



OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE (REIGATE AND BANSTEAD)

LOCAL COMMITTEE PROTOCOL FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

20 JUNE 2011

KEY ISSUE

Local Committees are able to adopt local protocols for public engagement. These must be reviewed on a regular basis. In Reigate and Banstead the Local Committee have agreed to review the protocols on an annual basis.

SUMMARY

The Local Committee (Reigate and Banstead)'s Local Protocol for Public Engagement was last reviewed on 20 June 2010.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS

The Local Committee (Reigate and Banstead) is asked to agree that:

- (i) The Local Protocol for Public Engagement is working well and should continue without any amendments at this time.

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The procedures for the Local Committee are governed by the County Council's constitution. The constitution gives Local Committees discretion to agree certain local variations.
- 1.2 The Local Committee can choose to adopt local protocols that change the:
 - Processes governing public engagement and service performance monitoring within formal Committee meetings;
 - Scheme of Delegation, allowing Local Committees to delegate power to an officer (previously the Area Director) for approving small amounts of local committee funding.
- 1.3 The Local Committee (Reigate and Banstead) agreed a local protocol governing public engagement and service monitoring on, making amendments to this protocol in March 2006 and December 2009 (addition of public speaking on rights of way applications). It was last agreed on 20 June 2010. This protocol is attached as **Annex A**.
- 1.4 The Local Partnerships Team became the Community Partnerships Team on 9 May 2011. Owing to this structural change and proposals to amend the Scheme of Delegation, the Local Financial Protocol will be brought for agreement at the next meeting of the Local Committee on 19 September 2011.
- 1.5 The Local Committees are required to regularly review any local protocols. This report outlines the options available to the committee in reviewing the protocol for public engagement.

2 LOCAL PROTOCOL – PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND SERVICE MONITORING

- 2.1 Local Committees have discretion to operate more flexibly regarding public engagement and service monitoring. Local Committees must comply with the County Councils standing orders (parts 2 and 3) *except where they draw up local protocols allowing them discretion to make minor variations to working practices*.
- 2.2 Local Protocols must be developed in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and formally approved by the Local Committee.
- 2.3 The current Local Protocol for the Local Committee (Reigate and Banstead) is attached as **Annex A**. This protocol has reduced the notification required to present a petition to seven days, and the number of signatures required to thirty. It also outlines the Local Committee's power to carry out local service monitoring.

3 OPTIONS

3.1 The Local Committee can:

- Approve the protocol for public engagement without any changes;
- Approve the protocol for public engagement with the recommended amendments (none);
- Approve the protocol for public engagement with additional amendments, subject to the rules within the constitution;
- Revoke the local protocol, reverting to the public engagement process set out in the constitution.

4 CONSULTATIONS

4.1 Public feedback is captured through the Local Committee feedback forms. This information has been used in consultation with local County Councillors.

5 FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None relating to this protocol.

6 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The protocol for public engagement ensures that the process is fair, and everyone has the same opportunity to engage with the local committee.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no crime and disorder implications to consider as part of this report.

8 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 The local protocol for public engagement provides the Local Committee with greater flexibility in the way it works. The public engagement protocol has made it easier for local residents to ask questions and present petitions.

The Local Committee (Reigate and Banstead) is asked to agree that:

- (i) The Local Protocol (public engagement) is working well and should continue without any amendments at this time.

9 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Feedback on the public engagement process from residents is generally positive. Negative feedback usually refers to the meeting venue or policy matters. As such, changes to the local protocol would seem unnecessary.

10 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 10.1 The Local Committee will be asked to consider the protocols again in 12 months' time.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:	Surrey County Council Constitution Reports to Local Committee: 20 March 2006 – Local Protocol 20 November 2006 – Local Committee Funding 3 December 2007 – Local Committee Protocols 7 December 2009 – Amendment to Local Committee Protocol (Rights of Way) Report to Council: 9 February 2010 – Amendments to Scheme of Delegation

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S LOCAL COMMITTEE
(REIGATE AND BANSTEAD)**

LOCAL PROTOCOL (Public Engagement and Service Monitoring)

Petitions

- 64 The minimum number of signatures required in petitions presented to the Committee be thirty. In exceptional circumstances, the Chairman may use their discretion to accept petitions with fewer signatures. Such circumstances would be those where the issue related to a scheme where fewer than 30 households would be affected.
- 64.2 Notice must be given in writing or by e mail to the Area Director at least seven days before the meeting.

Local Service Monitoring

The Local Committee will work to monitor and improve local service performance and partnership working in Reigate and Banstead by:

- Inviting Borough Council members of the Committee to join discussions (but not hold voting rights) on a range of issues in addition to transportation and highway matters;
- The Chairman of the Local Committee inviting partners, such as the Leader of the Borough Council, to join discussions (but not hold voting rights) at Local Committee meetings;
- Varying Committee meeting venues, including Surrey County Council offices, Reigate Town Hall and community venues;
- Focusing on monitoring and improving partnership work in certain areas. Such areas could include:
 - Independent adult living, elderly or vulnerable people
 - Environment/street scene issues
 - Young People and children
 - Waste
 - Community Safety
 - Specific geographical areas
 - Any other relevant area.
- County Councillors joining the local Reigate and Banstead Borough Council Local Community Action Plan (LCAP) Steering groups.

The Local Committee have made no amendments to the following, set out in the County Councils constitution:

Petitions

64.1 A spokesman for the petitioners may address the Committee on the petition for no more than 3 minutes, but thereafter may not speak further. The petition may be referred without discussion to the next appropriate meeting of the Committee at the discretion of the Chairman.

64.3 No more than three petitions may be presented at any one meeting of the Executive or a committee.

64.4 The Chief Executive may amalgamate within the first received petition other petitions of like effect on the same subject.

64.5 The presentation of a petition on the same or similar topic as one presented in the last six months will not be allowed.

Public Question Time

65 At the start of any ordinary meeting of the Executive or any Committee, any member of the public who is an elector of the Surrey County Council area may ask one question relating to a matter within the Executive's or Committee's terms of reference. Questions will not be allowed on matters which are "confidential" or "exempt" under the Local Government Access to Information Act 1985 or on planning applications. Questions should relate to general policy and not to detail.

65.1 Notice must be given in writing or by email to the Chief Executive at least 7 days before the meeting.

65.2 The Chief Executive may, having consulted the questioner, reword any question received to bring it into proper form and to secure reasonable brevity. Copies will be circulated to Members of the Executive or the Committee as appropriate.

65.3 Questions will be taken in the order in which they are received by the Chief Executive and directed to the appropriate Executive Member or committee chairman. Questions will be asked and answered without discussion. Any Member may decline to answer a question, provide a written reply or nominate another Member to answer it on his/her behalf.

65.4 The number of questions which may be asked at any one meeting may not exceed six and the chairman may exercise his/her discretion to regard a single question which has been divided into a number of sub-questions as several different questions within the allowable total number which may be asked at the meeting. The chairman may also disallow questions which are repetitious.

65.5 Questions which are received after the first six to be received will be held over to the following meeting, or dealt with in writing at the chairman's discretion.

Public Speaking on Public Rights of Way Applications
(Cf County Council Standing Orders 67.1-10)

1. Members of the public and their representatives may address the Local Committee on applications relating to public rights of way being considered by the Committee.
2. Members of organisations or elected representatives of parish, borough or district councils who have been formally consulted on the application are not eligible to speak.
3. Speakers must first register their wish to speak by telephone or in writing/e-mail to the Local Committee and Partnership Officer by 12 noon one working day before a meeting stating on which item(s) they wish to speak.
4. Speakers can register their wish to speak from the date of publication of the Local Committee agenda.
5. Only those people who have previously made written representations in response to an application will be entitled to speak. Written representations must have been made at least 14 days in advance of the committee meeting to the Rights of Way Team.
6. Speakers must declare any financial or personal interest they may have in the application.
7. Registration of speakers will be on a first come first served basis and speakers will be taken in the order in which they are registered, with the first five registered being entitled to speak. Where more than one person has registered an interest to speak, the subsequent speakers will be entitled to speak first if the first named speaker is not in attendance five minutes before the start of the meeting. Representations can be combined if necessary. A reserve list will also be maintained if necessary.
8. The time allowed for public speaking will be limited to 15 minutes for objectors and 15 minutes for supporters per item, and to 3 minutes per speaker.
9. Only if a member of the public or their representative speaks objecting will the applicant/agent be allowed to speak and then only to respond to the points raised by the objectors, and will be limited to 3 minutes for each objector who has spoken.
10. No additional information may be circulated by speakers at the meeting and they will have no right to speak or question Members or officers once they have made their submission.

11. Speeches will precede the Committee's formal discussion on each application requiring the Committee's attention.
12. The right to speak will only be exercised at the first meeting at which the application is considered and will not normally be the subject of further presentations at any subsequent meeting unless significant changes have taken place after a deferral by the Committee, or there has been a gap of six months or more between the meetings
13. If an item is deferred, either before the meeting (but members of the public have registered to speak), or at the meeting before public speaking and any debate has taken place, then the right to speak will still exist when the application is reported to the Committee. The list of speakers will be carried forward to the meeting the application is reported back to. Those on the list will be contacted in writing and asked to confirm whether or not they still wish to speak.