatalities on the A24 was incomplete. Officers apologised for the mistake and would contact her direct with a full answer.

42/08 **PUBLIC OPEN QUESTION SESSION** [Item 4C]

Two public questions were received with regards to Vincent Road, and Mr. Shove responded to the Agenda Item 6 Response to Petition Ranmore Common. Both Members of the public will be contacted in the future with further information.

43/08 **PETITIONS** [Item 5]

One petition was received.

**A), Cobham Road, Fetcham, Tim Hall presented the petition on behalf of the residents and interested parties.**

Vice Chairman, Tim Hall presented a petition on behalf of Mrs. Bailey who had collected the required signatures. Residents were concerned with regards to the rise in the number of accidents, which have mainly mounted the pavement. These appear not to have been forwarded to Surrey Highways. Tim Hall noted that the road is a through road for the A25 and a busy school route. He stressed that residents hoped some speeding restrictions could be put in place to help reduce the numbers of speeding vehicles and risk of accidents.

The Chairman thanked Mrs. Bailey for her efforts and confirmed that a formal report would be brought back to the next Local Committee meeting, in this instance the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

44/08 **RESPONSE TO PETITION –TO THE PETITION SPEEDING PROBLEMS RANMORE COMMON** [Item 6]

Members received a brief report detailing the response to the petition submitted by Mr Shoves on behalf of the residents of Ranmore Common, expressing concerns about speeding on the road.

Members were reminded that at the committee on the 24<sup>th</sup> September 2008 they agreed the current list of speeding requests. These roads will be assessed and progressed as required. Members were therefore asked to move Ranmore Common to this list for consideration.

**RESOLVED**

The Local Committee (Mole Valley) agreed to;

- (i) note the petition,
- (ii) the issue be moved forward to when funding is available, subject to it being prioritised against other priorities.

## **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The available budget for this financial year will be sufficient to implement the four advertised roads and survey the outstanding eleven roads.

### **45/08 MOLE VALLEY LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – CORE STRATEGY [Item 7]**

Members were reminded that the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act came into effect in September 2004 and introduced the requirement that Local Planning Authorities had to prepare Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) instead of Local Plans.

Jack Straw, Mole Valley District Council Planning Officer informed Members that the LDF system is intended to speed up the preparation of plans (known as Local Development Documents), ensure that they are monitored, reviewed and kept up to date and that there is greater and more effective community involvement. As a result of the changes, the planning system can be more responsive to changing circumstances. The Local Development Framework is a folder of Local Development Documents, the most important and first of which is the Core Strategy.

On 14<sup>th</sup> November Mole Valley District Council published the Core Strategy it is proposing to submit to the Secretary of State. Local Committee Members were invited to comment. Members were supportive of the document and hoped the new changes would mean infrastructure was in place or intrinsic to new developments. Jack Straw agreed and also noted the concern Members raised over the changes in the economy and the effect this would have on future developments.

Some Members wished it to be noted that not all Mole Valley District Councillors agreed the document. It was stressed that they believed the work was sensible and had achieved a great deal but there was more work to be done on a number of issues which had led to a divide in council.

## **RESOLVED**

The Local Committee (Mole Valley) agreed to not the report.

## **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

This was a member briefing, any comments are to be forwarded to the Local Partnership Team.

### **46/08 UPDATE ON MOLE VALLEY'S HEALTHCHECKS AND PARISH PLANS [Item 08]**

Margaret Morton from Surrey Community Action introduced three representatives from Mole Valley projects and gave a brief overview of the work SCVS are doing to support parish councils, town councils and villages.

Trevor Sokell from the Bookham Vision gave a comprehensive overview of

work Brookham residents have done to start the Bookham Plan. He explained that they had set the structure and had all the volunteers signed up and in formalised project groups. The timeline had been agreed and they were planning the consultation to begin in the new year. The aim was to discover what Bookham is, what the people living there want in the short term and long term. They understand all the projects will need to be in partnership with local authorities and local organisations. Mr. Sokell asked Members to support the work they were doing.

Andy Tanner from DNA (Dorking Needs Action) explained what the group had been doing since the publication of the plan in 2007. The management group had formalised and become a company limited. Their work continues on a number of projects but in the current climate they are working with partners on projects to support and bring trade back into the town.

Finally, a representative from the Leigh Parish Plan gave a brief update on the work the parish council have done since the publication of their plan in 2003. Following the survey residents noted that there was little provision for young people, a lack of communication about the parish, poor transport links and speeding traffic. Following these results the group developed a number of projects; a website to aid communication, new residents welcome packs, including information in neighbourhood watch. They have launched speed watch and set up a playgroup. The future includes a revisit of all projects and an evaluation of their success. New issues have emerged, for example the rise in travellers and their needs together with the continuing need for young people projects.

Members thanked all four of the representatives for their work and committed to supporting the continuation of these projects in Mole Valley.

## **RESOLVED**

The Local Committee (Mole Valley) agreed to not the report.

## **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

This was a member briefing, any comments are to be forwarded to the Local Partnership Team.

### **47/08 UPDATE ON THE ACCESSIBILITY PROJECT [Item 09]**

Offices attended to give an update on the accessibility project and the Pegasus bus service.

Members were advised that the accessibility project continues with the aim to look at the current bus network and transport plans. Members were informed of the timeline and the officers hope that the result will mean an easier service for all in the community offering options and alternatives to everyday transport.

Member thanked the officers for the update and asked if the bus review would include the frequency of times and how late they operate as many services stop very early. Officers confirmed that the consultant looking into the transport plan would consider times and routes. A concern was raised that other parts of Surrey have considerably more buses than other. Officers

agreed this was the case and said the issues would all be explored.

Officers gave a brief update on the Pegasus Bus Service. Members were reminded in 2005 a pilot was introduced in Guildford; the service now takes 66 children from Mole Valley. The review showed that the service was good yet the rest of Surrey doesn't have this type of facility. Officers therefore signed a new contract for a further two years to keep the service running and during this time a feasibility study would be done to see if the facility could be extended across the whole of Surrey.

Members all agreed the service was vital in keeping school traffic down and moving children around the county safely. Some Members ask if during the buses down time the service could be used for other residents, officers confirmed this was being looked at.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Local Committee noted the presentation and thanked the officers.

#### **48/08 LOCAL COMMITTEE FUNDING [Item 10]**

Members were asked to support the nine proposals for formal approval from the funding from the Members' Local Allocation. Detailed proposals are outlined in Annexe A to the report:

- Leatherhead Youth Project detached youth worker £4,000 revenue
- Wescott In Bloom roof re-thatching £4,000 revenue
- Oakwood Village Hall disabled provision £1,000 revenue
- Walliswood Village Hall repairs £1,000 revenue
- Mole Valley District Council Costa Café provision £1,000 revenue
- Leatherhead Trinity School bell tower £3,000 capital
- Capel Parish Council Beare Green road surfaces £5,000 capital
- Bookham Scouts storage facility £2,000 capital
- Surrey Highways – Green Lane lighting £1,186 revenue

Member were asked to note the three bids that fall below the £1,000 threshold:

- Polesden Lacey Infants garden landscaping £950 revenue
- Fetcham Friendship Club £250 revenue
- Dorking & District Town Twinning concert £500 revenue

### **RESOLVED**

The Local Committee (Mole Valley) agreed;

- (i) to approve the proposals detailed in Appendix A totalling £24,186
- (ii) to note the approval of proposals which fall below the £1,000 threshold totalling £1,700

## **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The spending proposals put forward for this meeting have been assessed against the County standards for appropriateness and value for money and it is recommended that they should be approved.

### **49/08 NOMINATION TO THE CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP AND THE LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP IN MOLE VALLEY [Item 11]**

Members were asked to nominate representatives to the above partnership groups. Timothy Ashton nominated Helyn Clack to the Mole Valley Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership, which was agreed. Tim Hall nominated the Chairman Timothy Ashton to the Mole Valley Local Strategic Partnership this was also agreed.

The Local Committee (Mole Valley) agree:

- (i) to nominate Surrey County Councillor Helyn Clack to the Mole Valley Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership.
- (ii) to nominate Surrey County Councillor Tim Ashton to the Mole Valley Local Strategic Partnership.

## **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

Under Part 3, Section 1 of the County Council's constitution, the Local Committee is responsible for monitoring services provided locally and contributing to the district based community safety strategy.

The Local Committee's service monitoring role and devolved budgets provide an excellent opportunity for supporting the work of the CDRP and LSP.

### **50/08 M25 JUNCTION 9B [item 12]**

Members were reminded that traffic queuing on the slip road at the M25 exit junction 9b regularly tails back onto the motorway, predominantly during the morning peak, converting lane one into an extension of the slip road; the queue can develop for up to a mile before the junction. The motorway has four lanes at this location and although gantry signs indicate a speed reduction in advance of any queue to warn drivers, the extended queue represents a significant hazard.

The Highways Agency, with Surrey County Council's consent undertook a temporary trial of part time traffic signals on the slip road where it meets the A243 roundabout during the spring of 2008 to gauge the impact on both the motorway and the County Council's highway network. The trial was considered a success notwithstanding the A243 northbound queues into the roundabout were longer than normal, albeit with only an average of 8 seconds being added to the journey time.

Following the trial the Highways Agency developed an option for permanent part time traffic signals for the exit slip road at junction 9b and this is the

proposal under consideration.

Members were therefore asked to agree to the recommendation to support the Highways Agency's traffic signal proposal and enter into an Agreement pursuant to Section 4 of the Highways Act 1980 to enable the Highways Agency to undertake all necessary work associated with the proposal. Members agreed that overall it was a good project and they were delighted to see the Highways Agency looking at the problem.

## **RESOLVED**

The Local Committee (Mole Valley) agree that:

- (i) the Highways Agency proposal for permanent part time traffic signals on the exit slip of the M25 at junction 9b be supported; and
- (ii) authority is delegated to the Head of Highways, in conjunction with the Chairman, to enter into an Agreement pursuant to Section 4 of Highways Act 1980 with the Highways Agency to facilitate the installation of the traffic signal proposal.

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

There is a very real possibility of a significant motorway incident occurring on the M25 mainline as a consequence of traffic queuing to leave the motorway in the vicinity of or at the exit slip road to junction 9b.

### **51/08 SPEED LIMITS PROGRESS REPORT [Item 13]**

Members received an update on the progress of the current agreed speed limit request list.

Members were also asked to agree the inclusion of Ranmore Common, Hollow Lane and the A25 west of Dorking for assessment this financial year.

## **RESOLVED**

The Local Committee (Mole Valley) agreed to:

- (i) note the progress on the Speed Limit Request List; and
- (ii) to accept the inclusion of Ranmore Common, Hollow Lane and the A25 west of Dorking.

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- (i) The available budget for this financial year will be sufficient to implement the 4 advertised roads and survey the outstanding 11 roads.

- (ii) Surrey County Council has accepted challenging road safety targets to reduce injuries on its roads.
- (iii) Good speed management can contribute to this.

52/08 **CAPITAL AND MAINTENANCE PROJECTS PROGRESS REPORT** [Item 14]

Members were reminded that at the Local Committee on the 11 June 2008 they agreed a programme of work for the 2008/09-2010/2011 financial year funded from the Integrated Transport Budget and Local Allocation. The authority was delegated to the East Area Group Manager, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman in relation to any amendments to the 2008/2009-2010/2011 scheme list, as a result of changes in available funding following the closing of the 2007/2008 accounts. The committee was updated on the progress made again the schemes.

**RESOLVED**

That the Local Committee noted the report.

[Meeting ended: 16.40]

Chairman



## **Annex A Member Questions**

The following questions were submitted in accordance with Standing Order 46.

### **Question from Chris Hunt, District Councillor for Ashted Village**

#### **The City of London Crossing**

Following the completion of the new pedestrian crossing at The City of London School in Park Lane, Ashted in September of the year, parents of pupils and the School are concerned that this new facility built at a safer location than one presently used, remains un-operational. This is due to Highways not installing promised lighting and also conducting a required safety audit, which was understood to have taken place during the half term holidays

In view of the dark evenings and the potential safety implications of not using this new crossing could the East Highways Group Manager confirm that these outstanding Highway jobs be given the utmost priority.

### **Response from Local Highways Manager**

The above crossing facility, which was part of a section 278 agreement between the County Council and the City of London and constructed by a contractor working for the City of London. The scheme was substantially completed six weeks ago. The provision of the lighting columns is being funded by the County Council and the order to erect these was raised upon completion of the works. Lighting columns normally take 3 months from placing of order, to erection on site and connection to the electricity supply. Unfortunately there has been some minor slippage to the programme and we will update Cllr Hunt positively with a completion date within the next two weeks.

There are three stages to safety audits, the first two have been completed and the final stage will happen upon full completion of the works and has not been a delaying factor.

### **Questions from Stephen Cooksey, County Councillor for Dorking and Holmwoods**

#### **Quality Checks**

Would the Chairman describe the quality checks that are in place to ensure that the grass cutting contractors employed in Mole Valley are undertaking their responsibilities in line with their contractual obligations?

### **Response from the Local Highways Manager**

I assume Cllr Cooksey is specifically asking about the grass being cut, rather than other contractual obligations? As members will know the Surrey Highway Partnership is not based upon a 100% check of all works, hence the 'Partnership'. We undertake a 10% audit of all works and a Q1 check (Percentage of minor works completed first time) for Key Performance Indicators.

## **Grass Cutting**

Would the Chairman inform the Committee about whether he is satisfied with the quality and efficiency of the grass cutting programme in Mole Valley in 2008-2009 and if not what measures are to be taken to improve the quality and performance of contractors during 2009-2010?

### **Response from the Local Highways Manager**

Generally the standard of grass cutting meets the required standard for highway safety needs. This season has caused some challenges due to the heavier than normal rainfall, which did necessitate the need for local sight line strimming on occasions. To meet this challenge two weekly meetings were set up between Surrey Highways, Carillion and the grass sub contractor to resolve issues as and when they occurred.

## **Drainage and Flooding in North Holmwood**

Would the Chairman describe what action has been taken to resolve the drainage and flooding problem that has been reported repeated over a number of years at the A24 Roundabout in North Holmwood and when a permanent solution to this dangerous situation is planned to be implemented?

### **Response from the Local Highways Manager**

North Holmwood Roundabout does not have a dangerous situation whether dry or wet. The roundabout does suffer from an ongoing pipe capacity and blocking issue which is cleared on a regular basis.

## **Overhanging Vegetation in Deepdene**

There is a general recognition following a range of complaints over a long period of time that the vegetation overhanging the verges and footways between the Deepdene roundabout and the North Holmwood roundabout on the A24 is unsightly and in many places causing obstructions. Would the Chairman indicate when action is to be taken to deal with this problem?

### **Response from the Local Highways Manager**

The degree of vegetation overgrowing the verges and footways between North Holmwood and Deepdene Roundabout is largely an issue of prioritisation with the available funds for such work. If Cllr Cooksey would promote funds, from another source, specifically for this stretch of road then additional maintenance work could be done.

## **Lighting on the A24**

Would the Chairman indicate whether serious consideration was given to bringing forward the phase 2 lighting scheme on the A24 between the Deepdene roundabout and the North Holmwood roundabout when additional capital funding was made available earlier this year and give clear and specific reasons why this scheme was not brought forward when others were?

### **Response from Chairman and Local Highways Manager**

At present these works are programmed for financial year 2010/2011. Cllr Cooksey as a member of this Local Committee can ask that these works be brought forward and I am sure as the local member he will take the opportunity to do so accordingly. Members should all be aware that there is a LTP seminar set up for early 2009 to look at needs and priorities.

### **South Street Bus Stand**

On 17 September 2008 a meeting was held between residents and officers to discuss the petition regarding the new South Street bus stand in Dorking presented to this committee much earlier in the year. Residents were promised that a number of possible suggestions to resolve the issues raised at the meeting would be considered and a report detailing what changes might be possible would be made available to residents and this committee. Would the Chairman inform the committee, and through the committee, the local residents, why this report has not been forthcoming?

### **Response from Surrey County Council's Passenger Transport Team**

Subsequent to the meeting on Wednesday 17 September in Dorking the following progress has been made on the bus stand in South Street.

The Passenger Transport Group posted information in the bus stop at Townfield Court inviting passengers to comment on the proposal to swap the 465 bus stand with the 516 stand at the other end of South Street (opposite Waitrose).

Transport for London (TfL) have been asked about using this bus stand, which is currently allocated to service 516 (opposite Waitrose) instead of Mays Garage. TfL have indicated that they see no specific operational problems in moving the stand.

However, although this proposal would solve the issue for those residents living opposite the Mays Garage stand in South Street it does create other problems for existing passenger, such as:

1. Passengers who currently live down or off Horsham Road or westwards beyond Townfield Court and alight at Mays Garage would have a considerably longer walk from opposite Waitrose to the other end of South Street. We have received written / telephone representation from 5 passengers who use service 465 who have requested that the stand remains in its current position and have stated that to move it would cause them hardship.
2. Priory school children using service 465 would have to alight at the southern end of South Street and walk to up to the Priory. When we checked this service 25 school children alighted from the 465 at Mays Garage.
3. Passengers that currently use service 516 from Waitrose would be inconvenienced, as they would have to walk to the next nearest stop, which is in West Street.
4. It is not felt appropriate for the 465 to operate a loop around the one-way system so that passengers can alight at Mays Garage before the bus proceeds to Waitrose to lay over. This would create further traffic congestion in the one-way

system with no additional passenger benefit and the recovery time for the service would be lost.

The existing 24/7 parking restriction applied to this clearway would change to 7am – 7pm if service 516 used Mays Garage. Guidelines set by Department for Transport recommends that only 24/7 or 7am – 7pm parking restrictions are introduced as standard. To deviate from this would cause confusion with enforcement officers and road users, this standard is set across the County.

The Passenger Transport Group have been in contact with Arriva and understand that no further incidents have been reported since the meeting on 17 September.

In conclusion to move the 465 bus stand to opposite Waitrose will cause hardship and concern to vulnerable people living down or off Horsham Road, and those who need to travel to the Priory School. These are some of the people who tell us they very much value the 465 and all the recent improvements. To move the stand will solve one problem but disadvantage and create an accessibility issue for existing users. Despite the potential advantages for residents living opposite the Mays Garage stand, there is strong evidence which suggests that the arrangements for the 465 would best be left as they are now. Accordingly no further action is proposed.

### **Questions from Hazel Watson , County Councillor for Dorking Hills**

#### **Gritting and the A25**

What objective independent evidence (other than confirmation from the contractor) does the County Council have that the stretch of the A25 from the top of Coast Hill at Wotton to Abinger Hammer is gritted? If this stretch of road is gritted, given that it is much icier than the rest of the A25, can this stretch of the A25 be gritted to a greater extent, i.e with a thicker layer than the rest of the A25?

### **Response from the Local Highways Manager**

The Surrey Highway Partnership does operate on a basis of trust and auditing of works. The winter maintenance operation is subjected to audits and measurement of key performance indicators as is the rest of the contract. The gritting of roads is determined by need and I am not aware that the section of road raised by Cllr Watson has any additional need. I assume Cllr Watson is referring to the very unfortunate death on the A25 at Abinger Hammer, the Highways Group Manager East did attend the inquest on behalf of the County Council and reported that no blame, responsibility or criticism was made of the Highway Service. There is a written statement from the operator on the day of the accident confirming that the road was gritted and treated as required.

#### **Drain Ditch, A25**

What action has the County Council taken to ensure that the drain and the ditch opposite the entrance to the Abinger Hall Estate on the A25 at Abinger Hammer are clear to reduce the incidence of flooding on the A25 at this location?

### **Response from the Local Highways Manager**

The ditch and drain opposite Abinger Hall on the A25 are part of the routine inspection process that takes place.

### **Rothes Road surface redressing**

The Local Committee papers for the last meeting held in September stated that Rothes Road in Dorking would receive a surface dressing in the third quarter of the current financial year, (i.e before the end of the 2008 calendar year) but the surface dressing has not taken place. What is the reason for the delay in applying the surface dressing of Rothes Road and when will it take place?

### **Response from the Local Highways Manager**

Rothes Road was to receive a mastic asphalt treatment which did not happen for the same reason as Cllr Watson question 7 regarding other roads due to be treated in this two year rolling programme.

### **Flooding on the A24**

What action is the County Council taking to resolve the problem of flooding on the A25 on the eastbound carriageway just east of the Deepdene roundabout in Dorking?

### **Response from the Local Highways Manager**

The flooding issue east of the Deepdene Roundabout will be investigated as funds become available, I cannot give a firm date at present.

### **Broomfield Junction on A25**

When will the damaged and ineffective salt bins in Westcott in Broomfield Park at the junction with the A25 and in St John's Road at the junction with Furlong Road be replaced following my initial request in the Summer?

### **Response from the Local Highways Manager**

Following on from Cllr Watson request for new salt bins in the summer, they have been ordered and when a firm date is known for their delivery Cllr Watson will be informed.

### **Deepdene Roundabout**

Just over a year ago the A24 between the Deepdene roundabout and the Denbies roundabout was resurfaced but the resurfacing failed at the time, leaving a shiny surface in several places. When will this stretch of the A24 be resurfaced to remedy the defects and why has this not already taken place?

### **Response from the Local Highways Manager**

The A24 from Deepdene Roundabout to Denbies Roundabout was surfaced dressed in the 2006/07 financial year and suffered from binder failure in the view of the Highway Service. The service has been negotiating through Carillion our highway partner to the sub contractor to agree the following:

1. Rationale for the failure;
2. Responsibility for failure;
3. Remedial action required;
4. Who pays for the rectification.

The service is close to getting an agreement in place which will mean that the above stretch of the A24 will be redressed in the late spring of 2009 at no cost to the County Council.

### **Surface Treatment**

On 8 April 2008 the Executive agreed a list of roads to be included for surface treatment for the two years of 2008-10. The roads included the A25 Westcott Road in Dorking between Vincent Lane and Milton Lodge, the A25 Guildford Road at Wotton from Sheepphouse Lane to Hollow Lane, Tanhurst Lane in Leith Hill and Adlers Lane in Westhumble. Will these roads receive the surface treatment in the current financial year or the 2009-10 financial year as agreed by the Executive in April?

### **Response from the Local Highways Manager**

The Executive of the County Council agreed in April a two year programme of works for 2008/09 and 2009/10. The roads that Cllr Watson has listed above were going to receive a mastic asphalt treatment this current financial year, but due to weather and timing conditions the sub contractor ran out of time to apply the treatment safely this season, accordingly the treatment will happen next financial year in the late spring.

### **Questions from Valerie Homewood, District Councillor for Beare Green**

#### **Grass Cutting**

Last summer neither the timing nor the frequency of the grass cuts along the A24 south of Dorking were sufficient to keep the road safe.

At the right hand turn into Beare Green village, for example, councilors and residents bombarded SCC officers for a full month with letters and illustrative photographs protesting about the invisibility of oncoming traffic from the south due to the height of the grass. Indeed, one motorcyclist nearly went under a sports car for this reason.

What measures will officers take to ensure that in 2009 the timing and frequency of grass cuts is governed by the length of the grass and by road safety, in order to prevent a recurrence of the dangerous conditions suffered by road users and residents during the summer of 2008?

### **Response from the Local Highways Manager**

I note Cllr Holmwoods comments and would note that her remarks regarding a possible accident are conjecture. The A24 received the agreed number of grass cuts that were available with the level of funding received. When there have been sight line issues, these were addressed. The grass cutting frequencies for 2009 will not be changed and normal exceptional sight line work will be done if there are concerns. I am not aware that there were 'dangerous conditions' as Cllr Holmwood implies.

## **Fatalities on A24**

In the last two months there have been two fatalities on the A24 between South Holmwood and Beare Green. Although not wishing to prejudge the reasons for these particular accidents, it is widely believed that speed plays a significant part in the ongoing and historic high rate of serious accidents on this stretch of road.

THIS QUESTION IS INCOMPLETE

### **Response from the Local Highways Manager**

Cllr Holmwood is suggesting that the two fatalities on the A24 this year were due to speed, they were not. My understanding at present is that the car driver who died had a heart attack whilst driving, and the cyclist who died was heading south late at night and was driven into. At present we do not have more firm information, however speed has not been an issue. The rationale for speed cameras is based upon accident statistics related to speed, the accident history on the A24 south of Dorking has improved substantially and cannot be compared to the issues north of Dorking, which drove the need for the speed camera at Mickleham.