



Minutes: of the meeting of the Local Committee for Woking held at 5:00pm on 13 November 2002 at HG Wells Conference and Event Centre.

Members Present

Mr David Rousell - Chairman
Mr Geoff Marlow – Vice-Chairman
Mrs Elizabeth Compton
Mrs Sheila Gruselle
Mrs Margaret Hill
Mrs Val Tinney

Part One – In Public

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

86/02 Apologies for absence [Item 1]

None received.

87/02 Minutes of last meeting: 15 October 2002 [Item 2]

Confirmed and signed by the Chairman

88/02 Declarations of interests [Item 3]

In accordance with Standing Order 58, Mrs Gruselle declared a personal interest in item 11 on the agenda, Allocating Local Committee funding.

89/02 Petitions [Item 4]

No petitions were received in accordance with Standing Order 62.

It was agreed that Item 5, Public Questions, would be heard before Item 9, Knaphill Library, because the only question related to the banding of Knaphill Library.

90/02 **Members' Questions** [Item 6]

Mr Geoff Marlow asked a question under Standing Order 45 as follows:
“Are there any further developments in the role of the Local Committee in the scrutiny of the NHS?”

Geoff Marlow
Councillor
Woking East

The Chairman, Mr David Rousell, responded:

“It is likely that the Health Scrutiny Committee will develop a protocol with health organisations, and with the Local Committees and District Council Overview & Scrutiny Committees. The Committee may hold bi-annual planning and review meetings; in which the planning meetings the health bodies would provide their plans, and the County Council and district councils would identify areas for scrutiny, with inputs from health, the voluntary sector, business, user and carer representatives, research institutions, and Community Health Council [CHC] representatives (whilst CHCs remain in existence).”

91/02 **Children's Services Annual Report** [Item 7]

Members noted the performance and recent changes in Surrey's Children & Young People's Services. Judy Wright explained that future reports will contain information on the performance of Children's Services in Woking. Members asked for future reports to include totals as well as percentages and a commentary for any charts.

Replying to questions from Mr Marlow, Judy Wright said that:

- Agency staff are used to covers some vacancies, especially in children's homes. These are expensive and are also hard to find.
- Of the 24% of children that are not adopted or placed in foster homes, the needs of some are better met in children's homes. The service needs more foster carers but is doing well recruiting adoptive parents.
- Because adoption requires a life long decision, the assessment involves an independent panel. Children are generally placed with a family of similar ethnic inheritance. Where this cannot be arranged, the child is still adopted and assigned a mentor.

In reply to questions from Mrs Tinney, Judy Wright said that:

- Connexions will be providing some funds for youth services and Children's Services is submitting a bid for a multi-agency team for teenagers.

- The Service has identified a need to take more robust action for the protection of black and ethnic minority children and could do more to apply for Government funding in this area.
- Family centres are rated very highly by families because they provide a friendly environment and are geared to meet the needs of children.

Responding to questions from Mrs Gruselle, Judy Wright said that:

- The Service has adopted a workload management scheme where the workload is assessed on points. Each Social Worker takes on about 30 to 40 points. These are monitored and reviewed monthly.
- There has been an improvement in meeting deadlines for reviews. Officers now fix a date a month before the deadline and liaise with schools in advance if this occurs during school holidays. No Social Worker can be late or defer the review without permission from their manager.

Replying to a question from Mrs Compton, Judy Wright said that there is an impression that there are more children with challenging behaviour, even 5 to 6 year olds. Teams work with schools to ensure that the relationship between school and child is better and more supportive.

In response to questions from Margaret Hill, Judy Wright said that there are 800 children in care in Surrey. By bringing all the services together, officers will be better able to identify those children that need assistance. The first task for the new Children Strategic Partnership will be a needs analysis.

Members thanked Judy Wright for coming to the meeting to discuss Children's Services.

92/02 The Library Service in Woking [Item 8]

Members confirmed the role of the library service in Woking in promoting self-reliance and confirmed the range of service developments.

Responding to questions from Margaret Hill relating to development of services, Rose Wilson said that officers have been meeting with library friends groups and stakeholders to understand what people want from libraries

Mrs Gruselle asked about information CDs. Rose Wilson replied that area resource managers carry out stock profiling at each library to determine the usage of educational and recreation CDs. Libraries also work closely with education to devise an education development plan.

However, the Audit Commission commented that libraries need to improve selections for ethnic minority groups.

Members thanked Rose Wilson for a good, clear and concise report and for coming to the meeting to talk about library services in Woking.

93/02 **Public Questions** [Item 5]

This question was received from Knaphill Community Library Association:

"In relation to item 9 on Knaphill Library, please will the Committee delete "small" and "band 5" in recommendation (i) and explain why officers recommend that Knaphill Library should be small and in Band 5? The Committee should be aware that the Surrey County Council Communities and Country side Select Committee agreed, after enquiry, that Knaphill Library should not be in Band 5."

Officer's Response

A response was given by Chris Norris, Head of Libraries:

Officers recommend to the Local Committee that the replacement for Knaphill should be a small (Band 5) library for the following reasons:

- Library developments are required to be self financing in capital and cost neutral in revenue terms, thus making it difficult if not impossible to make the new library larger than the current one
- Patterns of use demonstrate that Woking library is a very powerful draw, having a catchment area, which includes Knaphill. This implies that a new library at Knaphill should be designed to complement Woking library
- The County Council has decided to retain all 52 libraries, thus reducing the options for rationalisation.

The Communities and Countryside Select Committee provides valuable advice and support to the portfolio holder for libraries. The Local Committee is aware of the advice of the Select Committee in relation to Knaphill. This advice may not have fully taken into account the above factors.

94/02 **Knaphill Library** [Item 9]

Members noted and agreed with officers that Knaphill Library is in a poor condition and that something needs to be done quickly to resolve the problem but that the solution must be self-financing and cost neutral.

In reply to questions from Mr Rousell and Mrs Tinney, Christine Holloway said that officers have been speaking with the Knaphill Community Library Association about options for the library and Chris

Norris confirmed that they will consult with Woking Borough Council and developers about the possibility of S106 funding, and of using neighbouring sites.

Resolved

- (a) That officers investigate the feasibility of creating a new library on the existing site;
- (b) That, if case (a) is not feasible, officers need to search for a suitable site to lease;
- (c) That if neither (a) nor (b) produce a solutions by 31 March 2003, officers are to investigate the feasibility of creating a new library near the Vyne.
- (d) That the Local Director should arrange for Knaphill Community Library Association to explain their views to Members.

95/02 Update on Local Committee funding allocations [Item 10]

Members noted that progress was being made on all previously agreed allocations except one, where the position will be sorted out soon. The Local Director recommended that another project, Democracy Day, which had been set aside for further exploration was not feasible.

Members resolved not to proceed with funding for a “Democracy day” project.

96/02 Allocating Local Committee Funding [Item 11]

Mrs Sheila Gruselle declared a personal interest in this item because she is a member of Surrey Care Trust on behalf of Surrey County Council.

Resolved

- (a) To allocate funding:
 - £1,000 to South Woking Help at Hand project
 - £10,000 to Woking Hospice portable ultrasound cancer equipment
 - £2,000 to combat under-age sale of alcohol on condition that there are specific targets for Woking and that it is allocated to the objective, delegating *Safer Woking* the responsibility of deciding how the money can be most effectively spent; and
 - £820 for an internet connection at Trinity Youth Centre on the condition that the centre opens before the end of February 2003.
- (b) That the remaining funds of £6,337 go towards a project with links to the Basingstoke Canal; and that authority is delegated to the Chairman, in consultation with Mrs Compton, to decide on the best way to do this.

97/02 Waste Management Performance Report [Item 12]

Members noted the distribution of waste management and other related responsibilities in the county and the 2001/02 waste management performance countywide and in Woking.

Members noted that the High Court conducted a judicial review of the decision by the County Planning Authority to grant planning permission to SITA to develop an incinerator at the Clockhouse Brickworks site at Capel in Mole Valley. The Judge upheld the application and quashed the decision of the County Planning Authority. Members also noted that the Government's intention to introduce a Bill to develop a national strategy that diverts biodegradable municipal waste from landfill was included in the Queen's Speech at the opening of Parliament and it was likely that landfill limits would be imposed.

Replying to questions from Mrs Tinney, Bob Stranks said that:

- Surrey County Council has done well in comparison to other counties to dispose of old fridges. It is still unclear how much of the £40 million the Government is going to allocate Surrey. Disposal costs to date are about £1.7 million and there is no evidence that the rate of disposal is reducing.
- The Mayor of London has released a draft consultation on London's waste strategy. Bob Stranks has sent a reply and comments on behalf of Surrey County Council to the Mayor of London via Surrey's Executive.

In response to questions from Margaret Hill, Bob Stranks said that the relationship between Surrey County Council and the district and borough councils had improved. However, new tensions can be caused when the Government introduces new legislation. It is important that the county and borough and district councils recognise each other's roles and complement each other. Surrey County Council is working hard to make this relationship work.

Replying to questions from Mr Rousell, Bob Stranks said that:

- The 12 authorities in Surrey are currently discussing a joint waste strategy. The new bill focuses on diverting waste from landfill, not recycling. Other ways of dealing with waste need to be found.
- If authorities are unable to deal with waste the Secretary of State will intervene.
- Surrey County Council offers £1.5 million in landfill credits. Authorities and other groups are encouraged to use this scheme which will end on 31 March 2005. Basingstoke Canal has received substantial funds from landfill tax credits.

Ray Morgan, Executive Director of Woking Borough Council, said that he too felt Woking Borough Council and Surrey County Council were working together and felt that a holistic approach is the best. He hoped

to present a plan to the County Council, provided it was approved by Woking Borough Council Members.

98/02 **Forward Programme** [Item 13]

Members agreed the forward programme with a correction to an item in May 2003 that the words "Corporate Plan 2003/04" be deleted and replaced with "Corporate Plan 2004/05".

Resolved that the following items be added to the programme:

- Plans for Woking that are likely to affect the green belt
- A discussion on how the Committee can reduce fear of crime and perceived crime in Woking.

99/02 **Exclusion of the Press and Public** [Item 14]

There were no items of business that involved the likely disclosure of exempt information.

[Meeting Ended 7.05 pm]

Chairman