

DRAFT

MINUTES:

**of the meeting of the Surrey County Council Local
Committee held at 10.00 on Friday October 5th 2007 at the
Runnymede Centre, Chertsey**

Surrey County Council Members

Mrs Mary Angell - Chairman
Mr Terry Dicks – Vice Chairman
Miss Marisa Heath
Mrs Yvonna Lay
Mr R A N Lowther
Mrs Elise Whiteley

Runnymede Borough Council appointed members

Councillor John Furey*
Councillor P.Tuley
Councillor A.J. Davis
Councillor John Ashmore*
Councillor Linda Gillham

* indicates not present

PART ONE - IN PUBLIC

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

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am.

31/07 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Councillor John Furey sent apologies for absence, and Councillor Tuley attended as his substitute.

**32/07 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING HELD ON 9TH FEBRUARY 2007
[Item 2]**

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

33/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

No declarations of interest were received.

34/07 WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS [Item 4]

Six questions were asked by members of the public and these received replies as follows:

Question from Mr Adrian Skelt, of Egham Residents' Association

"With the planned closure of the Lyne Lane civic amenity/waste site from November 2007 to May 2008, can Surrey County Council advise whether they are prepared to offer Runnymede residents alternative, temporary rubbish/green waste disposal options in the meantime (& especially over the busy Christmas period)? In this regard, & to avoid increased fly-tipping in the Borough & inconvenient journeys for residents to the nearest sites at Sunbury or Woking, we would suggest that SCC consider the provision of temporary skips or other facilities within the existing Lyne Lane site (e.g. on existing land just inside the gates on the right?)".

Answer from Surrey County Council's waste contract manager:

The refurbishment of the Lyne Lane site has been delayed slightly and therefore the site will not now close until 9 January 2008. This will allow residents to use the site over the busy Christmas period.

The council's contractor, Surrey Waste Management, is currently investigating whether it would be possible to provide some temporary facilities during the refurbishment.

The main issue with the provision of a temporary facility is not so much the availability of land but the need to ensure that the operation meets the requirements of the regulatory authorities (Waste Planning Authority and the Environment Agency).

A programme to publicise the temporary closure and refurbishment of the Lyne Lane site will commence at the beginning of November 2007. This will include information on the alternative facilities and any temporary facilities if these can be provided.

Question from Mr Victor Miles of Drill Hall Road

"The residents of Drill Hall Road would like to know when they can expect the gullies in that road to be cleaned and flushed through?"

Answer from Surrey County Council's Local Highways manager:

All gullies in Surrey should be cleansed at least once per annum. On occasions problems are experienced with access due to parked vehicles. When this occurs there are a minimum of two sites visits to try and complete the works.

At difficult locations, the County Council works closely with Runnymede Borough Council to coordinate our activities and maximise opportunities for access. This includes advance notice for residents, where we request cars are not parked for a specific period.

If a road is known to suffer from frequently blocked gullies (due to soil run off or other reasons), the intention is to cleanse them at least twice per annum. Drill Hall Road is included among these sites.

The gullies in Drill Hall Road will next be visited by 12 October 2007. They are programmed for a second cleanse in early January 2008. The road was last visited on the 17 January 2007".

Mr Miles asked a supplementary question:

“Will the council ensure that signs notifying residents of planned gully cleansing the next day are displayed on 11 October?”

Mr Bolton assured Mr Miles that he had requested this, and asked Mr Miles to contact him personally if this did not happen.

Questions from Mr Malcolm Loveday of the Chertsey Society

“At the instructions of Surrey County Council a mature Horse Chestnut tree was recently cut down on the corner of Abbey Garden/Colonels Lane Chertsey. Although we recognise that SCC has statutory powers to fell trees on the highway verge, nevertheless this fine tree has been part of the street scene for more than three generations and is within the conservation area, we are of the opinion that local residents and the Chertsey Society should have been notified in advance. Although the tree showed some signs of die-back like most other horse chestnuts, it can be seen from the attached photos of the cut trunk that it appeared to be healthy.

1. Could we please see a copy of the arboriculturist’s report that justified the tree being felled?
2. What plans are being made to remove the tree stump? (bearing in mind that the site is a scheduled ancient monument and any disturbance below the ground should be undertaken with the supervision of an archaeologist approved by English Heritage).
3. What plans are being made to tidy up the corner and to replant a replacement tree?
4. Are there any other plans for SCC to fell any more trees in the Conservation Area in Chertsey?”

Response from Surrey County Council’s Highways Manager

A number of concerns were raised by the general public to the County Council about the state of this tree. Following a visual inspection by a Community Highway Officer, the County Arboriculturalist was instructed to undertake a formal inspection. In his professional opinion the tree required felling. A copy of the formal report is attached. The Chertsey Society and local residents were not notified in advance as the works were recommended for safety reasons rather than as part of any street scene improvement.

We do not intend to remove the stump, it will be left to naturally decay and hopefully provide a haven for stag beetle larvae. For this reason it is not intended to replant a tree and the area will be left so the shrubs, which needed to be cut back for access, can re-establish themselves.

At this time there are no trees identified in need of felling within the Chertsey Conservation area.”

Mr Loveday added a supplementary comment:

“Thank you for your answer, I am disappointed that given the historic nature of the site the County Council did not consider remedial work instead of felling.”

The Chairman concluded the discussion on this matter.

35/07 WRITTEN MEMBERS' QUESTIONS [Item 5]

No members' questions were received.

36/07 PETITIONS [Item 6]

No petitions had been received.

37/07 GREEN LANE ADDLESTONE, PROPOSED PUFFIN CROSSING [Item 7]

Mr Richard Bolton introduced the report, noting that there had been a pedestrian fatality at the site in 2005 which had led to reports of a petition from residents (although this was not lodged with the Local Committee). Members had approved the proposal to be added to the Forward Programme in September 2006.

Members supported the proposal to select Option 2 as detailed in the report because there would be no driveways to cause conflict, there would be no need to remove parking from immediately in front of the shops, there was excellent visibility, and there would be no requirement to relocate a bus stop.

RESOLVED:

Agreed:

- a) the proposals for a controlled crossing as detailed in option 2 be approved for construction in 2008/9;
- b) the Local Highway Manager be authorised to advertise the necessary legal notice for the introduction of a signal controlled crossing..

38/07 THE CAUSEWAY, HYTHE: PROPOSED PUFFIN CROSSING [Item 8]

Mr Richard Bolton explained that Centrica had approached the County Council with this proposal, on behalf of their employees. Centrica had offered to prepare, build and offer a commuted sum for future maintenance of the crossing at nil cost to the County Council. He said that as the crossing would benefit other pedestrians using the Causeway, was in line with Local Transport Plan objectives, and had attracted support from the police and the local member, he commended the scheme to the Committee.

RESOLVED

- a) that the proposals for a controlled crossing detailed on drawing 5208-01 be approved for construction at no cost to the county council;
- b) the Local Highways Manager was authorised to enter into an appropriate legal agreement with Centrica plc (or their approved agent) to facilitate construction of the works;
- c) the Local Highways Manager was authorised to advertise the necessary legal notice for the introduction of a signal-controlled crossing.

39/07 HEAVY GOOD VEHICLES PROPOSED AMENDMENTS [Item 9]

Mr Richard Bolton explained that the report recommending an amendment of the current limit from 17 tonnes to 18 tonnes arose from a Government directive which required the change. He said that this would apply to Chertsey Bridge.

The local member observed that there may be a risk of infringements of the weight limit when works to Walton Bridge commenced.

RESOLVED

- a) that the intention of the County Council to make an Order under sections 1, Part III of Schedule 9 and Part IV of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 to change the existing weight restrictions orders listed in Annex A from 17 Tonnes to 18 Tonnes be advertised and that if no objections be maintained, the Order be made.

40/07 UPDATE OF LOCAL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMME [Item 10]

Mr Richard Bolton highlighted schemes previously agreed by the Committee which had been undertaken since it met in May. He introduced the recommendations for new schemes to be added to the programme, as outlined in his report, noting that members of the Committee had viewed and considered these sites on a tour of the borough in July 2007.

Mr Lowther asked that the request from petitioners for a crossing in Guildford Street Chertsey be kept under review, and was supported in this by Councillor Tuley.

Mrs Whiteley sought and received confirmation that the vehicle activated signs for Christchurch Road school approach could be funded from a central county budget, subject to technical feasibility requirements being met.

Miss Heath noted that residents in Blays Lane had asked for further consultation before proceeding with the footpath lighting scheme, and was assured that this would be done.

Mrs Yvonna Lay asked what would be done to take forward the idea of a Controlled Parking Zone over the coming year before the summer 2008 members' tour. Mr Bolton said that he would undertake research with other areas and send a briefing to Local Committee members on his findings.

RESOLVED

- a) That the Committee notes and approves the rolling feasibility, design and construction programme, and funding arrangements, as contained in the report and annex 1.

41/07 FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE – FOR INFORMATION [Item 14]

Mr Clive Whitethread, Station Manager for Egham, and Mr Steve Dean, Borough Manager, presented a short information report about the work of the Fire and Rescue Service locally. Mr Dean explained that the target for his area was to undertake 100 prevention visits (Home Risk Assessments) and said that they were taking the message about false calls to young people through schools and youth clubs. He outlined the work undertaken by the Service in response to the flooding

emergencies over the summer in Doncaster, Gloucestershire, Kent, Guildford and neighbouring Chobham. He noted that there had been 50 residential fires locally but no fatalities and few injuries, and that they had received 7 referrals to the Firewise intervention scheme for children showing an unhealthy interest in fire. The successful and hard-hitting Safe Drive Stay Alive joint performance was in its third year and over 28,000 Surrey young people had viewed it, in 2007 students from St George's and Salesian schools and Strode's College had accepted invitations. Finally, he highlighted a planned road safety open day at Chertsey Fire Station in December 2007.

Members welcomed the information, and asked about the number of automated alarm false alerts received from Royal Holloway College, and work being undertaken to combat the problem. Mr Dean gave the following data which showed a downward trend:

2004-5: 296 calls

2005-6: 240 calls

2006-7: 258 calls

2007-8: Quarter 1 to July: 58 calls.

He noted that former county council borough fire manager Alan Oakes had taken up a post at Royal Holloway and was working with former colleagues to reduce the problem. The College was considering fining students and asking them to find alternative accommodation when found to be culpable.

42/07 COMMUNITY SAFETY [Item 13]

The report was introduced by Miss Carolyn Rowe, Area Director, and Mr David Dodd (Community Safety Manager, Runnymede Borough Council), and Inspector Roger Nield (Surrey Police) contributed.

Miss Rowe noted two corrections to the report:

- on page 1, Summary, the contribution from the Government Office for the South East to read £131 667;
- on page 3 at 1.3, the target for Runnymede was to reduce total reported crimes by 11%.

She highlighted the importance of partnership in increasing the effectiveness of crime and disorder initiatives, and the Safer and Stronger Communities strand of the Local Area Agreement with Government in 2008 which would lead to funding being distributed through the partnership route increasingly. She also noted the shift from a three year Community Safety Strategy to a one year rolling programme to enable flexibility in setting and responding to new priorities.

Mr Dodd highlighted the fact that the overall budget for 2007-8 was lower than in 2006-7, and reminded members that the JAG and CIAG partner meetings were empowered to allocate small amounts of funding to enable speedy interventions.

Inspector Nield noted that the reduction target of 11% related to total reported crime in the borough, and gave the very latest figure for reduction in reported crime in the year to October as 13%.

Members asked about the training and minimum ages of Police Community Support Officers, the adequacy of lighting at Pooley Green for CCTV monitoring of the car

park, and the efficacy of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders in giving community respite from bad behaviour.

RESOLVED

- a) to note the progress made in promoting community safety in Runnymede, and latest crime data;
- b) to delegate responsibility for expenditure of the County Council's local crime & disorder funding to the Area Director;
- c) to endorse the importance of the contribution of all services towards community safety in the borough; and
- d) to comment on issues of concern.

43/07 LIBRARY STAFFING REVIEW PROPOSALS TO INCREASE LIBRARY OPENING HOURS [Item 12]

Miss Rose Wilson introduced the report by noting that its purpose was to increase access and offer greater clarity about service provision. The main changes put forward were to restructure libraries into groups categorised A, B and C, to offer a more consistent offer across the County, and to improve marketing to non-users of libraries in partnership with the Communications team. She noted that the main impact on libraries in the borough was detailed on page 6, showing an overall gain in opening hours, with only Egham library losing half an hour.

Mrs Angell said that she did not agree with the statement that the transfer of calls from libraries to the Contact Centre had been a success, and that when calling the Centre to reach her library, she had been subjected to a list of standard questions and had not always been put through. Miss Wilson said that she had received feedback from some users that they were unhappy with the filtering process they had experienced, but that they were working actively with Contact Centre staff to mitigate and improve the customer care experience.

Members commented that the emphasis on marketing was welcome as was the increase in opening hours, concern was expressed by Mr Dicks that access to computers remained free of charge, and the need to demonstrate the range of facilities to children and young people was highlighted.

Mr Dicks proposed an additional recommendation (d) and was seconded by the Chairman.

RESOLVED

- a) the Local Committee supports the approach of seeking improvements to opening hours and services through efficiency gains from self-service new technology;
- b) Local Committee supports the proposed new Group structure – three groups of libraries A, B, and C, with a geographic/strategic approach;
- c) Local Committee supports the resulting improvements in opening hours in libraries in Runnymede.

- d to ask the Executive to reintroduce direct public access to libraries by telephone.

44/07 LOCAL PROTOCOL – PUBLIC QUESTIONS DEADLINE [Item 11]

RESOLVED

- a) the deadline for receipt of public questions for the Local Committee shall be 12 noon, four days before the meeting.

45/07 MEMBER ALLOCATIONS [Item 14]

Mrs Whiteley asked Mr Bolton to contact her as soon as funding for the VAS sign at Christchurch Road was confirmed.

Mrs Gillham asked whether equipment in schools and libraries was covered by the Government funding formula. Miss Rowe advised that the relevant items proposed in the allocations report fell within the discretionary funding budget, so that this was a legitimate use of member allocation funding.

RESOLVED

- a) to approve the expenditure proposed in paragraphs 3.1 to 3.17 from the Members' Allocations budget

46/07 LOCAL NEWS [Item 16]

The Chairman reminded the meeting that the information concerning the closure of Lyne Lane site in November had been superseded by the answer to the earlier public question, stating that the site was planned to close temporarily in January 2008.

She also reminded the meeting that the next meeting of the Local Committee had been re-arranged to **February 8th** 2008.

[Meeting ended 11.46 am]

Chairman's signature