

MINUTES of the meeting of the **COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE** held at 2.00 pm on 28 November 2013 at Ashcombe Suite, County Hall, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Committee at its meeting on Wednesday, 15 January 2014.

Elected Members:

- * Mrs Denise Saliagopoulos (Chairman)
- * Mr Chris Norman (Vice-Chairman)
- Mrs Jan Mason
- Mr John Orrick
- * Mr Saj Hussain
- * Rachael I. Lake
- * Mrs Mary Lewis
- * Mr Christian Mahne
- * Mr Chris Pitt
- * Ms Barbara Thomson
- * Mr Alan Young
- * Mr Robert Evans

In attendance

- * Mr David Harmer
- * Mr Mike Bennison
- * Mr Stephen Cooksey
- * Mr Ken Gulati
- * Mr Peter Hickman
- * Mr Richard Wilson
- * Mrs Nikki Barton
- * Mr Tim Hall
- * Mrs Helena Windsor

1/13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from John Beckett, Natalie Bramhall, Mark Brett-Warburton, George Johnson, Jan Mason, John Orrick and Adrian Page.

Nikki Barton substituted for John Beckett, Tim Hall substituted for Natalie Bramhall and Helena Windsor substituted for George Johnson.

2/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 2]

None were received.

3/13 SURREY CYCLING STRATEGY [Item 3]

The Chairman began by welcoming the Environment & Transport Select Committee to the meeting and explained the reason for the meeting was to scrutinise the Surrey Cycling Strategy. The Strategy was to go to the Cabinet meeting on 17 December 2013 where a decision would be made.

The item was separated into three sections which the Committee considered.

Section One: Analysis of the Public Consultation

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Susie Kemp, Assistant Chief Executive (Surrey County Council)
Lesley Harding, Sustainability Group Manager (Surrey County Council)
Isabelle Guyot (Dialogue by Design)
Morgan Wild (Dialogue by Design)
Hally Ingram (Dialogue by Design)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. Dialogue by Design had been commissioned by Surrey County Council to analyse the individual consultation responses and to write a final report, which would be provided when completed. They had created a coding framework which enabled them to code and analyse all the qualitative data.
2. There had been over 3,500 respondents to the consultation, with the largest volume of respondents coming from Mole Valley and around 12% from outside of Surrey. Three quarter of respondents were over 40 years old and two thirds were male.
3. A large number of respondents agreed with the broad aims of the Strategy, including people with opposing views of cycling. However, there were concerns regarding the implementation and funding for the suggested ways forward, with some respondents feeling that Surrey County Council should concentrate on other priorities.
4. There was a lot of support for segregated cycle routes from motorists, though keen cyclists were concerned that they would no longer be able to cycle on the road as they currently enjoy doing. Additionally

there was universal support for greater awareness and respect among all road users, with better communication regarding the Highway Code regulations and suggested routes. Furthermore, there was a suggestion that road signs should be implemented to warn of cyclists in the area such as is used to warn motorists of possible horses.

5. Safety was raised as the biggest concern, with support for separate routes particularly for children to use to travel to school. However, some respondents felt that cycling was unsafe and should not be publicised to children.
6. Many of the respondents felt that cycling was good for Surrey as it promoted the county and benefited local businesses, though there were concerns regarding road closures for events and the general disruption residents felt these events caused. Respondents discussed the need to vary the routes of major cycling events, around Surrey and to other counties, so the same communities were not always affected.
7. There was concern regarding the influx of sport cyclists into the county since the Olympic Games and the rising number of unregulated 'Sportives' being organised within the county. Respondents felt these events needed to be better regulated so residents could have more warning of what was happening. Furthermore, some suggested that insurance or licensing should be brought in for cyclists.
8. Local Cycling Plans were supported, though there was a strong onus on the need for these to be integrated so routes did not suddenly stop at borough/district boundaries, and for the plans to be consulted on before being agreed.
9. Members raised concerns that the survey was geared more towards cyclists and did not properly enable concerned residents to voice their views. Furthermore, due to the respondents being self selected, in that they had chosen to take part in the consultation rather than being randomly selected, it was felt that the results could not be taken as a representative sample.
10. Members also raised concerns regarding the number of young people who responded to the consultation as only 15 under 18 years olds took part. Officers stated they had engaged with schools regarding the process and many schools had responded as organisations though young people were traditionally a hard to reach group when consulting. However, they would begin consulting in the new year with more targeted questions on specific aspects of the Strategy.

Section Two: Analysis of Organisation Consultation

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

Susie Kemp, Assistant Chief Executive (Surrey County Council)
Lesley Harding, Sustainability Group Manager (Surrey County Council)

Key points raised during the discussion:

1. The Committee were informed that analysis of organisations responses to the consultation was conducted by Surrey County Council officers by using a coding framework similar to the one used by Dialogue by Design, but modified to reflect the responses. Unlike the individual consultation, many organisations chose to submit emails and letters rather than complete the survey.
2. Responses from organisations often mirrored the concerns raised in the individual consultation regarding the lack of suitable routes and the behaviour of some cyclists and motorists. Furthermore, there was a strong feeling that the Strategy needed to be for all and not just cyclists with clear definitions of sport cyclists and leisure/transport cyclists.
3. The majority of respondents wanted to see changes to training provision for cyclists - children and adults - and motorists with focus on safe cycling and fostering respect for other road users.
4. Members raised concerns that not all businesses were consulted on the Strategy and that the Council should have contacted the Surrey Chamber of Commerce to publicise this consultation exercise. Officers stated they had circulated the consultation widely, though stated when they consider actions within the Strategy in future, they would do further consultation and attempt to engage with more businesses across Surrey. Officers additionally agreed to circulate the full list of businesses which were consulted as part of initial engagement regarding the Strategy and could produce reports on each area of Surrey if necessary.

Section Three: Surrey Cycling Strategy

Declarations of interest: None.

Witnesses:

John Furey, Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment
Helyn Clack, Cabinet Member for Community Services
Susie Kemp, Assistant Chief Executive (Surrey County Council)
Trevor Pugh, Strategic Director for Environment and Infrastructure (Surrey County Council)
Lesley Harding, Sustainability Group Manager (Surrey County Council)
Matthew Jezzard, Traffic and Streetworks Manager (Surrey County Council)
Duncan Knox, Road Safety Team Manager (Surrey County Council)
David Sharpington, Sustainability Programme Delivery Team Leader (Surrey County Council)
Inspector Andy Rundle, Mole Valley Neighbourhood Inspector (Surrey Police)

Key points raised during the discussion:

Infrastructure

1. Analysis on the consultation suggests that off road routes or quieter roads would be preferable for cycling, or segregated cycle lanes on busier roads. This would be considered as part of the highway process

during major schemes, with funding to be sought from a variety of sources including Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). It was felt that Local Plans would assist funding applications, in addition to taking lessons from current schemes such as cycle routes in Walton-upon-Thames and Leatherhead to Ashted.

2. Members discussed how it was important to consider cycling schemes when carrying out highways maintenance, such as during the delivery of Project Horizon. Furthermore, it was suggested that in rural areas there was the opportunity to develop a cycling network by resurfacing the bridle paths so they can be used by cyclists and horse riders. The Cabinet Member for Transport, Highways and Environment confirmed that the County Council is investing £100m in a five years highways maintenance programme and cycle routes were being considered, where possible, and that officers were in the process of looking at possible family trails across the county. However, Surrey did have challenges to face, namely the fact that it had an aging infrastructure that wasn't designed for extensive cycle route provision and very heavy volumes of traffic. The Strategic Director felt the use of bridle paths was a possible way forward and felt this should be part of Local Plans, where appropriate. However, some Members felt that if infrastructure was put in place that took cyclists out of the main road, there would still be a number who continued to cycle in the road, but that the majority would use the paths or segregated lanes.
3. Members felt that businesses needed to be a higher priority within the Strategy as they were still to see the benefits of the increasing number of cyclists and events within the county.

Training

1. From the consultation there was a strong message around the need to share the road as there was a minority of cyclists and motorists who acted in an anti-social way. Furthermore, due to Surrey specific issues including country lanes and horses, it was felt that it was important that training had a consistent message regarding safety.
2. The Mole Valley Borough Inspector stated that since the Olympic Games there had been a significant increase in recreational and sports cyclists on the roads of Surrey, which has led to an increase in the number of enforcements against dangerous cyclists. However, due to cyclists having no identification, such as number plates, it was difficult to enforce. In Mole Valley there were dedicated weekend patrols with Police officers on bikes to monitor Sportives and encourage correct behaviour where necessary. It was stated that there were a number of cyclists coming from South London, but also from across Surrey and other counties.
3. Members queried the locations of cycle training courses and why it was not county wide. Officers explained that the training schemes in Guildford, Woking and Reigate & Banstead were subsidised via a government grant. However, training was offered to school children with over 10,000 a year taking part. The issue with increasing training was that only those who want it, and not always those who need it, will take part. Officers further stated that there is a wider need to educate

road users on respecting other road and pavement users. For example, the Highway Code states that cyclists can ride two abreast.

4. Members queried how many casualties and fatalities had taken place on Surrey roads involving cyclists, and whether this had increased in recent years. Officers confirmed they had this data which they could share with Members for their information.

Sport Cycling

1. Officers stated this was a challenge as there were a number of sportive events taking place in Surrey which did not require the event organiser to notify the Highways Agency or Police. Sportives were considered rides and not races and therefore not covered by the regulations. The Strategy aimed to encourage clubs and event organisers to notify the Council and Police as early as possible so they could be added to the publicly available event calendar. Officers were additionally developing an events Code of Conduct for organisers and participants which it was hoped would improve relations. Furthermore, officers felt that in the long term it would be beneficial if the regulations were changed so event organisers were required to provide notification.
2. The Committee felt that a change in regulations was necessary and that the Council should lobby central government for a modification. The Cabinet Member for Community Services welcomed Members' support on this matter, and stated that a phone number was to be set up which would enable members of the public to inform the Council if unregulated events were taking place as it would assist the Council to build evidence for the need to change the regulations. She further stated that many of the unregulated events taking place were not being arranged by clubs and that often cycling clubs in Surrey had excellent Codes of Conduct of their own and were being engaged as part of the Strategy.
3. Members discussed the need to ensure that businesses were able to operate during events, as previously many had been cut off with staff and supplies unable to get in.
4. Members queried the rise in night cyclists wearing very bright lights on helmets which unsighted other road users, and whether anything could be done to alleviate this problem. The Borough Inspector for Mole Valley explained that this was an issue across Surrey and they were often off-road cyclists returning home who felt it was safer to have brighter lights rather than using the dimmer. The Borough Inspector stated that this was often very dangerous and Police advised cyclists to turn their lights down as there are regulations regarding the brightness of headlights.
5. The Committee were informed that officers were requesting that event organisers engage with local communities and elected Members when organising future events. It was expected that the communities' thoughts would be considered and actions to alleviate concerns would be taken where appropriate.

Major Events

1. The Framework paper placed an onus on the event organisers to consult local communities and elected Members, in addition to ensuring that no road would be closed more than once in a year unless there was significant support from residents to do so.
2. Officers assured the Committee that they tried to avoid road closures for events and always considered other options, such as rolling road closures which were preferred by residents. They provided a robust challenge to road closure requests from event organisers.
3. Members queried whether the Event Framework was exclusively for cycling events or whether other events such as triathlons and half marathons would be required to follow the same guidelines. Officers assured the Committee that the Framework was for all sports events on the Highway and the aim was to strengthen the role of elected Members by making it clear that it was expected they would be consulted on plans.
4. Members queried whether the Ride London-Surrey event would be required to follow the Framework. The Committee were informed that the Cabinet would make a decision on 17 December regarding Ride-London Surrey; initially whether to support it on a strategic level until 2017 and then a subsequent decision on the route of the event, which would be taken annually. The event organisers were expected to consult Members regarding the route and would be requested to continue to engage with elected Members. Furthermore, Members would be invited to a briefing to discuss the plans for this event.

Recommendations:

- a) That the impact on, and potential benefits for, businesses in Surrey as a result of cycling events be a key element of the Strategy. In particular, staff access to businesses when events are taking place.
- b) That consideration be given to including cycling infrastructure schemes on future highways maintenance programmes including Operation Horizon.
- c) That the County Council be encouraged to lobby central government for a change in primary legislation so that unregulated 'Sportive' events become regulated.
- d) That Parish Councils and Local Committees be involved with Surrey County Council and Surrey Boroughs and Districts when working together to develop cycling plans that reflect local priorities and issues.
- e) That paragraph 7.4 of the strategy be amended to read 'Any additional major events would involve a road closure only when there is clear evidence that there is strong local resident and business support to do so.'

4/13 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 4]

The Communities Select Committee noted its next meeting would take place at 10am on 15 January 2014.

Meeting ended at: 4.40 pm

Chairman