

Minutes remain draft until agreed at the following committee meeting

MINUTES: of the meeting of the Runnymede Local Committee held at 10.00 on Friday 23 April 2004 at the Runnymede Centre, Chertsey

Surrey County Council Members

*Mrs Elise S Whiteley - Chairman
*Mrs Moira James – Vice Chairman
*Mr R A N Lowther
*Mr Terry Dicks
*Miss Susan Bruce

*= present

PART ONE - IN PUBLIC

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

14/04 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

There were no apologies for absence

15/04 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 12 MARCH [Item 2]

Cllr Moira James asked that an amendment be made to the record of open public question number 5 asked by Cllr Edwards- Runnymede Borough Councillor as to whether the Local Committee kept an eye on the position of the Central Railway proposals.

The correct response should have read:

Cllr James informed Mr Edwards of the outcome of a meeting she and other Members had with Helyn Clack, Executive Member for Transportation, prior to Mrs Clacks meeting with Mr McNulty, where it seemed an answer would not be forthcoming in a short timescale, potentially due to the regional referenda coming up in Northern England.

The minutes will be amended accordingly, and agreed as a true record and signed

16/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interest

17/04 PETITIONS [Item 4]

Mr William Ward, Local Transportation Director informed the Local Committee that a petition signed by 15 people had been received regarding Riversdale Close and Gogmore Lane. Mr Ward informed the committee that the lead petitioner had been sent a reply, and that a report would come to the next Committee in detail.

18/04 PUBLIC QUESTIONS [Item 5]

An informal public question time had taken place prior to the formal meeting. The minutes of this session are at **Annex 1**

A formal public question was taken from Cllr Carole Jones, Deputy Mayor for Runnymede Borough Council.

The question and its response are attached as **Annex 2**.

19/04 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS** [Item 6]

Cllrs Susan Bruce Elise Whiteley and Moira James had submitted member's questions. The questions and responses are attached in **Annexe 3** to these minutes.

Cllr Bruce read her question regarding road safety at the junction of Crown Street and Hummer Road, Egham

Mr David Mitchell, Principle Engineer, read a highlight of the response from Runnymede Local Transportation Service.

Cllr Whiteley read her question regarding traffic problems in Station Approach, Virginia Water. Mr Mitchell again highlighted the response, and added that residents had also mentioned that a street name had been an obstruction, which would now be re-sited.

Mrs Whiteley asked as a supplementary question that consideration be given to making the road one – way between Barclays Bank and the no entry sign by the doctor's surgery at its junction with Christchurch Road.

Mr Mitchell responded that this would be considered in consultation with Mrs Whiteley.

Cllr Moira James read her question regarding the Liverpool – Lille rail proposal by Central Railway.

Mrs Whiteley read the response given by Mr Steven Styles, Senior Transport Manager, Sustainable Development, Surrey County Council.

As a supplementary question, Mrs James asked that it is ensured that the Local Committee be kept updated on any further information on this issue.

Cllr Moira James read her question requesting an update on the situation and progress regarding the road works at the Central Veterinary Laboratories site on Woodham Lane, New Haw.

Mr William Ward, Local Transportation Director read his response, and Mr Gerald Cole Senior Principle Engineer added that works had been ongoing for so long due to a fundamental design flaw, and that a meeting was arranged for 27th April after which there would be a much better idea of the progress at this site.

Mr Ward assured the Committee that the works had been designed 6 or 7 years ago, had been inherited by Surrey County Council, and were in no way to do with the current Mammoth contract.

As a supplementary question, Mrs James asked that update post the meeting be also sent to Runnymede Borough Councillor Mr John Dean and that local residents be kept informed.

20/04 **MEMBERS ALLOCATIONS** [Item 7]

Carolyn Rowe Surrey County Council Local Director introduced the report outlining items awaiting Committee decision for outstanding 03/04 funding.

RESOLVED

The Committee

- (i) Approved the proposed expenditure from the Members' allocations budget
- (ii) Noted the new proposals and guidelines for Members' allocation in the financial year 2004/05

21/04 ANNUAL HIGHWAY MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR LOCAL TRANSPORT SERVICE FOR RUNNYMEDE 2004/2005 [Item 8]

Mr Gerald Cole, Senior Principle Engineer, introduced Mr Steven Lee, Assistant Head of Transportation, Surrey County Council and members of Surrey County Council's partner constructor, Ringway, to the Local Committee.

Mr Cole informed the Committee that since the preparation of the report, the 2004/2005 revenue budgets for highway maintenance in Runnymede, mentioned in paragraph 5, had been approved.

Mr Cole referred to the programme in annex 1 containing the list of proposed schemes planned for this financial year (in bold type) and a reserve list (non bold). Mr Cole said that subsequently the major carriageway maintenance planned for the A318 Byfleet Road, New Haw had been removed.

Members sought clarity on prudential Funding referred to in Paragraph 5.1.

Mr William Ward, Local Transportation Director, said that this method of funding capital works will enable the Transport Service to carry out more schemes on the ground. It was a 5-year programme that would be reviewed annually.

Mr Ward replied to Member concerns regarding the Highway Management plan:

How does Ringway work on a practical basis?

Weekly meetings between Mr Ward, the Ringway agent and the contractor doing the work were introduced on 1st April to look at the months work in detail, and the contract as a whole was now settling down.

Regarding the expense of work in Runnymede, the costs had increased over the previous year, but the budgets had come in on target. Mr Ward stated his team would be looking carefully as to how much work was achieved with the budget when the accounts were closed in mid May.

The objectives of the contract remained the same as previous to its existence, keep roads safe and respond to emergencies quickly. He reported that Ringway responded to emergencies more quickly, and that the Local Transportation Service needed to ensure the follow up to replace emergency measures with something more permanent happened quickly.

Addressing Member concern about loss of control of work to the contractor Mr Ward replied that one of the transportation engineers was situated within Ringway's team, and although there are always issues implicit in a longer communication chain, Mr Ward assured the Committee everyone was working toward improving this.

Mr Ward reported the main benefit of the new contract to be economy of scale, where work is looked at across a number of Boroughs, and that in Runnymede all parties were working as one team.

Mr Steven Lee, Assistant Head of Transportation, Surrey County Council stated that although the cost had risen under this new contract, if last years arrangements had continued, it would also have been more expensive.

The Health & Safety legislation is greater and more now has to be done to meet it.

Mr Lee stated that costs associated with workers on the ground are transparent, and they were not being over paid. When the contract left evaluation of costs last year, it was priced competitively. Mr Lee assured the Committee that the LTS remained in control.

The Committee asked that a close watch be kept on monitoring the clearing of drains and ditches in view of the flooding previously experienced.

Mr Ward replied that there was an increase in awareness of checking gulleys and ensuring they were working correctly, and that feedback was being sought on their condition from contractors.

Mr Brian Johnson of Ringway informed the Committee that Ringway had introduced GPS (Global Positioning System) so they were able to monitor what their gully cleansing personnel were doing.

A second innovation involved recycling material from roadworks and reusing it where needed.

Members were concerned about the volume of additional signs being put up in prominent sites advertising fairs and events, which caused potential distraction to motorists. Member asked that this be clamped down on.

Mr Ward replied that there had been a blitz on these signs in the last day, but that it was a continual battle. People responsible are warned about possible prosecution, but in the majority of cases, it was due to a certain level of ignorance.

The Committee raise the issue of the increase in price of crossovers to private individuals and Mr Ward replied it was necessary to do a comparison of how many were done at what price last year and compare it to this year.

The Committee asked that contractors ensured that jobs were completed quickly in one spot rather than starting many jobs and leaving them partially completed over a period of time.

Mel Wallace of Ringway replied that the priority was to get in and out as quickly as possible, but there had been an influx of work in March causing them to leave works to attend to others. Hopefully this had settled down, and would be managed through the weekly communication process.

The Committee asked how they would know that performance was improving, and Mr Steven Lee replied that this year there would be a new system of performance indicators in place that influenced the extensions of work where appropriate and included financial penalties where it wasn't.

When asked if contractor timescales were challenged, Mr Lee said they were, and that contractors were involved at an early stage in discussions, and a central post of a traffic manager's role was being created to manage time the contractor spent on site, alongside the time utility services take digging up the roads.

Mr Lee confirmed there would be a full 12 month review of the contract and reports were being taken to Select Committee regularly. Reports would be brought before the Local Committee through the Local Transportation Service, and reports in their newsletter.

Questions were asked regarding the 04/05 provisional programme of works for Runnymede.

Why was Byfleet Rd maintenance scheme removed from the scheme, when it was a piece of work to be done this year?

Mr Ward replied that this was a plan of works and would vary through time, but this had been removed due to finances required elsewhere in the County such as implementation of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement. Mr Cole reported that Byfleet Road would remain on the programme for 2005/2006.

Regarding the reserve works for verge protection along Woodham Lane, Members inquired whether it would go ahead and was it doing the job it was meant to do as cars are parking in the road instead, causing a road safety issue.

Mr Cole reported that this would only affect the final section of the proposed area of work and that it was a balance of safety issues and being visually acceptable. Mr Ward offered to do a mini consultation in the area.

Members asked what the likelihood of reserve schemes being implemented was? Mr Ward replied the team would endeavour to get as much of the plan completed as possible.

Members were concerned by the implication on future costs and staff recruitment and retention within the Transportation Service due to works ongoing at the development of Terminal 5, to which Mr Ward responded that the transportation department was staffed with very competent engineers, but that in Runnymede 2 key players would be leaving in the next month. One of the engineers was leaving due to a lack of affordable housing in the area.

Members inquired as to whether monitoring would include looking to see whether roots of weeds were growing in the drains. Mr Ward responded that roots in drains could only be checked if a camera was put down the drain, which was costly, but could be done where it was considered there was need.

Referring to the A30, Members asked how often shrub clearing was due to occur in the programme. Mr Cole responded that a rough cut was planned for 3 times a year, including the A30, but that Japanese knotweed was very difficult to control.

In response to the question of collaboration between service providers to ensure work is coordinated, Mr Ward said this was a continual challenge.

Members asked what notice was given to residents re moving their cars to allow works to take place, and Mr Ward replied that the Transportation Service was informed of statutory work on a daily basis, and it was hoped all residents received a letter in advance of planned works.

Mr Dicks hoped the review of the contract would be an open one and requested a quarterly report on costs associated with it.

In response to the Members question about reviewing why people were leaving the transportation service in Runnymede, Mr Ward replied that exit interviews were carried out as a matter of course.

Mr Lee summed up by assuring Members of the commitment to continual improvement and to his making the review an open and honest assessment.

RESOLVED

The Committee

- (i) Agreed the Annual highway management plan for local transport service for Runnymede 2004/2005

22/04 EGHAM TO VIRGINIA WATER CYCLEWAY RESULTS OF FEASIBILITY STUDY
[Item 9]

Mr Mitchell introduced the report and outlined the various options that led to the decision to take the cycle route off the roadway.

The Committee asked whether the £98 000 cost of the route compared realistically with other cycle ways.

Mr Ward replied that it was a long route, and that in future a price per meter would be brought to the Committee as a comparison.

RESOLVED

The Local Committee

- (i) AGREED – that the New Wickham Lane and Stroude Road cycleway route, as detailed in the attached report, be progressed to detail design.
- (ii) AGREED-that the consultation on the detailed design to be progressed with the Local County Councillor and other interested parties.
- (iii) AGREED - that the footway on New Wickham Lane and Stroude Road, as detailed in the attached report, be used as a segregated shared cycleway.

23/04 UPDATE OF THE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMME [Item 10]

Will Ward, Local Transportation Director, introduced this regular report demonstrating progress in delivering the transportation programme for this financial year and progress of works planned and underway by the Local Transportation team.

Under section 1, Mr Mitchell appraised the Committee of the plans for a school bus lay- by at the Magna Carta school, saying that the scheme required planning permission for which the school would apply to the Runnymede Borough Council. There was also an additional £10 000 costs required due to the need to move utilities. The costs would be split with £30 000 coming from the SCC Local Transportation Plan, £30 000 from Runnymede Borough Council and remaining balance of up to £15 000 being met by the school.

Under section 2, Mr Mitchell informed the Local Committee of progress against the target for implementation of decriminalised parking. He stated that it was an 18month programme which was started in April 2003, a challenging programme but was on target.

Under section 3, Mr Ward brought to Committee the report on progress in delivering the transportation programme for this financial year.

Members asked why work had stopped on the pelican crossing on the Egham bypass. Mr Mitchell replied that the contractor, Ringway, had experienced problems with the supply of equipment, but that work would be completed once all the equipment was in place.

Members complimented Christopher Deakins, Senior Transportation Engineer for all his work in bringing about an effective footway scheme at Holloway Hill.

Members were informed that unfortunately Mr Deakins was leaving to join the London Borough of Hounslow. Members thanked him for his dedication in post with Surrey and wished him well for the future.

Members were told that the A308 Runnymede Roundabout junction was being looked at and was being brought back to committee in September. It was likely to be a costly scheme and money for need to be forthcoming.

Member raised the issue of accidents on Tithe Hill. Mr Ward assured Members improvements were being progressed. Members paid tribute to Rhys Mander, Transportation Projects Engineer for his hard work regarding Tithe Hill , Middle Hill.

RESOLVED

The Local Committee;

From section 1:

- (i) AGREED –, That the proposal be progressed to detailed design and constructed.
- (ii) AGREED –, The final cost will vary from estimated cost and it is therefore considered appropriate that the risk with any over/under spend will be shared between the relevant parties benefiting from the scheme.
- (iii) AGREED –, That the necessary traffic orders for road tables be advertised and the Local Transportation Director be authorised to consider any objections received in consultation with the local County Councillor and the Vice-Chairman

From section 3:

- (iv) AGREED- to the updated programme of transportation schemes indicated as in **Annex 1.**

[Meeting ended 11.51 am.]

Chairman's signature

Record of open public question time

Question 1. – Mr Alan Thorogood. (Virginia Water Community Association)

Environmental Impact Assessment of development of the former DERA site

Background

Previous questions have been asked at this committee on 24th January 2003 and 6th June 2003. The main issues are

- the disputed ownership of the land at the former DERA Ministry of Defence site at Chobham Lane, Chertsey,
- the Environmental Impact any proposed redevelopment will have on the adjoining Chobham Common National Nature Reserve and on the amenity of local residents

Runnymede Borough Council and Surrey Heath Borough Council have recently been approached for information on a “Scoping Opinion” under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations in respect of a proposed development likely to comprise 1.25 million square feet of development comprising approximately 90% B1 with ancillary A1, A3, C1, D1 and D2.

Local residents are aware that road traffic surveys and air quality monitoring is already underway.

The Questions

1. Can the Committee please provide an update on the response from Mr Mike Dawson (Head of Countryside & Heritage) on the SCC investigations into the ownership and boundary issues, together with an assessment of the potential impact any change will have on the adjacent Chobham Common National Nature Reserve and its protected species and habitats?

Note: at the 6th June meeting it was stated that Mary Elliott in Legal Services and solicitors at Hart Brown were currently working on the title of the SCC Countryside Estate, and the disputed ownership was being discussed with Ann Charlton.

2. Local residents have recently been made aware that public access rights “for air and exercise” (under section 193 of the Law of Property Act 1925) may also still apply to a major part of the land within Runnymede, and that this was the subject of an investigation by Joanna Mortimer in December 2000. Can the results of that investigation (and any other related investigations) also be clarified?

Mr Anderson said there were two items on this agenda that required the co-operation of Surrey County Council and Runnymede Borough Council, the item regarding Gogmore Farm Park and The item regarding the future of The Runnymede Centre. Mr Anderson asked when were the two organisations going to have a proper partnership Committee as in other areas, with both partners at the table for Committee.

Response

Mr Dawson, SCC Head of Countryside & Heritage, would be contacted to secure a response to Mr Thorogoods question, which would also be sent to all Members.

Question 2. – Runnymede Borough Councillor Mr Davis

1. Concern to everyone is the planning blight caused by the Central Railways proposal. Can planning blight now be lifted?

Responses

Members responded that without causing undue concern to residents, there was still a need to be vigilant, and house buyers should still be aware until this threat had absolutely gone away completely.

Mr Nick Skellett, Leader and Chairman of the Executive reported that proposals for Central Railways were with the Government for several years, and involved several studies by the strategic rail authority before a Government decision was made. Now they had, we should take some comfort from that. The rail could not be built without Government support, and certainly not through planning applications with individual boroughs.

Runnymede Local Committee, Friday 12 March 2004.

Annexe. 2. To minutes- Public Questions

Question 1.

From Carole Jones,

Deputy Mayor for Runnymede and Cllr. for Englefield Green West:

This committee may recall that the community of Englefield Green raised a substantial amount of money to renovate the Youth Club in Corby Drive, the works and labour donated amounted to over £60,000, the works included the provision of an outdoor multi-use play area. This enormous contribution from the community came about because of the extremely poor state of the existing facility and in a hope to keep youngsters off the streets and causing problems (which they were) the community hoped that by providing a better facility, the young people would benefit, and in turn the residents of Englefield Green would benefit.

It is with great disappointment that after all of this work, that still the facility is only open for 6 hours per week. In fact it is closed far more often that it is open. We find also that the Egham Youth Club opens on the same two evening slots being a Monday and a Thursday. Staff shortages at Egham mean that Englefield Green is regularly now being closed so that staff can go to Egham, - a situation that the people of Englefield Green find quite unacceptable.

Why cannot Egham and E/Green operate on different nights of the week at the very least, this way staff would not be stretched, both centres could be open when they promise to be, and the youngsters within the area could have the option of going to Egham one night, E/Green the next and so on.

Finally, will Surrey County Council work towards opening the Youth Club more than 6 hours a week to meet the needs of the local community.

Response from John Davies,

- Surrey County Council, Youth Development Officer for Runnymede

Members of the County and Borough who attended the meeting held at the Runnymede Centre on the evening of the 1st March 2004, will be aware that the Youth Development Service is committed to expanding its provision at Englefield Green Youth Centre.

At that meeting the presentation included our commitment that it is our intention that all youth provisions in Runnymede Would be open to Young People on three evenings per week, commencing in this new financial year, and at other times where the need has been identified in consultation with young people.

Developments since the presentation are:

1. The Appointment of a permanent Youth Worker in Charge at Egham Youth Centre.
2. The introduction of support for young parents, through relocating the "Babylink" support group at Englefield Green Youth Centre on Thursdays.
3. Interviews for part time staff have been undertaken, with further interviews to undertaken in the next two weeks.

Since the appointment of the new Neighbourhood Youth Worker, Jessica Cox, new initiatives are currently being planned for work with young people in North Runnymede.

All new staff still require enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks, and therefore the impact of new staff will not be immediately felt.

With regard to the question relating to Egham and Englefield Green being “open” on the same evenings, this matter was reviewed 12 months ago in consultation with young people. It was felt that the evening arrangement should continue, particularly as both centres serve different communities and that at Egham, ages vary depending on the evening. In addition, Egham is also open on two other evenings one serving special needs young people and the other serving young people with interests in music

After consulting with my staff team, I can confirm it was on one occasion that staff from Englefield Green worked at Egham.

This occurred when no young people were in attendance at Englefield Green, and rather than do nothing they supported the new youth work team at Egham.

The programme for last term at Englefield Green has involved activities away from the Centre, both at leisure venues or other youth provisions eg. Leacroft Centre, Staines.

Runnymede Local Committee, Friday 12 March 2004.

Annexe. 3. To minutes-Members Questions

Question 1. from Councillor Susan Bruce:

Road safety at the junction of Crown Street and Hummer Road, Egham

Having been approached by local residents with concerns regarding road safety at the junction of Crown Street and Hummer Road and problems associated with speeding traffic and drivers contravening the one-way system, I would ask Officers from the Local Transportation Service, please could you report on the situation and advise on any appropriate action that could be taken?

Response from Runnymede Local Transportation Service

Local residents have reported a series of accidents at the junction of Crown Street and Hummer Road and have requested that preventative action be taken to address the problem.

Officers are fully aware of the resident's concerns, however provision of funding for safety schemes must be prioritised to ensure resources are allocated in a consistent and sustainable manner. In accordance with Surrey County Council's policies funding will be directed into those schemes that have the greatest potential to reduce injury accident rates or those schemes that have the most benefit in achieving the objectives and priorities set out in the Local Transportation Plan.

Accident reports indicate that the majority of accidents occurring at the junction are damage only accidents and there have been only two personal injury accidents at the junction in the last three years. To address this low cost measures, including improved signing and additional "Slow" road markings, have been completed at the junction.

However residents continue to raise their concerns and have approached the Local Transportation Service and offered to pay for further traffic calming measures themselves. However this is not an approach that Surrey County Council would be willing to adopt because it could lead to an inconsistent approach to road safety. Due to the continuing concerns of local residents it is proposed that the site be included in the next Member's review of the transportation programme, when consideration of any additional measures will be examined in further detail.

Question 2. from Councillor Elise Whiteley

Regarding Station Approach, Virginia Water-

Has Surrey County Council found the best solution to traffic problems in Station Approach, Virginia Water?

Response from Runnymede Local Transportation Service

In July 2003 an Accident Working Group scheme was completed at the western end of Station Approach. The low cost accident remedial measure involved prohibiting entry by vehicles to the western end of Station Approach from Christchurch Road. The measures were proposed to address an accident pattern involving vehicles turning right into Station Approach from Christchurch Road.

It has been observed that since the introduction of the no-entry the majority of traffic in Station Approach flows from east to west. The local residents' association have suggested that formalising a one-way system in Station Approach would help to avoid potential accidents by eliminating confusion. We understand that the local member is in favour of these proposals.

However the Local Transportation Service have reservations about introducing new one-way systems, for instance the associated increase in traffic speeds and the likely inconvenience for some local residents and traders.

It is proposed that local residents and local traders be consulted as to whether they would be in favour of making Station Approach one-way.

The proposed method of consultation would be a letter highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of a one-way system and outlining other measures that could be taken to minimise confusion if a one-way system was not implemented.

Question 3. from Councillor Moira James

Regarding Central Railway,

Following the recent statement from Central Railway that they are not giving up their plans for a Liverpool -to-Lille Freight Railway Line routed through Surrey, and the unacceptable environmental consequences which would accrue for Surrey including Runnymede, of their present proposals, may I ask the Chairman of the Local Committee to seek assurance that Surrey County Council:

- continues to be vigilant and oppose the present Central Railway proposal
- advocates a more practical route, possibly to the Eastern side of London?

Response by Steven Styles, Senior Transport Manager, Sustainable Development, Surrey County Council:

Surrey County Council strongly opposes Central Railway's plans to construct part of the proposed rail freight line through Surrey and has held that view since the company announced their intentions in July 2000. While supporting the concept of moving more freight by rail, the Authority has always had grave reservations about Central Railway's plans to by-pass central London and construct part of its line along the inner rim of the M25. Furthermore, along with the South East England Regional Assembly, Surrey County Council had always advocated the benefits of constructing a dedicated north-south freight line to the east of London along the Thames Gateway – where considerable regeneration is already under way. Central Railway, on the other hand, is of a different view.

After three years of waiting the Government's recent decision not support the company's efforts to submit before Parliament a hybrid Bill to garner support for this project, the company appears to be unwilling to accept the Government's decision and want to press ahead. Their only option now is to return to the normal planning rules for such project of this magnitude and that is via a Transport & Works Act application to Government. This is a process the company is familiar with and one they attempted in 1996 for a similar proposal. This application was defeated by 276 votes to 6.

Question 4. from Councillor Moira James:

Regarding Woodham Lane, New Haw

Following concerns expressed locally on the subject, I would ask for an update on the situation and progress as regards the road works at the Central Veterinary Laboratories site on Woodham Lane, New Haw.

Response by Will Ward, Local Transport Director, Surrey County Council:

Works started again on site on Monday 19th April 2004. The contractor's programme is 9-10 weeks to complete works. During that time there will be a period of traffic light control on an off peak and 24 hour basis. The final details of the traffic control and programme will be agreed on the 27th April 2004 with the contractor. We will be monitoring progress on a daily basis. Our highway lighting engineer is resolving the problems with illuminated bollards on the refuge islands.