



**LOCAL COMMITTEE  
(REIGATE AND BANSTEAD)**

**PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

**21 SEPTEMBER 2009**

**A Public Question has been received from Mr Neil McAlister on the subject of the Horley Underpass:**

“Why did the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) present one report about the Horley underpass at the last Local Committee meeting, on 20 July 2009, that only made vague and skewed references to costs of mounting CCTV covering the Horley underpass, but failed to present another more detailed report, written by a Siemens engineer who is a technical manager and who had actually visited the underpass? I now understand his report, which runs to several pages, had the kind of essential information on which a proper decision by the Local Committee could have been based about mounting CCTV covering the Horley underpass. I have reason to believe that the CDRP knew about the engineer’s report before the meeting on 20 July.

I had learned in August of this year, from reading an official document, that the Siemens engineer whom I had mentioned in my speech to the Local Committee on 20 July had actually gone to the trouble of preparing a quotation for work required for a CCTV scheme in connection with the Horley underpass and submitted that information to the Community Safety Manager, who I understand is very closely associated with the CDRP. From asking questions I then discovered that he had also written a report on the topic, dated 24 June. I also understood from the Town Clerk that the report had gone to the CDRP.

The public are owed a full explanation as to why the engineer’s report was not submitted to the Local Committee.”

**Response:**

As Mr McAlister states, the Local Committee (Reigate and Banstead) received a report written on behalf of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) in response to his petition for the installation of CCTV at Horley Underpass. The Local Committee agreed a number of recommendations, and the relevant minutes extract is attached as **Annex A** to this response. These recommendations still stand.

***Roles of the Local Committee and CDRP***

It is firstly necessary to clarify the fact that the Local Committee does not have any decision-making powers with regards to the installation of CCTV. The CDRP focuses on key areas of crime and disorder within the Borough and is one of the groups that can determine the installation and expansion of CCTV. Improvements to the underpass, including the potential for CCTV are being considered as part of the Horley Regeneration Project, which has a broader remit than the CDRP.

It should also be noted that the underpass is in the ownership of Network Rail.

***The report of the Siemens Engineer***

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council's Community Safety Manager, on behalf of the CDRP, commissioned a report from Siemens in order to establish the potential feasibility and associated costs with a CCTV scheme for the Horley Underpass. This report was dated 24 June 2009, and its purpose of this report was to enable the CDRP to make an informed decision. Siemens did not give permission for its content to be released into the public domain, and although it was the subject of a Freedom of Information request by Mr McAlister to Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, the information was deemed to be exempt on the grounds of commercial interests and security, and the request was denied. Mr McAlister was informed in a letter dated 17 September 2009.

The report would also have been exempt under the County Council's Access to Information rules. Article 3.02(k) of the County Council's Constitution states: "the public may be excluded from meetings whenever it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that exempt information would be disclosed". If the report of the Siemens engineer had been submitted to the Local Committee, it would be exempt under Categories 3 and 7. Category 3 concerns information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information); Category 7 concerns information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime. Exempt reports are circulated only to Members of the Committee and are not available to the public either electronically or as paper copies. During discussion of exempt items, the Committee would enter private session and the press and public would be excluded.

***Monitoring of the underpass by Surrey Police***

One of the recommendations agreed by the Local Committee in July was to monitor incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour at the location over an allotted period of time. In the subsequent period, the Surrey Police Safer Neighbourhoods Team has monitored the area as part of their regular patrols. They have confirmed that there have been no reported crimes or neighbourhood issues during this period. It should also be noted that there is no evidence of crime or anti-social behaviour being

deflected from the town centre. In addition, no crimes or incidents have been reported to British Transport Police.

***Current position and next steps***

A number of multi-agency meetings have taken place, involving Surrey Police, Reigate and Banstead Borough Council (Community Safety Manager; Horley Regeneration Manager), Network Rail and Surrey County Council (Highways; Local Partnerships Team).

Network Rail has already implemented drainage improvements to the underpass, and has agreed to carry out a structural survey of the underpass, which is necessary before any improvement works can be implemented. Improvements will be undertaken as part of the Horley Regeneration Project, and the Horley Regeneration Manager has agreed to write to Mr McAlister detailing these plans.

**Extract from Minutes of 20 July 2009 meeting of the Local Committee  
(Reigate & Banstead)**

16/09 **PETITIONS [Item 5]**

- (b) A petition was received from Mr Neil McAlister signed by 364 users of the Horley railway underpass, requesting the installation of CCTV.

The Committee **AGREED** that in partnership with Network Rail, a rolling programme of works is developed to improve the environment of the subway through appropriate maintenance and management, to include:

- (i) Improvements to the overall condition by painting and upgrading the lighting levels, especially within the tunnel area. The suggestion of installing CCTV cameras and mirrors placed on future projected works if then deemed necessary using appropriate, current intelligence.
- (ii) Investigation of methods to curtail cycle use which does not impinge on disability groups i.e. are there any particular railway by-laws that can be applied in relation to property.
- (iii) Monitor incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour at the location over a specified period of time in order to assess the level of risk.

**NOTES:**

- (i) Surrey County Council's constitution, (Standing Order 46) requires that questions be sent in writing to the Local Committee and Partnership Officer by 12 noon, four working days before the meeting.
- (ii) At the discretion of the Chairman, a Member who has given notice of a question may ask one supplementary question relevant to the subject of the original.