



Minutes of the Local Committee for Woking  
General Agenda  
Meeting held at 4.15 pm on 14 July 2004  
at  
the Council Chamber, Civic Offices, Woking.

Members present:

Mr Geoff Marlow – Chairman  
Mrs Val Tinney – Vice Chairman  
Mrs Elizabeth Compton  
Mr David Rousell  
Mrs Diana Smith

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**Part One – In Public**

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

44/04 **Apologies for absence** [Item 1]

Sheila Gruselle gave her apologies for absence.

45/04 **Election of Chairman of Committee – 2004/05** [Item 2]

**RESOLVED**

That Mr Geoff Marlow be elected as Chairman for the year 2004/05.

46/04 **Election of Vice-Chairman of Committee – 2004/05** [Item 3]

**RESOLVED**

That Mrs Val Tinney be elected as Vice-Chairman for the year 2004/05.

47/04 **Minutes of last meeting held on 26 April 2004** [Item 4]

Confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chairman.

48/04 **Declarations of interests** [Item 5]

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

49/04 **Petitions** [Item 6]

There were no petitions received.

50/04 **Written Public Questions** [Item 7]

There were no written public questions.

51/04 **Written Member Questions** [Item 8]

**This question was received from Cllr Val Tinney**

Is the Local Committee aware that the Post Office is planning to close five more post offices in Woking? People in my division are particularly worried at the closure of East Hill post office and I know that the closure of the Pyrford post office is also a concern. Will colleagues join me in expressing my dismay to Post Office Ltd and asking them not to close these post offices?

**Christine Holloway, Local Director for Woking, recommended the following response to the Local Committee for Woking:**

The Local Committee is very concerned at the threatened closure of more post offices at East Hill Maybury, Hermitage, Old Woking, Pyrford and Westfield. This will be inconvenient for many local people, and particularly for those who find it hard to get to post offices at a distance, such as older people, disabled people and people with small children.

The Local Committee will convey its concerns firmly to the Post Office and ask them to reject the possibility of closures.

The Local Committee will also inform the Post Office that the Local Strategic Partnership - which includes all the key agencies in Woking, private and public has expressed a similar view and is also opposed to any further closures.

After a short discussion it was agreed that that Members should write to both Post Watch and the Post Office on an area by area basis if they wanted to object to the Post Office closures. In addition it was agreed that Mr Marlow would write a letter on behalf of the Local Committee objecting to all of the local closures.

**These questions were received from Cllr Diana Smith**

Question 1

I welcome the decision, communicated in a letter from Simon Shepherd to parents of children in South Woking schools, to withdraw the proposals for the reduction of Primary school places in South Woking given in the recent consultation paper issued by Surrey County Council.

The South Woking consultation was part of a review of primary school places throughout Woking, and further proposals were expected to follow on an area-by-area basis. A confidential pre-consultation paper was sent to Head Teachers and Primary School Governing Bodies in March 2004, based on the same information and approaches to tackling the perceived problems of falling school rolls as the now-withdrawn South Woking consultation.

Can it now be confirmed that:

- i. The suggestions put to Head Teachers and Governing Bodies in the pre-consultation document have also been withdrawn,
- ii. Further discussion with Primary Schools throughout Woking will be informed by
  - a. Greater consideration of the uncertainty of population statistics.
  - b. An awareness of the importance and also the potential of primary schools as the 'heart of the community'.

In addition what, in outline, is the current intended approach towards the financial difficulties primary schools face as a result of fluctuating numbers?

Question 2

What action has been taken by Surrey County Council at the Land on the Garibaldi Crossroads to cut the grass, remove secondary growth including brambles, remove dead branches, maintain banks alongside the track, and cut back growth making it difficult for wheelchairs or pushchairs to get around the barrier in the track, as noted in the minutes for the Local Committee Meeting of the 26 April? What further action is scheduled to continue the required maintenance?

**Regarding question 1, Ian Beck, School Places and Planning Manager responded:**

1. The public consultation on the future organisation of primary phase provision in south Woking, relating specifically to Westfield Primary, Kingfield Infant, Barnsbury Infant and Barnsbury Junior Schools has been cancelled and the consultation paper issued on 7 June has been withdrawn.

Officers will continue to work with headteachers and governing bodies of all Woking schools to explore solutions to the problems created by falling rolls. For the foreseeable future, however it is unlikely that any proposal will come forward proposing the closure of a school.

Much of the paperwork issued to governing bodies before the public phase of the consultation began is no longer relevant and may need to be revised. Where such papers were issued under confidential cover, they remain confidential.

2. The projections for future demand for primary school places throughout Surrey will need to be revised, as they are each year at around this time, in the light of data published by the Office for National Statistics and in accordance with the methodology published in the School Organisation Plan.
3. Every school review includes consideration of the existing community use of school buildings and the potential for further community use in accordance with the 'Extended Schools' initiative and local policies. This was stated explicitly when the review of provision in Woking began and remains the case.
4. Initiatives for supporting schools with fluctuating pupil numbers have been at the centre of the annual round of consultation on Fair Funding for many years and will no doubt continue to be the main focus of this annual debate. Various amendments to the Council's Scheme of Delegation have been suggested in the past and, where there has been a substantial measure of agreement, they have been adopted.

The recent announcement from central government that schools may be funded on a three year rather than a one year cycle may improve schools' ability to plan budgets with more confidence.

**Regarding question 2, Derek Lloyd, Head of Estates Strategy responded:**

The outcome of the Local Committee meeting held in April 2004 will be reported to the Member Asset Panel on 29 July 2004. It is anticipated

that they will form a definitive view of how the site should be managed, fully taking into account the views of the Local Committee.

Estates Strategy will not carry out any work on the site (unless on safety grounds) until the Member Asset Panel has formed its view. It is understood that Highways have cut the grass on the site and trimmed back the undergrowth recently. Estates Strategy were informed about some fly tipping on the site on 13 July 2004, and this will be dealt with shortly.

In response to a request from Mrs Smith, it was agreed that the decision made by the Member Asset Panel on 29 July would be reported back to Mrs Smith and the rest of the Local Committee.

### **Executive Functions**

#### **52/04 Member Update on Lead Areas [Item 9]**

Mrs Tinney reported that the planning application for the new County Hall in Woking had been agreed.

Mrs Smith reported that the Youth Council's music event called Summer Madness will take place on 14 August. The Youth Council aims to focus on working with older people in the coming year.

Mrs Compton updated the Committee on health and hospital radio and the excellent Investors in People report received by Social Services.

The notes from the Local Strategic Partnership meeting were noted.

#### **53/04 Surrey Structure Plan Proposed Modifications [Item 10]**

Peter Shadbolt introduced the report which set out the implications of the proposed modifications of the Structure Plan for Woking.

It was noted that the consultation period on the modifications runs from 25 June 2004 until 6 August 2004. To date there have only been about 5 responses, none of which object to any of the changes.

In response to a question from Mrs Tinney about whether it was possible to stop the development of flats creeping out of the town centre towards the south of the town, Mr Shadbolt replied that the town centre area is designated in the Local Plan. The Structure Plan includes a policy on housing type which gives a strong steer to boroughs saying what types of housing is needed in local areas. If the borough feels that the housing proposed is not suitable, then the Structure Plan policy gives them enough reasons to object.

Mrs Compton was concerned about the impact of the new dwellings on traffic. It was noted that the demand is for two bed flats due to the excellent transport links of the town centre. In response to a question from Mrs Smith on whether developers could include a car pooling scheme, it was noted that transportation colleagues are looking at it and it could be considered by developers, but it is not included in the current Structure Plan.

In response to Mr Marlow, it was noted that the division lines shown on the map in the documentation are not hard and fast, and changes will happen on a gradient either side of them.

In response to Mrs Smith, it was explained that having County Hall in Woking will not make a change to Guildford's status as county town. It will just enhance Woking's status as an administrative centre.

Members thanked the officer for the opportunity to comment on the proposed modifications to the Structure Plan.

#### 54/04 **Annual Report from Adults and Community Care** [Item 11]

Mike Geernaert introduced the report which updated the committee on the work of Adults and Community Care over the past year.

Mr Marlow congratulated the service on their 2 star rating and their success at reducing delayed discharges.

In response to a question from Mrs Tinney on support for older people and funding for bathing, it was noted that there is currently enough funding from the PCT until September 2004. There will be a meeting with the Borough Council soon, and it is envisaged that a solution will be found.

In response to Mrs Compton, Jon Muller explained that recruitment and retention is a nationwide problem for occupational therapists and work is ongoing to address this.

Mr Rousell asked about whether there was tension between getting people into home care and block contracting. Mike Geernaert replied that it had not been an issue in Woking. They aim to secure capacity without limiting patients' choice and flexibility.

#### **RESOLVED**

Members noted the report and agreed:

- a) That further work on developing a taxi voucher scheme for Woking should be undertaken and this work must involve consultation with representatives of local disabled groups.
- c) To support the Social Care Teams' bid to have Woking as a mobile technology pilot.

Officers withdrew recommendation b) as it was being resolved outside of the meeting.

55/04 **Safer Woking Partnership** [Item 12]

Camilla Edmiston, the Community Safety Officer from Woking Borough Council, introduced the report. She highlighted a few of the actions in the report including the Lakeview springclean, the jointly funded domestic violence outreach service, the skate park in Woking park, and the jointly funded mobile CCTV van.

Priorities for this year include developing a revised Community Safety Strategy, piloting a multi-agency approach to dealing with abandoned vehicles and the appointment of an Anti-Social Behaviour Worker.

Members noted the report and thanked the officer for her presentation.

56/04 **Policing in Woking Borough** [Item 13]

Chief Superintendent Craig Denholm introduced the report and gave the following updated crime figures for Woking Borough for April – June 2004, compared to the same period last year.

| <b>Offence</b>           | <b>Number of offences</b> | <b>Numerical difference</b> | <b>Change</b> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|
| Total crime              | 1854                      | -2                          | -0.1%         |
| Burglary dwelling        | 108                       | +8                          | +8%           |
| Violent crime            | 350                       | +26                         | +8%           |
| Robbery                  | 22                        | +8                          | +57%          |
| Theft of motor vehicle   | 50                        | -7                          | -12.3%        |
| Theft from motor vehicle | 144                       | -4                          | -2.7%         |

The figures show that Woking is doing well on most crime categories compared to the rest of the county and nationally. Woking Police have recently deployed a revised strategy for violent crime involving more

police resource and working with partners. There is high visibility proactive policing around the town centre on Friday and Saturday evenings which has been very successful. 85% of all violent crime now occurs outside of the town centre, and the increase shown is mainly due to increased reporting of domestic violence incidents.

Operation Violet was very successful in arresting local drug dealers, and there will be similar operations in the future.

Mr Marlow thanked the officer for his presentation and invited the committee to ask questions on both items 12 and 13.

Mr Rousell commented on the 11 day average for the removal of abandoned vehicles and requested information on how some other boroughs remove abandoned vehicles in 24 hours. Craig Denholm commented that criminals often pool cars so that not one person owns it. If these are found then they are seized and crushed.

In response to a question from Mrs Smith about specific initiatives for the summer holidays, Sergeant Ian Thomas explained that the Youth Police Community Support Officer (YPCSO), the Youth Development Service and the Borough Council have a plan. They will tackle hotspots as they arise during the holiday period. In addition the mobile CCTV van will be deployed at appropriate locations and the PCSOs, Neighbourhood Specialist Officers and the Borough Council's Neighbourhood Officers and Tenant Support Officers will continue working locally in the borough.

In response to a question from Mrs Tinney regarding drugs problems, it was explained that it is very hard to establish exactly what the drug problem is. Operations like Operation Violet are very successful, and so is outreach work and the support from pharmacists. Most clubs now have staff deployed in the toilets to help combat drug dealing and drug taking. The agencies feel they are doing a good job at addressing this issue locally.

**57/04 Allocating Local Committee Funding: Members' Allocation**  
[Item 14]

Christine Holloway reminded the Committee that some money may come back into the budget if the conditions set by the Local Committee have not been met or a project costs less than predicted. £500 has been returned because it will not be needed for a toy library at the Mosque.

Two corrections were made to the report. Firstly it was recommended that £2,200 is given to the Friends of West Byfleet Library, and secondly Woking Dance Festival requested £2,600.



Mrs Compton felt that the back pumping of the Basingstoke Canal did not meet the criteria and was disappointed that it was not being supported. It was noted that as part of the Section 106 agreement for the move of County Hall to Woking, money would be put in corporately for the back pumping. It was also noted that the County and Borough already give money to the maintenance and update of the canal and the money should be spent on things that do not receive corporate support. Following a vote of one against and five for, it was agreed not to support the back pumping of the Basingstoke Canal from the Members Allocation fund.

Regarding the driving project, Mrs Smith confirmed that they aimed to help 15 people for a period of 25 weeks.

### **RESOLVED**

Members agreed the following allocations:

- a. Brookwood Memorial Hall windows – up to £3000
- b. Basingstoke Canal back pumping - £0
- c. Friends of West Byfleet Library chairs – £2,200
- d. Woking Dance Festival - £2,600
- e. Woking young parents driving project – up to £8,000
- f. Advocacy in Action development plan- £2,654

#### **58/04 Local Committee Forward Programme [Item 15]**

### **RESOLVED**

The forward programme was approved as in the report with the addition of a report on the Policy and Productivity Review. Officers were asked to reassess whether reports are needed on schools review and admissions criteria.

#### **59/04 Exclusion of the Press and Public [Item 16]**

There was no business that involved the likely disclosure of exempt information and thus required the public to be excluded from the meeting under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

[The meeting ended at 6.00 pm]

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Chairman