

**COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE
(with Members of Environment & Transport Select Committee in attendance)**

Item under consideration: SURREY CYCLING STRATEGY

Date Considered: 28 November 2013

Key points raised:

1. Members raised concerns that the public consultation questions were 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 did not properly reflect residents' opinions on cycling in the county.
2. Members also raised concerns regarding the number of young people who responded to the consultation, as only 15 under 18 year olds took part. Officers stated they had engaged with schools and many had responded as organisations, though young people were traditionally a hard to reach group when consulting. However, officers stated they would begin consulting in the New Year with more targeted questions on specific aspects of the Strategy.
3. The view was expressed 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 informed the Committee they had circulated the consultation widely, though stated when they consider actions within the Strategy in future, they will carry out further consultation and attempt to engage with more businesses across Surrey. 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.
4. Members stressed 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 access sites. Some Members had also received reports from residents that paramedics had experienced difficulty in visiting patients. The need for emergency services to be able to operate effectively during events was emphasised.
5. The Committee discussed how it was important to consider cycling schemes when relaying roads, 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 relaying bridle paths so they could be used by both cyclists and horse riders. However, some Members felt that even if infrastructure was put in place that took cyclists away from main roads, there would be a number who continued to cycle in the road and this would therefore still need to be managed.
6. Members queried the locations of cycling training courses and why they were not offered 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 often only those who wanted it, and not always those who needed it, would be likely to take part.
7. Concern was expressed at the aggressive behaviour of both cyclists and motorists and the need for both groups to share the roads and obey the Highway

Code. It was noted that the Police had dedicated patrols in the Surrey Hills area to tackle this issue. The Committee welcomed Council proposals for a Code of Conduct for event organisers and participants.

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8. It was felt that a change in primary legislation to make unregulated 'sportive' events regulated was necessary and that the Council should lobby central government for a modification. It was noted however that many of the unregulated events currently taking place were not being arranged by clubs and that cycling clubs in Surrey often had excellent Codes of Conduct of their own.
9. The Committee welcomed the Strategy's proposals for greater consultation with local communities when organisers were planning events - in particular, the assurance that no road would be closed more than once in a year unless there was significant support from residents to do so. Members were also reassured that officers always challenged proposed road closures and considered other options such as rolling road closures wherever feasible, in order to mitigate the impact of events on residents as much as possible.

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 programmes in 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 Cycling 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.'

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Chairman of the Communities Select Committee