

Item 10

The Standing Citizens' Panel for Surrey Heath
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S LOCAL COMMITTEE IN
SURREY HEATH
22nd July 2004

KEY ISSUE:

The report updates Members on the last meeting of the Standing Citizens' Panel for Surrey Heath.

SUMMARY:

The Citizens' Panel met on 3rd June 2004 and discussed

- Town Centre Accessibility
- Crime and Disorder
- The MORI Community Survey 2003

The notes from the meeting are summarised below.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. discusses the report, and:
2. decides whether to allocate £500 to purchasing advertising space in local newsletters and magazines.

INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

1. At the Local Committee meeting held on 17th July 2003, the Committee agreed to the setting up of a Standing Citizens' Panel for Surrey Heath.
2. The next Panel meeting will be on 11th August 2004 and will focus on Waste.

ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

At the meeting on 3rd June 2004 the Panel considered:

- Town Centre Accessibility
- Crime and Disorder
- The MORI Community Survey 2003

Town Centre Accessibility Study

Wanda Cresswell from Surrey County Council's Local Transportation officer attended the meeting to ask the Panel about the accessibility of the Town centre. This will be used by the Local Transportation Service to plan for the future and

ensure that accessibility issues are addressed early on in planning and maintenance work.

Issues:

- The Town Centre is not always accessible by bus as buses run at the wrong times.
- Keeping cars out is not the answer as many older or disabled people rely on their cars.
- Main Square automatic doors have been faulty for over six months.
- There is a lack of free undercover disabled parking
- Shop mobility revamp proposed but no action yet. Where is this at?
- The High Street looks run down. Street furniture looks old and the paving is uneven.
- Elevated kerbs at bus stops are a danger to able bodied people.
- Not all dropped kerbs are properly dropped and so are still an obstacle.
- Need to ensure that dropped kerbs are opposite each other so that people can cross the roads.
- Pressure needed on shops to make sure they are accessible.
- No real issues with the placing of street furniture.
- Some blind people cannot feel the tactile paving through their shoes.
- Red tarmac is an excellent idea. Contrast makes it visible to visually impaired people.
- Tactile paving is slippery when placed on slopes.

Crime and Disorder

Mike Abbott outlined the crime and disorder groups in Surrey Heath. There is a CDRP (Crime and Disorder reduction Partnership), under which there is a JAG (Joint Action group) and a CIAG (community Incident action group)
The JAG looks at place and the CIAG looks at named individuals.

MORI Community Survey 2003

Jane Biscombe outlined the MORI Community Survey that was done in 2003. Local Committee are being asked to comment on the differences between Boroughs and so are seeking the Panels views on this.

- Some terms in the MORI report were ambiguous eg local area and would mean different things to different people.
- The Panel was seen as an indication of SCC's commitment to working locally and to consulting with local people
- Highways has become more responsive to local people. This was again seen as an indication of SCCs commitment locally.
- The Local Committee was seen as a major step in overcoming the "facelessness" of SCC.
- Local people still have very little idea about what goes on in Kingston.
- Copies of the Local Committee minutes should be sent out with the agendas.

- Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) minutes are not available. This is even more important now that the Crime Prevention Panel has been stopped.
- Why can't SCC put contact details in Heathscene?
- The Committee should send its newsletter to all houses in Surrey Heath.
- There is a lack of understanding about what SCC and SHBC does and doesn't do.
- SCC should object more vocally to central Government.
- More communication is needed locally, especially with schools.
- There has been a huge rise in expectation in the last 5 years and this could account for an apparent drop in satisfaction.
- SCC do very well in primary and junior education with the funds they get from the Government.
- There is no SCC information in the yellow pages or local phone book. Needs to list all contact numbers not just the contact centre.
- The contact centre is not liked by local people. It makes SCC look faceless and is frustrating to use.
- A public list of numbers and email addresses is needed. Why can't this go in the Local Committee newsletter and in other local newsletters like the Parish ones?

Summary

- SCC is seen as responsive to local people and actively seeking to engage them. The Local Committee and the Citizens' Panel itself are seen as clear indications of this. The Local Committee makes SCC very accessible to local people.
- SCC needs to promote its services and the Local Committee locally. Including the Local Committee letting people know that they can come along and ask questions etc.
- Local contact numbers should be listed in the yellow pages and in other local magazines / newsletters so that people know how to contact SCC.
- Experiences of using the call centre is very unsatisfactory.
- Local people would like to hear more about what SCC does and about the lobbying it does to Central Government.

CONSULTATION

3. The Panel is a consultative group of local representatives. The consultation from this meeting has been sent to the Borough Inspector and the Borough Community Safety Officer. It will also be used in the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and in a future Local Committee report on Community safety.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4. If Members agreed, some of the Members Allocations could be used locally to promote local contact details. Funding of **£500** would allow local newsletter and magazines to be targeted. Further funding would enable the Local Committee newsletter to be sent to local homes.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

5. None

CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

6. None

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7. The Panel is representative of the Surrey Heath Community.

CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

1. discusses the report, and:
2. decides whether to allocate £500 to purchasing advertising space in local newsletters and magazines.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: **None**