

Item 10

The Standing Citizens' Panel for Surrey Heath

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL'S LOCAL COMMITTEE (SURREY HEATH)

8th March 2007

KEY ISSUE:

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

SUMMARY:

On 13th December the Citizens' Panel met to discuss general local priorities and budget implications. Members have had the notes previously to inform wider discussions.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Local Committee notes the report.

INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

14. 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 13th December 2006.

Present: Sue Cartwright Chris Chaney
 Ray Bates George Daghish
 Diane Carol Jo Proctor

Surrey County Council Members present – Lavinia Sealy, Alan Peirce and Maurice Neighbour.

Surrey County Council - Carolyn Rowe, Jane Biscombe and Amber Jenkins.

Feedback from the last meeting

Introduction

2. The Churches Together Information available on the St Martin's website. <http://uk.geocities.com/st.martinsod@btinternet.com/directory/directory.html>. The SCP notes and minutes are fed back to County & Borough Councillors at Local Committee meetings.

Discussion on SCC priorities

3. Full budget information is available on the Surrey County Council website. www.surreycc.gov.uk. Residents feel aggrieved over council tax costs.

Question – Higher Charges or more cuts? The group were divided over this question. Some felt that costs were rising as services were worsening.

4. Could there be a single point of contact for special needs and/or a fast track procedure. It would be good if there were one local person to call who knows all regulations & red tape and can help carers.
5. The issue of financial help for 16-19 year old mental health patients was raised, it was thought that this had already been raised to the County approx 2 years ago. Voluntary Sector & NHS not picking up on this issue. Lack of co-ordination and a cross over of services. Hampshire County Council have clubs for people with mental health issues (Sunshine & Showers). Could this happen in Surrey Heath? A facilitator costs approx £4,000 – would this be a local funding priority? The voluntary sector can give information and advice on funding. The local news has reported on possible closures of Day Centres (re mental health – low level/depression). These need to remain open, could other facilities like Churches be used?
6. Surrey County Council needs to ensure it gets value for money from agencies and companies that provide health care. Also is value for money gained from highways contractors? Are all costs needed? The bus lane on A30 was not wanted by residents but pushed through anyway. However, Borough and County Council supported the bus lane to encourage bus journeys from Camberley to Aldershot.
7. There seem to be lots of expensive control loops in place, proliferation of control. If people are better trained to do their job then you wouldn't need so many managers. People need to be trusted to do their jobs though. This would reduce internal costs. Could the County learn about streamlining management from businesses?
8. Surrey County Council contact centre still does not have all the correct information although it is getting better.
9. Common assessment programme is being brought in to ensure assessment is a simpler process – trained professional to deal with all aspects. Has been or is being piloted in Woking.
10. Employment for people with disabilities is a local priority. Hillside Centre running courses for adults with learning disabilities – requires employers now to offer opportunities to the trained adults.
11. Surrey seen as more affluent than northern counties so less money given from central government. There are many pockets within Surrey of deprivation. Can the Council consider criteria for reductions in council tax ie over 65s, disability etc
12. Transport a priority – improve maintenance & project management. Can working 24/7 to complete a job or 2 x 8hr shifts be brought in? This may mean jobs take longer, there may be possible noise problems and it may cost more in the long run (ie wages/extra shifts)
13. Can the County consider cheap free buses for young people to get about. However we would need a very large & complex (expensive) transport system so this may not be viable locally.

14. Surrey County Council & Partners add value to children's lives, for example in the self reliance projects on the Old Dean, this should remain a priority.

Priorities

- Keep Council Tax rises low
- Reduction in over management
- Families
- Roads
- Community Safety
- Communicate Surrey's needs up to Government – each County should be treated fairly.

Next Meeting

15. The next meeting of the Panel will be in June.

CONSULTATION

16. 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

17. None

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

18. None.

CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

19. As detailed above.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

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

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Local Committee notes the report.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS: None