

DRAFT

MINUTES: of the meeting of the Surrey County Council Local Committee held at 10.00 on Tuesday 19 July 2005 at the Runnymede Centre, Chertsey

Surrey County Council Members

Mr Terry Dicks - Chairman
Mrs Mary Angell - Vice Chairman
Mrs Carole Jones
Mrs Yvonna Lay
Mr R A N Lowther
Mrs Elise Whiteley

PART ONE - IN PUBLIC

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

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am.

33/05 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Mrs Yvonna Lay.

34/05 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 11 MARCH 2005 [Item 2]

The Minutes were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

35/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

No declarations of interest were received.

36/05 PUBLIC QUESTIONS [Item 4]

Mr Mike Pollard had submitted the following question:

"Could the following topics be added to the sexual health module in secondary and tertiary schools:
information about the location, function and malfunction of the prostate gland, and details of what a PSA test is for? Also, details of what is the link between the prostate, selenium and pre-eclampsia?"

Mai Kennedy, a consultant with Four S, supplied the following written response:

There is no statutory obligation to include education directly about the prostate gland within the curriculum, but that is not to say that it could not be explored under the umbrella of positive sexual health and wellbeing. It would be a decision for the subject

co-ordinator for Personal and Social Health Education, or possibly Science, as to whether there was scope to include this within the curriculum provision, and ultimately the context of any sexual health policy would need to be discussed with the school or college governors.

It would be difficult to include every health topic in the curriculum so schools may concentrate on healthy lifestyles rather than explore the detail of specific conditions, e.g. the use of antioxidants such as selenium may be too much depth for schools to cover. If the questioner wishes to influence the national curriculum he would need to contact the Department for Education and Skills.

The Chairman said that members of the Local Committee, who were also members of the Education and Health Select Committees, were prepared to raise this issue with those committees.

37/05 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS [Item 5]

No members' questions were received.

38/05 FUNDING OF TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMME 2005/6, INCLUDING RESULTS OF MEMBERS' TOUR [Item 6]

The report was presented by Mr David Mitchell, who explained that the report took account of views expressed by members, when they had toured the proposed sites. Mr Lowther asked why paragraph 1.10 of the report (Safe Routes to School) mentioned taking account of school closures when no decisions had been taken on closures. Mr Mitchell explained that there was no presumption of any closure but an acknowledgement that the scheme in question was a valuable improvement regardless of whether traffic to and from the schools continued in future.

Mrs Angell, local member for Woodham and New Haw, proposed that the new crossing in Woodham Lane should be given a higher priority for action in the programme, in preference to the New Haw cycleway (annex 10).

RESOLVED

- a) that the local allocation of £109,000 be utilised as detailed in paragraphs 1.9 to 1.13 of the report;
- b) to approve the addition of the schemes as set out in Annexes 1,2,3,5,6,8,9 to the transportation scheme for further investigation, and to give greater priority in the programme to Woodham Lane (Annex 6) than to the New Haw to Byfleet cycleway (Annex 10).

39/05 SURREY HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP CONTRACT – PROGRESS REPORT [Item 7]

The Chairman asked members to agree to the withdrawal of Annex B (which had been tabled) as the figures quoted in it required further clarification with the author of the table. Members agreed to this.

Mr Will Ward introduced the report, noting that the contractors had performed well in parts but not in others, and that the Executive had agreed to extend the contract for a further year.

Mrs Whiteley proposed that the contractors Ringway should be asked to attend every Local Committee meeting, rather than alternate meetings, and was supported by Mr Lowther.

RESOLVED

that a Ringway Highway Services representative attends each Local Committee meeting to answer questions on operational and financial performance, starting in September 2005.

40/05 FIRST SIX MONTHS OF ON-STREET PARKING ENFORCEMENT SERVICE [Item 8]

Mr David Mitchell introduced the report and informed the committee that the survey of parking capacity in Englefield Green had been completed, and the results were being analysed. Local member Mrs Carole Jones said that the results were of some interest, and expressed a desire to be part of the joint working group to review the service.

RESOLVED

that Local Committee members Mr Terry Dicks and Mrs Carole Jones be appointed to the On Street Parking Joint Member working group.

41/05 RESTRUCTURE OF LOCAL TRANSPORTATION SERVICE [Item 9]

The report was presented by Mr Stephen Lee, Head of Transportation for Surrey County Council. He explained the structure charts (tabled as Annex 1). He noted that the role of Local Transportation Manager in each borough area would be an important one for each Local Committee, and providing key support to Local Committee members and knowledge of the locality. He said that the introduction of an Area Maintenance manager, who would provide direct supervision for the Contract Performance Team, would lead to improved accountability for delivery of works on the ground.

He explained that locating teams in Area offices was required for economies of scale and to achieve the savings required by the Budget. The Transportation service could not determine independently where area offices would be located, as this was part of the County's overall property strategy. He said that he had recommended to the Transport Select Committee that discussions on how to maintain localness should be had with Local Committees. He proposed that once the new teams were appointed and in place in October, there would be an opportunity to work with local members on the practical details of maintaining local links.

The Chairman expressed his continuing opposition to the plans to move transportation staff to an Area Office, and other members of the Committee expressed their support for this view. The Chairman noted that he had not received a reply to his earlier letter to the

Leader on this matter. He said he understood that the County Council's Executive and portfolio holder had been consulted, but said that local members had not.

Members' concerns were that no transportation staff would be based in the borough, that staff would be spread too thinly across the area and so quality of response would suffer, that this heralded a move towards area budgets rather than local budgets, and that people without cars would be deterred from visiting the Area office. Mrs Angell asked about the remit of a Local Highways Steward, and about the cost of refurbishing Quadrant Court, the new Area Office in Woking. Mr Dicks asked about the budgetary underspend on central Transportation costs for 2004-5.

Mr Lee said that he sympathised with the Committee's views. He regretted the fact that the Chairman had not received a letter (dated 21st April) from the Leader to Local Committee Chairmen, which had signalled the changes, as had a letter from the Chief Executive to borough councils, which had been sent at the same time. He confirmed that decisions on the restructure had been taken by the portfolio holder together with the Executive. He agreed to provide a copy of the job profile for the Local Highways Steward and confirmed that this role would not change from what operates now. He said that Mr Ian Cresswell, Head of Property, would be able to give an overview on the costs of refurbishment. He reassured members that the department's restructuring would not affect works budgets, as this had been stipulated by the Leader. Mr Lee said that it was recognised that there could be pooled Area budgets for some expenditure but not for transportation scheme works. Referring to the central costs underspend, Mr Lee explained that this had been a deliberate policy to retain a contingency fund in preparation for the restructuring, for example by leaving posts unfilled for a short period to avoid later redundancies.

Mr Lee advised the committee that financial control within the Transportation Service was such that the revenue budget outturn was within 0.33% of target.

Mr Dicks commented that he remained concerned about the underspend and the fact that the figures had not been approved by the Executive, and suggested that further investigation of this should be undertaken by the Finance department.

It was agreed that the Chairman would write again to the Leader about the restructure.

42/05 HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN (Item 10)

Mr Rhys Mander presented the report, which was for information. Members asked about drainage problems in Chertsey, weed control treatments for ragwort in the Lyne area, and the scope for increased frequency of grass cutting. Mr Will Ward said that he would review with the borough council the options for improved joint working in relation to grass cutting and would take account of best practice within the county.

43/05 PUBLIC FOOTPATH NO.40, EGHAM: PROPOSED DIVERSION [Item 11]

The Chairman explained that a letter had just been received from a solicitor representing the interests of the landowner whose land would be crossed by the proposed diversion. The letter emphasised the importance of privacy and anonymity to the individual in question. The Chairman offered members the opportunity to defer the

item, but it was decided to accept a summary of the letter from the author of the report, Mrs Debbie Spriggs, who had just had sight of the letter.

Mrs Spriggs summarised the solicitor's concern that the proposed double fencing between the footpath and the owner's land would not compensate for existing security measures, and that the financial implications of replacing the current security arrangements, which were needed for the safety of the owner and his household, would be significant.

Mrs Angell stated that she supported the recommendation and that one individual's desire for privacy should not override the safety of local people having to cross the railway on the existing footpath. She noted that the map showed the residential buildings were several hundred metres from the proposed diversion. Mr Lowther asked who would be liable for costs if the matter was taken to court. Mrs Spriggs said that the County Council would be expected to meet the cost of any public enquiry.

Note the correction to paragraph 4, to read, "Runnymede Borough Council....have raised no objections."

RESOLVED

The Committee agreed:

that a Diversion Order under Section 119 of the Highways Act 1980 for Public Footpath No 40, Egham, as shown on drawing no.3/1/88/H13, be made and either confirmed as an unopposed order or if objections were received, submitted to the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for determination.

44/05 LOCAL COMMITTEE PROTOCOL [Item 12]

The Chairman explained that the main change being proposed in the local protocol report was to offer a faster response time for public questions submitted in advance of the meeting, so that a question supplied five working days ahead of the meeting would receive a written response, or an oral response if submitted only two days beforehand. The Chairman would use his discretion as to whether to allow for a supplementary question at the meeting. He said that the reason for taking a decision to end the informal question time had been that questions submitted in advance during the formal meeting could receive a more informed and better quality response.

Some members expressed the view that the decision to end informal question time should be reviewed at a later date, and this was accepted. It was also noted that members of the public may contact their local member at any time if they have a question about the county council and its services.

RESOLVED

to agree the standing orders for the Local Committee as in Annex A.

45/05 MEMBERS' INDIVIDUAL FUNDING ALLOCATION [Item 13]

RESOLVED

to approve the proposed expenditure from the Members' allocations budget as at Annex 1.

46/05 ADULTS AND COMMUNITY CARE PERFORMANCE REPORT [Item 14]

Mr Jon Muller, Area Manager (North Surrey) for Adults and Community Care, gave an overview of service developments in the Runnymede area. He was accompanied by Mrs Carey Jamieson. The report was for information only.

He noted the inspection reports which had praised the strategic and operational strengths of the service, and the fact that the service had performed well within current budgetary constraints. He outlined developments in housing with extra care, the projected increases both in young people with disabilities reaching adulthood and requiring support whilst remaining independent, and in older people requiring care in the home. He also referred to the current health service consultation on reorganisation of the primary care trusts and the importance of maintaining co-terminosity with county services.

The Chairman concluded the meeting by thanking Principal Engineer Mr David Mitchell for his long service with the County and wishing him well in his new position.

[Meeting ended 11.42 am]

Chairman's signature