



Minutes of the Local Committee for Woking
General Agenda
Meeting held at 4.15 pm on 22 October 2003
at
the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Woking.

Members present:

Mr David Rousell - Chairman
Mr Geoff Marlow – Vice-Chairman
Mrs Elizabeth Compton (arrived at 5.45pm)
Mrs Margaret Hill
Mrs Val Tinney

Part One – In Public

[All references to items refer to the agenda for the meeting]

73/03 Apologies for absence [Item 1]

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Sheila Gruselle. It was noted that Mrs Compton would only attend for later agenda items because she was ill.

74/03 Minutes of last meeting held on 23 July 2003 [Item 2]

Confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

75/03 Declarations of interests [Item 3]

No declarations of interest in accordance with Standing Order 58 were made.

76/03 Petitions [Item 4]

No petitions in accordance with Standing Order 62 were received.

77/03 **Written Public Questions** [Item 5]

This question was received from Mr John D Mitchell

The land at Little Moor Lane Farm is owned by Surrey County Council, and managed by Messrs Bruton Knowles at Leatherhead. These water-meadows are let to a Tenant Farmer. They are also used for the admission and holding of flood water from the River Wey.

In October 2000 the ditch at Little Moor Lane Farm was dredged. There was no notification to homeowners along the bank. Operatives crossed the ditch without permission and trees were cut on owners' properties without notice or permission.

It has now been established through the Environment Agency that, in addition, the dredging work was incorrectly done. The ditch was dug too deep, and banks were left in an unstable condition.

The specification for this work made available by Surrey County Council (SCC) indicates that the bank sides should have been left with a batter (or slope) of 40-45 degrees. In fact banks were left close to the vertical, or were undermined.

Spoil (mainly sand) taken from the ditch still lines the bank on the SCC side in an unsightly pile about 2km long. The specification asked that this be removed.

Many properties in Westfield, Kingfield and Old Woking are affected, with the undermining of sheds, walls, summerhouses and paths.

Two in particular, numbers 10 and 11 Riverdale Drive, Kingfield, are at risk because the house buildings stand as close as 10-12ft to the ditch. Flooding causes the unstable banks to subside within a few feet of the house buildings, and land is being lost to the ditch. Trees and shrubs have lurched into or across the ditch or are leaning far towards the other side.

We have been informed that the work was paid for by a one-off payment made by Surrey County Council.

All attempts to get the County Council to accept liability have failed. They have also declined to send engineers to inspect the sites most at risk or the ditch as a whole. Instead they have merely recommended that householders should take action against the sub-contractors through the courts.

Would the Committee take urgent steps:

- to see that the stability of the banks is reinstated along the whole of its length where properties line the bank; and
- to secure the banks of numbers 10 and 11 Riverdale Drive from further erosion as the house-buildings stand so close to the water?

Christine Holloway, Local Director for Woking responded:

This is a technical question about a very specific local issue, and we will reply to the questioner individually in writing as soon as practicable.

In clarification, Mr Mitchell was informed that the reply would come directly from Surrey County Council centrally, not from the Local Committee. The Local Committee Chairman would be kept informed and Mr Mitchell was asked to come back to the Local Committee Chairman if he was not happy with the progress made.

78/03 Written Members' Questions [Item 6]

This question was received from Cllr Geoff Marlow

Will the Disability Discrimination Act apply to County Council facilities as well as to public buildings? I am thinking particularly of the waste facility in Martyr's Lane, Woking. There are steep steps to be negotiated up to the position from where you can drop your rubbish into the crusher, and there is a torturous stairway up to the green waste skip if you need two hands just to carry branches, etc. These steps and stairs make it difficult for the elderly, disabled and the muscularly challenged citizens to dispose of their rubbish.

Sue Johnson, Equalities Coordinator, responded:

We have a responsibility under Part II of the Act (already in force) to provide the same level of service to disabled people as to anyone else. So disabled people should be able to dispose of/recycle their waste just like anyone else can. In this instance this would either mean making changes to people being able to access the crusher/skip so that they can be used by everyone OR providing an alternative means of providing the service to disabled people which gives them the same level of service. If the cost of making the crusher/skips usable by disabled people is relatively small, then the Act would expect this to be the preferred option. If this option is impractical or financially disproportionate, the council could for example offer to collect the

waste direct from a disabled person's home, as an alternative means of providing the service.

Richard Parkinson, Operations Group Manager, Sustainable Development responded:

The site staff are available to assist people who are not able to lift their waste up the steps or into the containers. Signs should be displayed on the site to this effect. In addition the borough council will collect waste direct from homes either as part of the normal weekly collection or as a special collection for bulky waste.

Executive Functions

79/03 Member Update on Lead Area [Item 7]

i) Mrs Hill informed the Committee about a successful youth meeting with County and Borough Councillors organised by the Connexions Advisor at Woking Community Relations Forum during Local Democracy Week for 13-19 year olds. 30 young people, mainly from the ethnic minority community, attended. All those who attended wished there had been longer time for the lively debate and would like it repeated in the future.

ii) Mr Marlow reported that action was now being taken by Thames Water regarding the valve to delay flooding near Fox Lake Farm, Byfleet. He had had trouble getting a response from Thames Water. He would like to invite them to a future meeting of the Local Committee.

iii) Mr Rousell explained to the Committee that a new Minerals Plan is being developed. Woking Borough Council has endorsed the transportation of aggregate by rail, but has objected to the continued siting of the aggregates depot in Woking on the following grounds:

1. given its proximity to the town centre it would be more appropriate for the site to be allocated for uses that are compatible with a town centre location.
2. continued HGV movement to and from the site is a nuisance to local residents and contrary to objectives of the Surrey Structure Plan Deposit Draft.
3. access to the site is substandard and therefore prejudicial to highway safety.

The County Minerals Task Group is talking to British Rail to see if there are other possible sites that it could be moved to.

iv) Mrs Tinney reported that the Government is putting forward £1million for councils to bid against for key worker housing, and it is hoped that Surrey will be eligible to put in a bid for some of this.

v) The following briefing was circulated on behalf of Mrs Compton:

WOKING AREA PRIMARY CARE TRUST [PCT]

The Woking Area PCT has a budget of £ 173m for 205,000 people who reside in Woking and Surrey Heath as well as in New Haw and Woodham in Runnymede, and Ash, Ash Vale, Pirbright and Tongham in Guildford. It has a Board of Directors, with some co-opted members including Christine Holloway, our Local Director.

Its objectives are to provide a primary care service of the highest quality, and to promote joint working with local authorities, the voluntary sector, and other providers. Last year the PCT received 23 formal complaints but also 156 compliments. Last year's plans for a better service included reduction in waiting times by giving patients a greater choice over time and place of treatment, children's services, and mental health. Community Health Councils will be replaced by Patients' Forums from 1 December 2003.

OLDER PEOPLE

Woking Borough Council invited two of its partners, Surrey CC Adult and Community Care Services and Woking PCT, to join a 'thematic' Best Value Review of Older Peoples' Services.

A significant new approach to partnership working has been to appoint an Integrated Service Manager for Woking, Eve Verwey. The postholder is responsible for all Surrey County Council's Social Care Services and the integration of the Borough's Home Support Service and PCT's Community services - a new approach.

Experience of individual users of the service and their carers would be recorded and used by the Services Manager for continuous improvement within our Borough. In June we mapped supply and demand, preparing baseline information with a view to a final report this autumn.

Evidence supports Woking as being a forward-thinking area. As elsewhere, there are recruitment problems.

There are many services for older people in the town and the consultants, Cordis Bright, were complimentary about this. Our booklet is excellent, and provides details of the many services provided.

The collaborative Advantage Session is to be held in November, and an action plan produced from the session. A whole system event is

planned for December, detailing the findings from the review and establishing the way forward.

ADULTS AND COMMUNITY CARE SELECT COMMITTEE

The 2003/04 priorities in north west Surrey fall into four categories; **our customers** include all groups, children, young people, adults and older people, who depend upon **our resources** e.g. 'the right budget for outcomes.'

We need '**people first**' values and to attract good staff to provide **a strong focus on key priorities**. First, a fairer charging policy has been ensured.

We must provide supported housing for a whole range of different groups of people.

One of the most interesting new initiatives is 'Telecare', a modern type of home care where there is constant touch with the outside world throughout the home, and any problems are detected by sensors, pull cords etc. The 'Columba' project, with first patients from April 2003, presents new skills in assessment and rehabilitation, and new parties for delivery.

In 2003/04 the County Council has invested additional monies in older peoples' services to reduce the number of delays in hospitals across Surrey. Delayed transfers will be governed by a reimbursement policy system, with a statutory obligation on hospital staff to agree a date of discharge, with 24 hours then to effect it. Hopefully this will free up NHS beds and hasten rehabilitation.

80/03 Support for Carers in Woking [Item 9]

Mike Geernaert introduced the report which highlighted the key role that carers have to play in the community. The North West Surrey Strategy Group co-ordinates caring across Woking and Surrey Heath. They provide both adult and young carers with flexible support.

In response to a question from Mrs Tinney regarding electronic access to information available for carers, it was noted that Surrey has just finished a project to get information available on line, which includes the first on-line radio station for carers. By January 2004 each area in the County will be able to download an information pack. Hard copies will also be available. It is hoped that the website could also be used to support hospital discharge.

The Committee noted the huge savings that carers in Woking make and praised the work they do.

In response to a question from Mr Rousell regarding the new hospital discharge responsibility, Mike Geernaert reported that Adults and Community Care are working closely with health to make sure that Surrey County Council benefits from additional money to reduce the number of delayed transfers, and explained that Surrey County Council will be fined for everyone who is delayed in hospital. The money available does not cover fines. Health are willing to return 50% of the fines to Surrey County Council to reinvest to prevent further delayed discharge. Surrey County Council are trying to get 100% of the money back. The biggest problem that Surrey County Council face is trying to find the service needed when people leave hospital.

It was noted that Adults and Community Care need to work closer with the hospital system to ensure that all carers are identified and can be given appropriate support.

Members noted the report and praised the valuable work done by carers and looked forward to hearing about progress made next year.

81/03 The Library Service in Woking [Item 10]

Rose Wilson introduced the report which updated the Committee on the performance of the library service, its promotion of self reliance, and mobile library provision in Woking. It was noted that the Library Service is looking to update library buildings by looking for external partners or to relocate smaller libraries with other services.

Issues from the mobile libraries have dropped, but they are still widely used, especially by the elderly. The service hopes to bring the internet to mobile libraries and to try different locations for stops, such as schools or GP surgeries.

Chris Phillips has offered to meet with Members individually to discuss the mobile library service in their area. Chris Phillips contact details would be circulated to Members of the Committee.

Members asked to be kept informed of changes in the mobile library service provision. In response to a question from Mrs Hill regarding visually impaired children, Rose Wilson explained that a new social inclusion team has just been established and she will ensure that they make links with Sythwood School.

RESOLVED

Members welcomed the report and:

- a) Noted the range of service developments in Woking

- b) Agreed to give their ideas on the role of the Library Service in promoting self reliance and opportunities offered by the mobile library service to the Area Manager (North West) Libraries outside the meeting.

82/03 **Policing in Woking Borough** [Item 8]

Inspector Smith presented his report and explained to the Committee that the percentage increase in crime categories can look larger than it is: for example 13 more crimes show a 20% increase in robbery.

The National Crime Reporting Standards were introduced last April to get standardisation across all forces. These have affected figures across the UK. Surrey is still in the top two quartiles nationally.

The increase in violent crime in the town centre is being tackled in a number of ways including increased foot patrols, objecting to the renewal of one public entertainment licence, taking a licensee to court and the successful objection of a proposed new nightclub in Woking town. The latest figures show a decrease in violent crime in the town centre during the last month.

The jointly funded mobile CCTV vehicle has been used and there has been a 40% reduction in crime in West Byfleet.

In response to a question from Mrs Tinney, Inspector Smith explained that the mobile CCTV vehicle need only be used in the town centre in areas not covered by fixed CCTV.

In response to comments from Mr Marlow and Mr Rousell regarding the quality of the service when you contact the Police by phone, Inspector Smith explained that Surrey Police has recently recruited an extra 41 people to deal with calls so he expects improvement in this area.

Members noted the report, and thanked Inspector Smith for his presentation.

83/03 **Children's Services Annual Report** [Item 11]

Judy Wright presented the report which summarised the performance of the Children's Service for Social Care, Early Years and Childcare and Youth Justice during 2002/03. The report covered services to the most vulnerable young people in Woking, which have high costs for few people.

The high costs of living in Surrey make recruitment and retention of staff a problem. Mrs Tinney explained that the Corporate Management

Select Committee was making recommendations to the Executive on recruitment, and was hoping that the new commensurate care agency would help get agency staff in place more quickly. Christine Holloway added that the Community Support Team are working with Adults and Community Care to encourage people from the ethnic minority communities to apply for jobs.

It was noted that many of the children being looked after by the County Council are placed outside Surrey. A new foster care recruitment programme has been launched and Judy Wright will circulate details of this to all Members.

In response to a question from Mrs Tinney regarding the impact of court proceedings, Judy Wright explained that Children's Services are being proactive in liaising with the courts to help them recognise that Children's Services have to use their resources for all children in need in Surrey, not just the ones discussed in court.

In response to a question from Mrs Hill regarding the Service's boundary changes, Judy Wright explained that they were supporting staff through the change, and believed that the current change would be beneficial for working practices. The new boundaries help the PCT to work with Children's Services through the four Area Partnership Groups.

Judy Wright offered the opportunity for Members to job shadow officers within the Children's Service.

Members thanked Judy Wright for attending and noted the report.

84/03 Youth Service Annual Report [Item 12]

David Waine presented the report which explained the new planning arrangements for the development of the Youth Local Plan for Woking for 2004/05 and outlined the current youth provision in Woking.

He explained that the service has many vacant posts and a recruitment campaign is currently running. The service works in partnership to achieve the most with limited resources.

In response to a question from Mrs Tinney regarding the age profile of the Walton Road Youth Centre and the current use of it, it was explained that the Youth Service aims its services at 11-25 year olds. Walton Road tends to attract people aged 15-20, with the majority between 17-19. The Youth Centre leader is keen to develop a junior evening and a senior evening, but is unable to do so at present because staff vacancies mean they must concentrate on the majority client group.

In response to a question from Mrs Hill on the Woking Youth Arts Centre, it was reported that a project manager had been appointed and they plan to open after Christmas. David Waine agreed to keep Members informed regarding progress on the work schedule.

RESOLVED

Members noted the report and would like the proposals for a workshop to consider next year's plan, for a multi-agency strategy and for consultation with young people to be developed further and for Woking to gain experience from how these work elsewhere in the county.

85/03 Annual Report from Surrey Trading Standards [Item 13]

Richard Nowacki introduced the report on the service that Trading Standards provided in Woking in 2002/03. This included work on doorstep crime and underage alcohol sales.

Regarding doorstep crime, it was reported that there had been no major cases reported in Woking. In mid November the service is re-launching a hotline for people to report this type of crime.

Regarding underage sales of alcohol, Trading Standards are responsible for sales from off licences. Using money allocated by the Local Committee, 51 off licences were visited; then from 13 test purchases, only one off licence supplied alcohol to an underage person, which is a huge improvement on last year.

A recent consultation showed that Woking residents are not widely aware of the service provided by Trading Standards. Members discussed this and asked for more local publicity about the services provided.

RESOLVED

- a) Members noted the report which contained information on how the service was contributing to community safety.
- b) Members would like to see more people made aware of the service offered by Trading Standards locally.

86/03 Allocating Local Committee Funding: Members' Allocation [Item 14]

Christine Holloway introduced this report which set out bids against the £55,622 still available from this years Members' Allocation. It was noted that the funding rules have changed and the Local Committee can now commit money for future years because the Members' Allocation is now in the base budget.

RESOLVED

Members agreed:

- a) To release the full allocation approved at the meeting on 23 July 2003 to Shopmobility if their new request for sponsorship from local businesses isn't quickly successful.
- b) To fund all of the bids put forward with the recommended conditions; to allocate St John's Ambulance £3000 this year rather than £1000 for three consecutive years; and to ask St John's not to refer to their ambulance as a "Crusaider".

87/03 Local Committee Action Plan – Progress Report [Item 15]

Members noted the report.

88/03 Garibaldi Crossroads [Item 16]

Mrs Hill and Mrs Tinney updated the Committee on the outcome of the Member Asset Panel on 15 October 2003. The Committee noted that the Panel plans to recommend to the Executive that the land should stay in County ownership, and agreed with the Panel's recommendation that the maintenance of the land be resolved by the Local Director in consultation with the Local Transportation Director.

89/03 Forward Programme [Item 17]

RESOLVED

The forward programme was approved as in the report with the addition of an update report on the progress of the Sheerwater Neighbourhood Nursery.

90/03 Exclusion of the Press and Public [Item 18]

That under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under paragraphs 7 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (other than the authority).

Any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services.

91/03 **Knaphill Library** [Item 19]

RESOLVED

Members agreed with the officers' decision to pursue taking a lease on a suitable shop premises and to fit the premises out as an improved library, consulting the community on how this is done.

92/03 **Publicity for Part Two Items** [Item 20]

It was agreed that a press release should be issued jointly by the library service and the Local Committee.

[The meeting ended at 6.20 pm]

Chairman