



TOWN CENTRE ENVIRONMENT – PROGRESS REPORT ON JOINT SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL AND WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL PROJECT

LOCAL COMMITTEE FOR WOKING 28 JANUARY 2004

KEY ISSUE:

Surrey County Council Local Committee for Woking and Woking Borough Council can achieve more working together than separately to improve the quality of life and well-being of the people of Woking. This reports progress on specifying the details of the joint project to improve the quality of the town centre, approved in principle at the meeting of the Local Committee in October 2003.

SUMMARY:

Officers have identified how Surrey County Council Local Committee for Woking and Woking Borough Council can work together on a specific, time-limited project to improving the street scene and the environment in the town centre. It is important that both authorities allocate a budget as soon as possible and specify the work to be carried out in the first six months of the new financial year.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is asked to:

- **note this report of how officers are implementing the decision for Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council to work together to improve the street scene and the environment in the town centre**
- **instruct Surrey County Council Local Director and Local Transportation Director, and invite Woking Borough Council officers, to continue to specify the details of the work required and the budget**
- **allocate £25,000 in principle to this project, subject to the Local Transportation Director confirmation that this can be found from the budget delegated to the Local Committee by Surrey County Council**
- **request Woking Borough Council to note the report and to make a matching financial contribution**
- **once this project is under way, confirm their previous decision that officers develop proposals about how the two authorities could work together on other topics, for consideration at meeting in autumn 2004.**

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1. Surrey County Council Local Committee for Woking and Woking Borough Council share a mutual concern to improve their quality of life and well-being of the people of Woking.
2. On 2 July and 17 September 2003, Members of Surrey County Council Local Committee for Woking and Woking Borough Council Executive met informally to identify issues of joint concern in relation to the town centre, and to explore how the two authorities could work together more closely on this and other issues of joint interest.
3. In October 2003, the Local Committee considered a report based on their conclusions and agreed that the two authorities start working together on one specific project: improving the street scene and the quality of the environment in the town centre. They tasked officers with identifying how this decision should be implemented.

IMPROVING THE STREET SCENE AND THE QUALITY OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE TOWN CENTRE

4. The project aims to increase the well-being of people using Woking town centre by improving the street scene and quality of the environment. By making decisions about priorities and allocation in collaboration, we will use resources more effectively and avoid duplication of effort.
5. The tasks are:
 - to review all the street furniture
 - to determine the appropriate standard for Woking town centre
 - to bring it to that standard.

“Street furniture” includes highway surfacing where there are odd bits that don't match after repairs, as well as planting, signposting, lighting etc.
6. Officers from Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council are:
 - identifying the street furniture that exists and its condition
 - proposing appropriate standards
 - deciding what needs repair or replacing, and what isn't needed and should be removed
 - drawing up the budget
 - identifying funding
 - producing a timetable to complete all works possible within budget in the first half of financial year 2004/05.
7. They are also:
 - identifying the manufacturer, supplier, item code, description etc of each item
 - running the plans past the police to check implications for anti-social behaviour

MANAGING THE PROJECT

8. It is recommended that the Local Committee for Woking oversee the project, and the Local Transportation Director should be the lead officer. Reports about the project would be transportation items, with decisions taken by the Local Committee with equal numbers of Members from Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council. Woking Borough Council Executive Director is identifying the legal powers that will enable Woking Borough Council to allocate resources to a project managed in this way.

THE BUDGET

9. Officers recommend that for the sake of simplicity, Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council each pay for the type of works for which they are currently responsible. Each authority needs to identify a budget for the project. Officers are still identifying what is needed, and therefore cannot give a definite estimate of the cost, but suggest that it is unlikely to be more than £50,000. Because the work needed consists of several smaller elements, some improvements can be made even if there is not enough money to pay for everything.
10. Both Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council are still developing their budgets. The Local Committee for Woking does not yet know how much it will be allocated for 2004/05. In previous years, the Committee has had £100,000 capital. This is given on the presumption that it will be used for a specific improvement that supplements local highways and transportation spend, but it can be used for capital schemes in other service areas. For road maintenance, the Surrey County Council Executive provides a block sum to each district, with an allocation to various specific maintenance activities. The Local Committee can vire up to 30% of total budget between these activities. The total maintenance budget for Woking for 2003/04 is around £1.3 million.
11. The Local Committee is asked to allocate £25,000 in principle to this project, subject to the Local Transportation Director confirmation that this can be found from the budget delegated by Surrey County Council. The Local Committee is also recommended to ask Woking Borough Council to make a matching financial contribution. Officers will also ask the private sector to contribute through the Town Centre Management Initiative.

CO-ORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

12. The last Local Committee meeting was concerned that the existence of several town centre groups involving officers and members of various agencies lead to overlapping discussions and make it difficult to focus on a few priorities.
13. Officers have looked at the situation and are agreed that the Town Centre Management Group is responsible for maintaining the overview, receiving reports from the different working groups, delegating issues to the relevant

group, and avoiding gaps or overlaps. The Local Transportation Director is the link with this.

14. The Town Centre Safety Initiative is a subset of the Town Centre Management Group.
15. The Town Centre Access Study is due to report this spring. The Local Transportation Director is the link with this, and therefore to the Town Centre Management Group.
16. The Joint (Surrey County Council Local Transportation Service and Police) Road Safety Strategy continues. The Local Transportation Director is the link with this, and therefore to the Town Centre Management Group.
17. The Local Transportation Director is also the link with the Surrey County Council initiative "Upping the Street", which does not affect the town centre.
18. A new initiative to tackle concerns about youth and anti-social behaviour has just been launched by the Chief Constable of Surrey Police and local authorities in Woking, Elmbridge and Runnymede. The Town Centre Manager is involved with this, and will be able to keep the Town Centre Management Group up-to-date with any implications for the town centre.

OTHER AREAS FOR JOINT WORKING

19. The Local Committee agreed at its last meeting that there are other areas where Surrey County Council Local Committee for Woking and Woking Borough Council could consider working more closely together to improve the quality of life and well-being of the people of Woking. For example the two authorities might develop a joint vision of what Woking needs and of how to achieve it, taking into account the Structure Plan and Transport Strategy, and agree how to make best use of land and property to benefit the people of Woking, and secure the necessary infrastructure and services, whoever provides them. They might address quality of life and well-being, building on the work of the Community Safety Partnership on such issues as reassurance and community cohesion; provision for young people; health, especially health inequalities; and waste.
20. As agreed at the last meeting, officers will consider how the two authorities could work together on other topics, building on the results of the town centre project outlined in this report, and will bring a report to a meeting of the Local Committee later in 2004.

CONCLUSION

21. It is important that this proposal, its budget and other resource implications can be built into each authority's spending and service plans and respective work programmes. If the project is to be of lasting value, it must not be regarded as a one-off or "add-on" to existing activities: defining and harmonising the objectives of a scheme within them is critical, and this takes time.

22. This matter will be considered by Woking Borough Council at its budget-setting meeting. A more detailed project appraisal will be required in due course.

Report by: Christine Holloway, Local Director for Woking following consultation with Stephen Child, Local Transportation Director, Surrey County Council, and Douglas Spinks, Executive Director, Woking Borough Council

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- **Agenda and notes of informal private meeting between Members of Surrey County Council Local Committee for Woking and Woking Borough Council Executive on 2 July 2003**
- **Joint paper from Christine Holloway, Local Director for Woking, and Douglas Spinks, Executive Director, Woking Borough Council, for informal private meeting between Members of Surrey County Council Local Committee for Woking and Woking Borough Council Executive on 17 September 2003**
- **Action note of town centre project officer meeting 25 November 2003**

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