

DRAFT

MINUTES: of the meeting of the Surrey County Council Local Committee held at 10.00 on Friday 2nd June 2006 at the Runnymede Centre, Chertsey

Surrey County Council Members

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

11/06 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

There were no apologies for absence.

12/06 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 3 FEBRUARY 2006 [Item 2]

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

13/06 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

No declarations of interest were received.

14/06 PUBLIC QUESTIONS [Item 4]

Question from Borough Councillor Mrs Judith Norman

In October last year Highways agreed to the installation of a number of yellow lines throughout Runnymede. I am particularly concerned about lining around the junction of St Ann's Close and St Ann's Road in Chertsey and in Abbey Road Chertsey. The latter is particularly important as elderly residents of Abbey Court are unable to cross the road safely due to cars parked outside their building. A number of the residents are disabled or only walk very slowly and they are having to step out into the road between the cars in order to cross the road to visit the town centre. I would appreciate a timetable for these works being completed

Answer from Surrey County Council's Local Transportation Team

For reasons of efficiency, a countywide team completes the processing of traffic regulation orders centrally. It is not possible to install waiting restrictions on the public highway unless there is a traffic regulation order made backing them up in law.

Recently this team has had a high workload, with many legal orders needing review as Decriminalised Parking Enforcement has been rolled out across the County. Assuming that there are no objections to the statutory advertisement, the necessary legal work should be complete by the end of July. The required road markings will be installed in the weeks following.

Mrs Norman asked a supplementary question:

I would like to know why this process, from initial discussion to action, takes a whole year?

Mr Bolton explained that the small central team which dealt with such matters had had to respond to a high volume of requests following the recent introduction of decriminalised parking enforcement in other borough areas, and apologised for the delay. He said that the statutory notice for this work would be sealed by the end of July, and following this the work could be implemented shortly afterwards.

15/06 MEMBERS' QUESTIONS [Item 5]

One member question had been received.

Question from Mr Ray Lowther

"In Guildford Street Chertsey, one of the parking bays outside the carpet shop has a sign indicating that it is for unloading goods between 10am and 12 o'clock on Thursdays. Traders in the vicinity claim that this gives insufficient time - too restrictive - for the delivery of their stock and does not afford the opportunity for loading sales. Can this be investigated and the nearby tradesmen given full information on the outcome, following relevant consultation with them?"

Response from Surrey County Council's Local Transportation Team

The current restrictions in Guildford Street try to strike a balance between encouraging trade by maximising short term parking, permitting servicing of the businesses and ensuring that the road does not become impassable by parked vehicles.

There are a number of parking bays where parking is signed as restricted to a maximum period of 30 minutes, with no return for 30 minutes (between 0800-1800hrs Monday to Friday). Loading is permitted in these bays at anytime. Two of these bays preclude parking on Thursday mornings between 0800-1300hrs, to keep the bay free for loading. The drawback is that it prevents shopper parking during this period, a frequent concern amongst all traders.

The traders will be contacted and asked what, if any alterations would be beneficial. If there is an agreed consensus amongst those affected, any alterations will be considered at the next joint meeting of the DPE Joint Member Working Group and reported back to this Committee as appropriate.

Mr Lowther asked that Mr Bolton should contact a selection of traders for consultation, and he confirmed that this would be done.

16/06 **PETITIONS** [Item 6]

No petitions had been received.

17/06 **BYFLEET ROAD PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS** [Item 7]

Mr Nick Healey, Assistant Engineer, noted that Byfleet Road was very busy and lacked pedestrian facilities. He explained that since the last time the Local Committee had considered this location in December 2004, technical difficulties had arisen with the proposed improvements and these had resulted in an increased cost estimate. Mr Healey proposed a modified improvement which would upgrade the existing pedestrian refuge to a pedestrian island, and designate a shared footway/cycleway.

Local member Mrs Angell said that she was in support of the improved solution.

RESOLVED

- a) that the improvements in Annexes 1 and 2 be progressed to detailed design, consultation and construction in consultation with the Divisional Member.

18/06 **TRUMPS GREEN ROAD PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS** [Item 8]

Mr Richard Bolton introduced the report, noting that the suggestion for improvements at this site had come from the Runnymede Access Liaison group, whose members had reported difficulties in negotiating the narrow footway underneath the railway arch in wheelchairs and disability scooters. He commended a proposal to increase the footway to 1.6 metres to give better clearance and to introduce a priority give way system. He noted that SCC's Traffic team had confirmed that their projections concerning the incidence of congestion in the area over the next fifteen years indicated that a priority give way system would not cause a problem. He said that fifteen years was the maximum period which could be modelled with any degree of accuracy. Local member Mrs Whiteley asked if a pedestrian tunnel could be included in the design, to help residents of Lyne Road to reach the shops safely. Mr Bolton replied that the cost of a tunnel would be prohibitive, and that new dropped kerbs together with a single line flow of traffic would make it easier for residents to cross.

RESOLVED

a) to approve the widening of the western footway under the arch bridge along Trumps Green Road and the construction of a priority give-way system for vehicular traffic.

19/06 **NORTHCROFT ROAD** [Item 9]

Mr Richard Bolton explained that the proposals to install a new footpath on this sharp bend outlined in an earlier report to the Local Committee in 2004 had, on further investigation, been found to be not feasible due to plant underground and a difference in levels affecting water run-off. He noted that the new proposals in the report would cost significantly more to construct but would not mean any net increase in paved space, and that whilst the landowner Crown Estate was in support of the recommended solution, agreement would need to be sought from the Englefield Green committee (administered by Runnymede Borough Council on behalf of Crown Estate) which was due to meet later in June.

The local member asked if the speed along the adjacent Cricketers Lane might be reduced from the present national speed limit to 30mph, and it was agreed that this could be given further consideration during the members' transport tour of the borough. It was also suggested that the Crown Estate should be invited to make a contribution to the cost of the improvements.

RESOLVED

- a) that the proposed improvements, as detailed in Annex 1, be progressed to detailed design and construction in consultation with the Divisional Member;
- b) that subject to the agreement of all parties, the necessary legal processes as detailed in the report be undertaken to facilitate the construction of the scheme.

20/06 **ANNUAL HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE MANAGEMENT PLAN** [Item 10]

Mr Bolton introduced the report, which had been prepared by Peter Agent, the Area Maintenance Manager. He said that the budget county-wide had been increased by 2% in recognition of increased costs in the construction industry, and that the level of service would be kept broadly in line with the existing position.

Members asked whether the move to an area approach would be likely to result in a levelling down of service, to the detriment of the Runnymede district. Mr Bolton replied that there was no intention to reduce the service received in any of the three boroughs but that the service would be reviewing what was most efficient for each contract, for example in relation to grass cutting. He agreed to supply members with a copy of the schedule indicating when gully clearing and grass cutting would be taking place in each division. In answer to another member question about the danger of ragwort to horses, he confirmed that removal of ragwort at root was being addressed as part of the grass cutting and verge maintenance programme.

Mr Dicks raised his continuing concern that end of year budget adjustments could facilitate financing to "bail out" local transportation team budgets which had

overspent. Mr Bob Moodie (West Area Transportation Team manager) answered that it was normal practice to include a contingency element for the purpose of dealing with unpredictable needs, giving the example of a series of highway sign thefts in one part of the county. He said that the report to the Executive specified the exact nature of the contingencies figure.

21/06 UPDATE OF LOCAL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMME [Item 11]

Mr Richard Bolton introduced the update and highlighted the change to the overall budget since the last Committee, following a decision by the Executive to remove the congestion factor in the distribution formula. He explained that, subject to approval by the Executive later in June, it was anticipated that all local overspends and underspends would be rolled forward into 2006-7 financial year.

Members raised specific points on local issues – the need to resolve an impasse with Network Rail over new cycle channels over the railway bridge in Chertsey, and to expedite a pedestrian crossing in St Jude's Road in Englefield Green.

RESOLVED

a) that the Committee noted and approved the rolling feasibility, design and construction programme and funding arrangements, as detailed in the report and annex 1.

22/06 LOCAL PROTOCOL AND DELEGATION OF BUDGET [Item 12]

Members debated whether to reintroduce an informal question time for members of the public in the half hour preceding each formal Committee. The prevailing view was that this opportunity for public engagement would encourage more people to attend meetings. A vote was taken on recommendation i), in which five members voted in favour and one abstained. The remaining recommendations were agreed without debate.

RESOLVED

- i) that the Committee will offer an opportunity for public engagement and informal questions for half an hour before each formal Local Committee meeting commences (subject to annual review);
- ii) that written public questions, dealt with as part of the formal agenda, may be accepted up to 12 noon two working days before the day of the meeting;
- iii) that members of the public may ask one brief supplementary question relevant to the subject of the original, at the discretion of the chairman;
- iv) that the Committee will accept a petition carrying 50 or more signatures, although in exceptional circumstances the Chairman may use his/her discretion to accept petitions with fewer signatures in cases where it would not be appropriate to get 50 signatures, for example where a proposed scheme affects fewer than 50 properties;
- v) to delegate to the Area Director the authority to approve projects up to a limit of £1000, in consultation with members, subject to the proviso that no more than 10% of a member's allocation may be approved in this way. Such decisions would also be subject to the provision of equivalent detail

as those decided at Committee and to provision of reasons for urgency, and all such decisions must be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.

23/06 ANNUAL SUMMARY OF MEMBER ALLOCATIONS 2005-6 [Item 13]

A further appendix (3) to this item was tabled before the meeting, giving details of all projects agreed by members in 2005-6.

Mr Dicks highlighted his concern that a Runnymede borough councillor had been heard to remark that member allocation funding was used to buy votes. The Chairman agreed to write on behalf of the Local Committee to correct this impression and to highlight the many good causes delivering benefits to residents which had been supported over the year, noting that the average cost per resident was £1.30 a year.

The report was noted. Members were in agreement that the list of projects showed the range and diversity of projects which had been investigated and supported in response to local need.

24/06 MEMBERS' ALLOCATIONS [Item 14]

The Chairman welcomed the new lay-out of this report.

RESOLVED

to approve all the proposed expenditure from the Members' Allocation budget as detailed in the report.

[Meeting ended 11.10 am]

Chairman's signature