

Item 9

**Planning & Countryside Service
Annual Report**

SURREY HEATH LOCAL COMMITTEE

28 October 2004

KEY ISSUE:

The following is a summary of planning and development issues, and countryside and heritage issues relating to the Surrey Heath area for the year ended 31 March 2004.

SUMMARY:

The report contains local performance information for Transportation Development Control (which has the responsibility of responding to consultations from all the planning authorities in Surrey, on behalf of the County Council or the Highways Authority, on the transportation implications of planning applications). Surrey wide performance information is available for Minerals and Waste and Strategic Consultations on the County website at www.surreycc.gov.uk. (The relatively small numbers of applications and consultations dealt with per district mean that the local statistics for these services will have little validity.) The report also highlights the work of the Countryside & Heritage Division including Rights of Way.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is asked to note the report and comment on the performance of the service in the Surrey Heath area.

INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

1. This report includes an overview of major applications and policy developments over the past year and also any anticipated issues for the year ahead. The intention is that Members are kept informed of major developments. All statistics and performance data in this report are for the Surrey Heath area.

THE LOCAL PROFILE

2. The local profile was dealt with in a report to this committee on the Census Data earlier this year.

TRANSPORTATION DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

3. Transportation Development Control (TDC) has the responsibility of responding to consultations from all the planning authorities in Surrey, on behalf of the County Council or the Highways Authority, on the transportation implications of planning applications.

Number of responses to applications dealt with within 14 days:

4. Surrey Heath Borough Council (SHBC) consulted Surrey County Council as Highway Authority on approximately 1177 planning applications in 2003/4. TDC responded to 75% of these applications on the same day or the next day because the applications had little or no impact on the highway.
5. TDC selected 291 applications (25%) for further action and responded to 83% (average over the year) of these applications within 14 days. TDC aims to respond to 85% of applications within 14 days.
6. Surrey Heath Borough Council, like other Local Planning Authorities is under increasing government pressure to determine planning applications quickly within fixed timescales. Surrey Heath has suffered in meeting these timescales due to the number of large-scale applications and those requiring Legal Agreements. TDCD have sought contributions from more smaller scale developments than ever before and this had lead to an increasing number of developments requiring Legal Agreements to which the Highway Authority are required to be a signatory.
7. The statistics set by Government take account of the date that Planning Permission is issued. Where Legal Agreements are sought, the issue of the permission is deferred until the completion of the Agreement. As such it has been difficult for the Borough to complete the Agreements in accordance with the government statistics. Whilst ways of improving this are now being implemented, it nonetheless puts further pressure on TDCD staff, the Borough and County Solicitors to complete the Agreements within an acceptable timeframe.

Transportation gains negotiated within the reporting period

8. Where appropriate TDC request transportation improvements from planning applications, the type and level of transportation benefits sought depends on the nature of development proposed. The borough of Surrey Heath has two distinct areas. In the north west of the borough large-scale development proposals are popular in the many industrial and commercial

areas. In the south of the borough, development proposals are less significant and tend to be smaller in scale. Over the last year TDC has negotiated several significant contributions towards transportation initiatives, highway works and public transport improvements in the Surrey Heath area.

9. There were a number of planning applications within the Yorktown Strategy area. This has resulted in complex and lengthy discussions that have allowed TDCD to secure additional funding and the acquisition of third party land towards the Strategy measures.
10. In respect of other planning applications, TDC have secured transportation improvements aimed at improving road safety and encouraging the use of alternative modes of travel to the private car. These mitigation measures in Surrey Heath come to a total value in excess of £400,000 during the reporting period. This total does not comprise all funds secured and there have been many other small developments that have provided smaller scale highway works and contributions to the benefit of highway safety and convenience for all users of the highway.

Land West of Park Street

11. TDC staff has formed part of the Land West of Park Street Project group and has been advising and attending regular project meetings with Borough Officers and the Developer in respect of the town centre development proposals. Whilst yet to be determined, the application comprises a significant volume of work for TDCD at both the planning stage and if granted and implemented, at the construction stage.

Working in Partnership

12. Surrey Heath Planning Officers and Members generally support the recommendations of TDCD on Planning Applications and despite a great interest in highway matters, highway recommendations are rarely overturned. There remains to be concern in regard to Surrey's Parking Strategy. TDCD have been and will continue to work closely with Planning Officers and Members in justifying the County's position on parking issues
13. TDCD has continued to work closely with the Local Transportation Service and the Chairman of SCC's Local Committee in Surrey Heath and hopes to build upon the good relationship already established.

COUNTRYSIDE AND HERITAGE

Rights of Way

- 14 Our work on public rights of way included replacing 84 missing signposts and clearing over 15,000 metres of surface vegetation, as well as surface repairs, drainage works and repair or replacement of three bridges. We also arranged for adjoining residents and landowners to cut back overhanging vegetation, and worked with volunteers on footpath clearance and minor maintenance tasks.

STRATEGIC CONSULTATIONS

- 15 During 2003/04 the Spatial Policy Group has continued preparing the Surrey Structure Plan which reached its crucial Public Examination stage in November 2003. The final Structure Plan is expected to be approved by the County Council in October 2004. The Local Committees have had opportunities throughout the process to comment on the plan as it developed. The Group has also been very involved in the preparation of the South East Plan (being prepared by the Regional Assembly) and in particular, has acted as the lead officer support for the preparation of various sub-regional strategies. The group has also played a key role in the continuing push for more affordable housing in the county and has taken a lead role in the proposed 'S' developments being promoted by the County Council using its own land.

Minerals, Waste and County Council Development

- 16 Surrey County Council is responsible for deciding planning applications for:
- mineral developments (proposals for the extraction of minerals such as sand, gravel, clay, chalk and oil and gas or facilities for their initial processing);
 - waste developments (proposals for the disposal, storage and processing of waste, such as landfills, energy from waste plants, recycling, transfer stations, composting facilities, etc); and
 - developments the County Council needs to carry out for itself, or jointly with another body, to deliver the services for which it is responsible for providing (for example proposals at schools, social services facilities, the County Council's own office buildings, and new or significantly improved roads).
- 17 In this report applications for minerals and waste developments are referred to as 'county matter' applications and applications for the County Council's own development are referred to as 'county development' applications.
- 18 Within the Planning and Countryside Service the Minerals, Waste and County Development Division is responsible for processing both county matter and county development planning applications and reporting them, as necessary, to the Planning and Regulatory Committee.

County Matter Decisions

19. During the year the County Council issued decisions on 31 county matter applications (28 permissions and 3 refusals) and 16 submissions for approval of details required pursuant to conditions on an existing planning permission (details pursuant) or schemes of conditions on Interim Development Order permissions or Review of Old Minerals Planning permissions (all approved). None of the 31 county matter applications determined were for developments requiring an environmental impact assessment (EIA) to be undertaken and the applications accompanied by

Environmental Statements. No decisions were issued within the Surrey Heath Borough Council area.

20. Of the 47 county matter decisions (applications, details pursuant and schemes of conditions) issued in 2002/03, 47% were determined under delegated powers by the Head of Planning and Countryside, and 53% by the Planning and Regulatory Committee.
21. Due to the more complex nature of many minerals and waste development proposals longer periods are required to enable extensive consultations and negotiations, and to ensure that the proposed development is acceptable in all respects. In recognition of this no targets are set by Government to apply to county matter applications for Best Value performance indicator BVP109. Instead the County Council is required to set its own year on year target for determining county matter applications subject to BVP109.
22. BVP109 only applies to decisions on county matter applications not accompanied by environmental statements. Of the 31 decisions to which BVP109 applies, 32% (10) were determined within 13 weeks exceeding the target set for 2002-2003 of 25%. Given the very small number of cases involved no meaningful statistics can be produced for each of the Districts.

County Development Decisions

23. During the year the County Council issued 60 decisions for county development proposals (56 permissions and four details pursuant submissions approved). Details of the decisions issued within the Surrey Heath Borough Council area can be found in Annexe 1 of this report.
24. Of the 60 decisions on county development applications and submissions, 67% (40) were determined under delegated powers by the Head of Planning and Countryside, and 33% (20) by the Planning and Regulatory Committee.
25. There are no Best Value performance indicators which apply to county development applications. However, of the 56 planning permissions issued for county development applications in 2003/04, 70% were determined in less than 13 weeks.

Applicant satisfaction surveys

26. In 2003/04 the County Council was required by Best Value Performance Indicator BV111 to survey applicants who had received a decision on a minerals and waste application over the period 1 April to 30 September 2003. The survey questions, set by government were designed to investigate applicants experience with the planning service delivered by the County Council, and their overall satisfaction with the service. Eleven applicants were surveyed of which nine responded. Of these six (66.6%) were very or fairly satisfied, one (11.1%) was fairly dissatisfied and two (22.2%) were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the service provided.
27. Although the County Council did not achieve the BV111 target of 75% satisfaction and the satisfaction level is down on the 2000/01 survey

76.9% satisfaction level, rapport with applicants is generally good. The small number of applicants dealt with means that disproportionate percentage swings can result from slight variations in results.

28. As BV111 only applies to applicants receiving decisions on minerals and waste applications the County Council decided to run a similar survey for applicants who had received a decision on county development applications (County Council applications). The survey was conducted in the same way as the BV111 survey.
29. applicants were surveyed on the county development survey, of which eight responded. Of these six were very satisfied and two fairly satisfied with the service, giving an overall satisfaction score of 100%.

Summary of Minerals and Waste Planning Enforcement Activities During 2003

30. The 2003 Annual Monitoring Report, to be published later this year, will contain a chapter on Enforcement that gives statistical information regarding visits and complaints in addition to a broad-brush view of enforcement officers work and details several specific sites of particular interest that have been dealt with throughout the County during the year.
31. The associated appendix then details sites, the number of site visits and a brief individual site update on both the mineral and major waste sites within the 11 local planning authorities within the County.
32. In the Borough of Surrey Heath, 10 monitoring site visits to authorised mineral and waste sites took place with a further 0 investigative visits to sites reported as unauthorised waste operations. Details of the site visits can be found in Annexe 2 of this report.

CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

This report details the work and performance of the various aspects of the Planning and Countryside service in the Waverley area. Members are asked to note the work of the service and comment on any of its aspects.

Report by: **Roger Hargreaves, Head of Planning and Countryside**

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: **Roger Hargreaves, Head of Planning and Countryside**

TELEPHONE NUMBER: **020 8541 9302**

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Annex 1

COUNTY DEVELOPMENT DECISIONS ISSUED IN 2003/04

Application No Applicant Site Address	Description of Proposal	Notice Issued and Decision Date
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SURREY HEATH

SU03/0912 Ravenscote Junior School, Old Bisley Road, Frimley, Camberley	Provision of new parking area off the existing entrance drive to provide sufficient space to prevent existing users causing obstructions and parking hazardously in the existing car park	GRANT 20/10/03
SU03/0908 Land at former Spartan Boys Club, Portesbery Road, Camberley	Installation of demountable classroom for a temporary period of five years for use by Portesbery School	GRANT 21/11/03
SU04/0016 Land at Holy Trinity Primary School and 44 Benner Lane, West End	Overcladding on existing brickwork on school buildings and caretaker's house with horizontal board cladding	GRANT 17/02/04
SU03/1332 Bagshot Highway Depot, London Road, Bagshot	Retention of temporary demountable office building until 17 December 2005	GRANT 26/02/04

Schedule of Enforcement Activity during 2003

Annex 2

Site Name and Address	OS Grid Ref (eastings/ northings)	Activity	Operator	No. of Visits in 2002	Remarks
SURREY HEATH					
Swift Lane Civic Amenity Site, Bagshot	492128 163190	Waste Processing / Transfer	Surrey Waste Management	2	Site monitoring continues.
Wilton Road Transfer Station, Camberley	486819 159248	Waste Processing / Transfer	Surrey Waste Management	2	Site monitoring continues.
Camberley Sewage Treatment Works, Doman Rd, Camberley	486010 159501	Waste Processing / Transfer	Thames Water/ Thames Waste Management	2	Site monitoring continues.
Chobham Car Spares, Clearmount, Burrow Hill, Chobham	497092 163943	Waste Processing / Transfer	Chobham Scrap Yard	2	Scrap yard operations now being undertaken within less than half of the permitted Certificate of Lawful Use site area. District Council still addressing the proposed use of the remaining area for vehicle storage.
Land opposite Dettingen Barracks, Deepcut Bridge Road, Deepcut	490339 157914	Waste concrete recycling centre	Wooldridge Demolition	2	All waste materials removed and unauthorised activities ceased.