

Notice of Meeting

Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee



Date & time	Place	Contact	Interim Head of Paid Service
Wednesday, 17 July 2024 at 10.00 am	Council Chamber, Woodhatch Place, 11 Cockshot Hill, Woodhatch, Reigate, RH2 8EF	Dilip Agarwal, Scrutiny Officer dilip.agarwal1@surreycc.gov.uk	Michael Coughlin We're on Twitter: @SCCdemocracy

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This meeting will be held in public. If you would like to attend and you have any special requirements, please contact Dilip Agarwal.

Elected Members

Catherine Baart (Earlswood & Reigate South), John Beckett (Ewell), Luke Bennett (Banstead, Woodmansterne & Chipstead), Liz Bowes (Woking South East), Stephen Cooksey (Dorking South & the Holmwoods), Andy MacLeod (Farnham Central), Jan Mason (West Ewell), Cameron McIntosh (Oxted), Lance Spencer (Goldsworth East & Horsell Village) (Vice-Chairman), Richard Tear, Buddhi Weerasinghe (Lower Sunbury & Halliford) and Keith Witham (Worplesdon) (Chairman) Mark Sugden (Vice-Chairman)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Select Committee is responsible for the following areas:

- Waste and recycling
- Highways
- Major infrastructure
- Investment/Commercial Strategy (including Assets)
- Economic Growth
- Housing
- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Countryside
- Planning
- Aviation and Sustainable Transport
- Flood Prevention
- Emergency Management
- Community Engagement and Safety
- Fire and Rescue
- Trading Standards

AGENDA

4 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

(Pages 5
- 6)

To receive any questions or petitions.

The public retain their right to submit questions for written response, with such answers recorded in the minutes of the meeting; questioners may participate in meetings to ask a supplementary question. Petitioners may address the Committee on their petition for up to three minutes. Guidance will be made available to any member of the public wishing to speak at a meeting.

Notes:

1. The deadline for Member's questions is 12.00pm four working days before the meeting (*11 July 2024*).
2. The deadline for public questions is seven days before the meeting (*10 July 2024*).
3. The deadline for petitions is 14 days before the meeting.

5 UPDATED VISION ZERO ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY (INCLUDING A NEW APPROACH TO 20 MPH SPEED LIMITS)

(Pages 7
- 8)

Purpose of report: This report presents an updated version of the Surrey RoadSafe Vision Zero Road Strategy. The strategy has been amended following feedback from a ten-week public consultation.

Michael Coughlin
Interim Head of Paid Service
Published: Thursday, 11 July 2024

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY AND FILMING – ACCEPTABLE USE

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It is requested that if you are not using your mobile device for any of the activities outlined above, it be switched off or placed in silent mode during the meeting to prevent interruptions and interference with PA and Induction Loop systems.

Thank you for your co-operation

Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee**PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES****4b Public Questions****Question (1) From Amy Coleman:**

The Surrey County Council website acknowledges that with over 3000 miles of rural and urban roads, Surrey has a significant opportunity to increase plant and insect biodiversity through reduced cutting of verges in line with the Blue Campaign principles.

- a. Do you agree that the current grass cutting policy of six cuts a year in urban areas is incongruent with the objective of increasing biodiversity?
- b. Will the county council consider changing the default position to grass cutting such that all urban verges without a house fronting onto them are automatically managed as Blue Heart verges, without the need for an application?

This would quickly lead to significantly more wildlife friendly verges without the need for individual applications processed by the council, saving the council costs in contractor fees and administration of applications with no compelling downside.

ANSWERED BY: Richard Bolton, Assistant Director - Highways Operations & Infrastructure

RESPONSE: Thank you for your question. The council strives to support our greener futures objectives as part of our verge maintenance activities which includes promoting biodiversity. As you highlight, the blue heart initiative gives the opportunity for residents, where it is locally supported, to reduce the number of cuts. We aim to make it as easy as possible for residents to request a blue heart verge and have seen a significant uptake in the last year. We do appreciate your suggestion; however, we must balance this against the needs of road users and the wish of many residents who would like us to cut the verges more frequently. Where there are competing objectives, we need to ensure the approach to verge management is supported by the local community but also enables the safe use of the highway by all road users e.g. cyclists, pedestrians.

The council has other opportunities to support biodiversity such as on our Countryside sites and through our Local Nature Recovery Strategy. More information about on this can be found here [Managing nature - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/management-and-operations/roads-and-transport/blue-heart-veges) and [Local Nature Recovery Strategy \(LNRS\) - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/management-and-operations/roads-and-transport/local-nature-recovery-strategy).

Question (2) From Councillor Catherine Baart

It is important to ensure we get a “good deal” in agreeing with the bus companies which routes require subsidising by the county council. How do we know that the arrangement we come to with operators in funding routes is fair to the Council? Is there a national formula or is it simply down to a commercial negotiation?

ANSWERED BY: Paul Millin, Assistant Director, Strategic Transport

RESPONSE: Following the deregulation of local bus services as part of the Transport Act 1985, determining which bus routes are provided commercially is essentially a decision for local bus operators to take. This will include consideration of the costs, income and profitability of individual routes and groups of routes, alongside consideration a bus operator’s overall business and operating area. Like many other Local Transport Authorities, this council works proactively with all our bus operators to maximise commercial operations and encourage partnership investment and improvement.

The tendered local bus network is subject to open tender via a Dynamic Purchasing System. This gives all local bus operators the opportunity to bid for all tendered bus routes right across Surrey, thus creating a competitive market. Tenders are awarded on the basis of the best overall value for the Council and our residents.

If we believe tender prices are too high for a particular contract, we can and do award a short-term contract, then retendering it to secure better value for the Council. We did this in 2023 for a local bus contract in Spelthorne, with a retender and long-term contract award made earlier this year that has delivered significantly better value.

For commercially provided bus routes, the council may buy supplementary journeys that are not commercially viable if we believe they are required locally and offer added value for residents. Examples include, funding extra school journeys, or late evening journeys. Prices for supplementary journeys are negotiated with the commercial operator using our professional knowledge and experience of local bus prices and costs. This approach offers best value, as the commercial operator has limited additional costs; essentially driver time/wages and fuel. Continuity of route operation by one provider means simpler ticketing and information, compared to, for example, a second operator running only the last few late evening journeys on a route that runs all day.

Annex 5: Process for Engagement and Consultation on 20 mph Schemes

1: Desire for a 20 mph Scheme Established

This could be because of:

- Petition.
- Lobbying by local people or organisations.
- Road Safety Outside Schools assessment.
- Centrally funded road safety, active travel or local street improvements scheme.
- A request through planning permission consultations as a requested condition of planning consent.

2: Feasibility Work Undertaken on Options and Scope, and Need for Supporting Engineering Measures

- Speed surveys will need to be commissioned to establish existing speeds to ascertain the need for “light touch” supporting engineering measures, traffic calming or not.
- For centrally funded schemes, this would be funded centrally. For schemes that the local member would like to consider in response to lobbying from local people, this would usually need to be commissioned using the budget allocated to the local member for highway improvements.

3: Informal Engagement Plan, Materials and Activities

- Officers will consult with the local Divisional Member on the level of informal engagement required for the proposed scheme. In most cases it is expected that there will be a two-stage process consisting of an informal engagement phase followed by a statutory consultation phase. However, for some smaller, straightforward schemes, an informal engagement phase might not be necessary.
- An advantage of undertaking an informal engagement phase is that this would provide community insight that could assist County Councillors to decide on whether to support proceeding with a 20 mph scheme prior to the higher cost required for detailed design and the subsequent statutory consultation process.
- If an informal engagement phase is required then the proposals and options will be presented to local people for their comment and suggestions, usually over a period of four weeks. This would usually include the following, with the level of engagement activities being commensurate with the size of the scheme, and in agreement with the local Divisional Member:
 - a “Commonplace” webportal containing drawings and descriptions of the scheme proposals and questions for people to provide their views. Questions will be included to be able to distinguish between different stakeholder groups and where people live in relation to the proposed scheme.
 - Advertising of the webportal on social media.
 - Advertising of the webportal using posters on lamp columns and bus stops.
 - Advertising of the webportal through leaflet drops.
 - Media releases and news articles.
 - Direct notification of key stakeholder groups.
 - Dissemination of the proposals by the local Divisional Member(s).
 - Face to face engagement events could be considered for larger schemes in agreement with the local Divisional Member.
 - Careful consideration will be given towards methods of engaging with seldom heard people, depending on local circumstances and stakeholders.

4: Results of Informal Engagement Analysed and Presented to the Local Divisional Member

- The results will be analysed to show the views of the respondents, broken down by different stakeholder groups, and where people live in relation to the proposed scheme. The views of the police will be sought also.
- If necessary, Officers will present options for refining and amending the scheme in light of the comments received.

- The local Divisional Member will then decide whether to proceed or not with the next stage of formal statutory consultation on the preferred scheme. If necessary, further engagement work could be undertaken if the scheme needs to be significantly amended. If there is disagreement between Officers and local Divisional Member on whether to proceed or not, or with any suggested amendments to the scheme, then a decision can be referred to the Cabinet member by the Highways Engagement and Commissioning Manager. The scheme can also be referred to the Cabinet member if there is a request to proceed outside the parameters of speed limit policy.
- The results of the informal engagement and the decision will be published on the same webportal so that local people are kept informed.

5: Formal Statutory Consultation

- Following agreement with the local Divisional Member, the scheme proposals will be presented to the public (following the requirements of the Road Traffic Act 1984 & The Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England & Wales) Regulations 1996), to provide them with the opportunity to comment and formally object for a period of at least 21 days. This will usually include:
 - A “SurreySays” webportal containing drawings and a description of the scheme, with the opportunity for local people to provide their comments and formal objections.
 - Legal notices erected on site advertising the statutory consultation.
 - Notices published in the local newspaper advertising the statutory consultation.
 - A leaflet drop to affected residents to advertise the consultation.
- The feedback and objections to the formal statutory consultation will be presented to the local Divisional Member along with Officers comments and recommendations. It will then be up to the local Divisional Member to decide whether to proceed or not. If there is disagreement between Officers and local Divisional Member on whether to proceed or not, or with any suggested amendments to the scheme, then a decision can be referred to the Cabinet member by the Highways Engagement and Commissioning Manager. The scheme can also be referred to the Cabinet member if there is a request to proceed outside the parameters of speed limit policy.
- The results of the formal statutory consultation and the decision will be published on the same webportal so that local people are kept informed.