

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY) ITEM 9 ANNEXE B

Name of Project, Cost of Proposal, and Sponsor	What is the proposal and what needs does it address?	Details of any previous Local Committee Funding in past two years.	What consultation has been undertaken?
Legal challenge to planning application at forthcoming Public Inquiry  £900 revenue  Cllr Hazel Watson	Residents' objections to planning application will be presented by legal team  It will enable the Inspector to hear the views of the many residents opposing this scheme. Westcott Meadow Action Group (WMAG) represents over 750 residents  The application relates to a meadow near Springfield Road, Westcott – RH4 3NY	None	All residents in Westcott

**Officer advice pertaining to this proposal**

Officer advice from Surrey County Council's finance, planning and legal departments was sought and received in relation to this application. The funding from member allocations would be used to contribute to the legal costs incurred by Westcott Meadow Action Group (WMAG) in fighting a planning application at the inquiry stage in relation to a meadow near Springfield Road, Westcott.

**Financial considerations**

The application has been assessed against the Financial Framework for Local Committees. The advice from finance officers is that the request does meet demonstrable local needs and they are not convinced, from the information provided, that it delivers value for money or is consistent with the Council's policies. The County Council does not have a policy to oppose or support planning applications, as each one is taken on a case-by-case basis.

**Planning considerations**

The advice of planning officers is that it is currently unclear what position the Westcott Meadow Action Group (WMAG) might take in pursuing its continued opposition to this planning application. It is not therefore possible to determine how this position might relate to that of the County Council that objected to the original planning application for Springfield Road on highway safety grounds. On this

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basis, planning officers are uncomfortable with County Council funds being used to contribute to the Action Group for the purpose of funding costs of a legal team.

There may also be wider concerns linked to planning. It is believed that the case for the County Council's current objection could be weakened if it could be demonstrated that the County Council was financially supporting an Action Group. This is due to the need for the County Council to remain impartial and independent in reaching its conclusions.

### **Legal considerations**

The advice of legal officers is that, as an appeal against non-determination will cover all aspects of the application, not just highways, County Council monies potentially used by the Westcott Meadow Action Group (WMAG) to fund the costs of instructing counsel could be used for non-County matters, which could not justify the use of County funding.

The committee is requested to consider the application for funding in light of the advice of officers received, as set out above.