



**WOKING TOWN CENTRE
JOINT INITIATIVE ON ENHANCEMENT**

**LOCAL COMMITTEE FOR WOKING
18 JULY 2005**

KEY ISSUE:

Joint working with our Partners and Stakeholders to promote a coordinated approach to improvements, within Woking town centre.

SUMMARY:

The report informs and gives an overview of how we have and will continue to work with our Partners and Stakeholders to improve the Woking town centre, combining limited resources to maximise potential benefits for our customers.

CONSULTATIONS:

Woking Borough Council

Town Centre Management Group

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

Town Centre Management Group

1. Although originally established to promote and market Woking town centre, the Town Centre Management Group has become increasingly involved in the promotion and negotiation of improvements in Woking Town Centre.
2. This approach has proved invaluable in identifying local issues and on occasions, has secured sponsorship to help fund proposed works.
3. The Town Centre Management Group recently distributed around 40,000 questionnaires about Commercial Way seeking the views of residents and businesses within the borough. The response to this questionnaire, along with views expressed during one to one interviews with the owners and occupiers of the properties in Commercial Way, will assist in the further debate on the future of Woking town centre and may influence long term strategies and programmes about the Woking town centre enhancement proposals.

Commercial Way

4. Commercial Way, a key thoroughfare in the town centre, is a good example of an area that is showing signs of wear and tear, through age and usage, which the joint initiative is currently working to improve.
5. During April 2005, works were carried out at the eastern end of Commercial Way, where trees, which had outgrown their planter and environment, were removed along with the damaged planter and the area reinstated as a communal pedestrian area. This work has been carried out as an interim measure and provides an opportunity for future joint refurbishment packages agreed between Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council.
6. The formation of a longer term, holistic approach, will help to ensure that any maintenance works and enhancements can be implemented in unison, whenever the circumstances permit.

Maintenance

7. Surrey County Councils' Community Gang continue to attend to routine maintenance works within Woking Town Centre, with a visit of five days duration, every fourth week. Works being addressed are identified in a variety of ways, inclusive of customer notification, routine safety inspection and joint inspections by Surrey County Council and a Woking Borough Council representative. This joint approach ensures that there is an awareness of routine maintenance works, which enables, where appropriate, routine works to complement proposed projects.

ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

Woking Borough Council

8. Our joint working with Woking Borough Council and our stakeholders will help to promote a safer environment and develop an identity and character for Woking town centre, which will encourage greater usage of the available facilities and enhance economic growth.
9. Woking Borough Council reported to their Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 20th June 2005, giving an indication of the works currently proposed by Woking Borough Council, in and around Woking Town Centre. This report is attached as **Annex A**. It contains number of items that are considered appropriate for joint funding. However, each will need to be discussed with Woking Borough Council in greater detail in order that they may be programmed and funded appropriately, to ensure they are progressed in a suitable manner.
10. Woking was given the status of a regional transport 'Hub with the publication of the Regional Transport Strategy. Both Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council acknowledged the importance of developing a coordinated approach to delivering an integrated transport 'Hub@. Therefore, work has commenced to jointly explore how best to achieve the 'Hubs' aims and objectives whilst also nurturing Woking's economic viability and vitality.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11. Following joint discussions in 2004/5, an agreement was reached whereby both Surrey County Council's Local Transportation Service for Woking and Woking Borough Council would contribute equal sums of £25,000 for expenditure on projects within Woking Town Centre, giving a jointly available budget of £50,000.
12. Current expenditure in 2005/06 by Surrey County Council stands at around £12,500. This sum being the cost of the removal and the reinstatement of the planter area at the eastern end of Commercial Way.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

13. The proposed works will need to meet the targets and commitments contained in the Local Transport Plan, which addresses the implications of sustainable development.

CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

14. It is envisaged that the continued improvement to Woking Town Centre which will be funded by this initiative and associated works, will enable Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council to provide safer, more welcoming environment for our customers.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

15. The programme should raise no equality implications, as all of the proposals will seek to eliminate any perceived and or actual inequalities.

CONCLUSIONS AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

16. It is proposed that regular meetings are arranged between Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council so that we may discuss our proposals and objectives, agree a forward works programme, and establish the methods by which we will be able to monitor the progress and maintain the focus on the identified projects.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS:

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