

Item 10

The Standing Citizens' Panel for Surrey Heath

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S LOCAL COMMITTEE (SURREY HEATH)

18th July 2006

KEY ISSUE:

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

SUMMARY:

On 14th June the Citizens' Panel met to discuss local issues and Members Allocations.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Local Committee notes the report.

INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

1. The Standing Citizens Panel for Surrey Heath was set up following a meeting of the Local Committee on 17th July 2003. At this meeting, Members agreed that the Panel would be an innovative way to engage and consult with local people on local issues.

Notes from the Panel meeting on 14th June 2006.

Present:	David Gradwell	Keith Steel	Anne Greenstreet
	Ray Bates	Carol Brooke-Read	Anila Arshad-Mehmood
	Tim Price	Tony Camfield	Tal Gurevich
	Shirley Covenny	Chris Furneaux	Chris Chaney
	Diane Carol		

SCC officers present: Carolyn Rowe and Jane Biscombe

LOCAL ISSUES

2. The Panel were asked to identify local issues in Surrey heath.

3. **Surrey County Council's Business Delivery Review.**

Panel Members asked how BDR would affect local people in Surrey Heath and were concerned about the costs of the aborted move of County Hall to Woking. Carolyn Rowe outlined the BDR process that has been in progress since Autumn 2005. It is a major reorganisation of SCC but with minimum redundancies. Reporting of issues via the SCC website is being promoted

(www.surreycc.gov.uk)

The local Surrey Heath pages may be found at

www.surreycc.gov.uk/surreyheath.

The upper management of SCC has been reorganised into four directorates:

- Families (Adults and Community Care, Youth, Children's services, Education)
- Communities (Libraries, Adult and Community Learning, Registrar Services, Contact centre, Planning, transportation, waste)
- Policy and Performance (Local Partnership team, Policy)
- Corporate Services (Finance, Human Resources, IT, legal)

4. For local people this means greater access to SCC services via the contact centre, some changes to the Local Transportation Service (change in location and budget cuts). Transportation decisions will still be made via the Local Committee though and local people will still be able to ask questions / submit petitions to the Local Committee.

5. **Merger of Police Forces, Health and Ambulance Trusts.**

Panel members were concerned how much this would cost and how much the tax payer would ultimately end up paying.

6. **Transportation issues.**

- Frimley Park Hospital. The Panel noted that this issue was probably more for the hospital to deal with than SCC's Transportation Service, but noted that since the introduction of Decriminalised Parking Enforcement (DPE) the situation had not really improved as people were parking on the double yellow lines. Panel members were also concerned that they had not heard of any new developments to solve the gridlock situation around the hospital.

UPDATE - There are very few waiting restrictions around the Hospital. Enforcement of yellow lines is now done by Surrey Heath Borough Council on Surrey's behalf. Specific problem areas can be passed on at the time to the parking service at SHBC or via SCC. The Local Transportation Service is continuing with the Frimley Parking Study and whilst BDR has impacted on the programme it is the intention to provide a scheme for Local Committee approval at the end of the year as indicated in January's Committee report.

- The Meadows roundabout. This is very busy during the morning and evening but the Panel noted that there was probably not a lot that could be done.

UPDATE - The Camberley Movement Study, looking at all aspects of transportation, is due to be undertaken following approval of a number of town centre and other local developments. At present there is no programme or scoping for this work and it requires discussion with Surrey's Transportation Studies group who would likely carry out much of the work.

- The Red Road, traffic still speeds along this stretch.

UPDATE - The Local Transportation service will pass this concern onto the Local Casualty Reduction Officer.

- The Toshiba Roundabout. Where are the traffic lights? When will they be going in?

UPDATE - The scheme is classed as an intermediate scheme, i.e. over £500k in value and not funded by the Local Committee's devolved budget. These schemes are funded centrally by the LTP group and the Local Committee in March requested I seek information as to how intermediate

schemes are prioritised. This is still an outstanding task for me to action. The Toshiba scheme is not currently programmed for funding

- Links with Bracknell Forest. Could SCC work with Bracknell Forest on a link road to increase access to the A322 from the A30? Jane assured Panel members that Councillors fully understood the issues but that changes cannot be made straight away, especially with very strict budgets. The Panel asked for planners to think more creatively and suggested light railways and toll roads as possible solutions.

UPDATE - There are no proposals at present. Light rail for the area has previously been discounted and new road provision only likely to be justified with a strong business case.

- There was concern at the standard of maintenance work and the level of supervision, especially in Portesbury Road and Woodlands Road.

UPDATE - Under the Surrey Highways Partnership Contract, works are 'self supervised'. Those Surrey staff remaining post BDR will continue (as they have always tried to do) to influence works as much as possible but it has been and will continue to be difficult given current resources. What were the problems raised? The more specific the better. We are aware of incorrect road markings in Woodlands being laid and material failures in Portesbury Road.

7. Infrastructure and Development.

The Panel felt that development happened back to front in Surrey Heath, that new buildings were built first and then the roads and infrastructure. Development is not looked at in the context of other developments in the area. The development of the Local Development Framework (LDF) by Surrey Heath Borough Council should improve this situation.

The South East Plan can be found at the South East Regional Assembly website at www.southeast-ra.gov.uk

The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area limits development in areas near designated sites. In Surrey Heath these are around the Old Dean, Chobham and West End commons. This is having a significant impact on the amount of new housing that is able to be built.

8. Public Transport.

Trains to London are getting slower and more trains require you to change at Ascot. In 1947 it took an average of 1 hr and 5 minutes to get to London, now it takes 1 hr and 15 minutes.

Young people view trains as more useful than buses and are happy using the station in Camberley at night even though some adult members of the Panel felt that there should be a security guard based there during the night.

People feel forced to use stations outside of Surrey Heath due to the long journey times from Camberley station.

The Panel also commented that public transport fares keep rising even though the service is getting worse.

9. Crime and Disorder Issues.

The Panel felt that ASBOs had little effect and that young people on the streets are still seen as intimidating. Some people even viewed the town centre as a no go area at night even though the crime statistics for this area are very low.

Panel members were pleased that the new licensing laws had not had a major negative impact on the crime levels in the town centre and many thought that staggered closing times had actually eased the situation.

10. Youth issues.

Young people can't get DVD's out of Libraries and some find this frustrating. There is a shortage of places for young people to go, especially as the youth café has closed for the summer. Young people feel targeted if they go out with their friends as people immediately assume they are being anti-social and intimidating. It could be that some young people act anti-socially as they think this is what society expects from them, if they were treated differently they might act differently.

Young people get the blame for a lot of the bad behaviour in the town centre when this is usually older drunk people, not young people.

There are specific, alcohol free nights for young people, like SNAP and the nights at Pantiles or Envy but there may be some concern as this may just get young people into the habit of going out clubbing and so they may be more likely to do so when they turn 18 and be exposed to alcohol and anti-social behaviour.

The young people on the Panel told the group about the young people's website in Surrey www.urcountyursay.net it give lots of information, links to sites of interest, details the work of the Surrey Youth Parliament and gives travel and cinema times.

11. Contact Centre.

The Panel felt that the contact centre still needed improving and that waiting times were increasing. The Panel suggested separating the switchboard element from the general enquiry element. Jane will pass on these comments to the contact centre.

12. Older People.

A Panel member raised the issue that in some private accommodation for the over 50's stair lifts have not been fitted during construction (although they are now). When people ask for these lifts to be fitted the owners of the building say it is a Health and safety issue and the Fire Service will not approve them. Jane will check this with the Fire Service.

13. Bagshot Post Office.

Bagshot Post Office will close on 22nd July. The Community are trying to find alternative provision or someone to run the existing post office.

14. Bagshot Library.

Panel members were concerned that the questionnaire regarding the future of Bagshot Library did not give enough variety of responses and appeared to be biased towards closure.

15. Blackdown school.

The Panel requested an update on what was happening with this site.

MEMBERS' ALLOCATIONS.

16. The Panel were asked to look at the out turn report for Members' Allocations in 2005 / 06 and comment on the allocations.

17. The Panel felt that the Members' Allocations were an excellent idea and offered a very accessible, flexible source of funds for local groups. In particular the Panel highlighted the funding to Police Community Support Officers as particularly

beneficial to local people. Some concern was raised at the level of funding to schools and Jane pointed out that School core costs were not funded by the Members' Allocations.

CONSULTATION

18. The Panel is a consultative group of local representatives. The notes in this report reflect the views of Panel members. Steps are being taken to increase the numbers and diversity of Panel Members.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

19. None

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

20. The issue of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area was raised as a local concern by the Panel as it is a barrier to new housing.

CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

21. As well as those issues detailed in the main body of the report, the Panel will discuss local Crime and Disorder issues at it's next meeting in September.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Local Committee notes the report.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: None