



SCC LOCAL COMMITTEE IN SPELTHORNE – 16th December 2013

AGENDA ITEM 6

MEMBER WRITTEN QUESTION TIME

1. Cllr Robert Watts will ask the following question:

“Would the area highway manager please confirm why a contractor working for Surrey County Council in replacing lamp columns in Spelthorne has not taken into account the anticipated new cycle lane. The funding of this cycle lane scheme through the DTP and a top up payment by SCC has been agreed for some months and the initial design completed. Lamp columns along Gaston Bridge Road have recently been replaced in their original positions that will need to be moved again to facilitate the construction of the new cycle lane. Please confirm why there is no interrelationship between departments in SCC Highways and why money is being wasted in these times of severe austerity?”

James Young, Walton Bridge Supervisor, will give the following answer:

“A meeting was held between officers and representatives from Surrey County Council's street lighting contractor at the end of June, following completion of the outline consultation drawings by the external consultant employed by the county to undertake the design of this scheme.

At this meeting it was ascertained that the street lighting design work for the section of the A244 that forms the part of the cycle scheme in the borough of Spelthorne was at a very advanced stage with completion within a small number of weeks. In addition the installation programme showed that these works were to begin very imminently. The PFI contractor had already sourced all required equipment and other resources for this upgrade works and so due to the advanced state of the project it was felt that it would not be beneficial to stop the project. The costs of aborting the PFI upgrade works at such a late stage were weighed up against the costs of altering the position of the lamp columns as part of the Cycle Safe scheme construction period. Having ascertained that Skanska would proceed with their work as planned, when subsequent delays to this work took effect, there was no direct link within Skanska between the replacement teams and the Cycle scheme and so the opportunity to review coordination didn't arise.

Throughout the length of the proposed scheme within Spelthorne there will only be a need to move the new lamp columns back to be in line with the new

back edge of the footway. Although within the limits of the Toucan crossing, proposed near the junction with Gaston Way, it may be necessary to alter the column layout due to the changed road layout. At the time of the meeting insufficient detail was available about this crossing to then have been able to change the PFI contract design which was another reason for continuing these works as planned.

On many occasions since the inception of the PFI lighting contract there have been instances where PFI upgrade works and Surrey County Council network improvement schemes have been coordinated thereby saving the county valuable money. This approach will continue in the future but sometimes factors outside the control of the teams mean that this is either not possible to postpone the works due to their advanced stage or that it would not cost effective to delay one set of works in order to combine works.”

2. Mrs Denise Saliagopoulos will ask the following question:

“Here is the response I have received from our officers when I asked why a well established local Club was being asked to pay substantially more by way of rent. Would members agree with me that the proposed rent rise is totally unreasonable?”

‘Further to your request I have been in contact with colleagues in Property Services and have gathered the following information to answer your query.

Staines Pistol and Rifle Club had a licence at the Leacroft Centre and the fee charged was £1,700 per annum. The licence permitted the Club to use the range area for 2 hours per week, from 19.00 to 21.00 on Tuesday evenings only. The licence expired in January 2013 and was not renewed to enable the Leacroft Centre to be refurbished. At this time the Rifle Club were consulted by Dipal Patel and Ann Davies (both of whom have now left SCC) and were told that improvements were being made (mainly based on structural necessity) and that a lease would be the best way forward to ensure safeguarding at the centre. I have been informed that the Gun club noted and supported this although it appears that charges were not discussed at this time.

The terms proposed for the new lease are:

- A term of 3 years to commence on completion of the lease.
- Either party to have the option to terminate the lease on an annual basis, providing 6 months written notice has been given.
- Rent £2,750 per annum.
- A contribution of £2,050 per annum (increased annually in line with RPI) towards electricity, water, repairs and maintenance of the exterior of the building, communal access and pedestrian gate, CCTV system and monitoring, gas, safety certificates, inspections and reports in relation to the building, and buildings insurance.
- The Club to be responsible for any business rates attributable to the range.

As mentioned above, The Leacroft Centre has been refurbished since the licence was granted. The rationale for the changes to the proposed costs are as follows:

- The hours of use will change from 2 hours per week to 24/7 access and use of a dedicated area.
- An independent entrance door to the proposed rifle range.
- Installation of dedicated toilet.
- Installation of CCTV.
- Improved condition of the space following the refurbishment.'

Clare Neave, SCC Estates Delivery Manager, will give the following answer:

"The Leacroft Centre is owned by Surrey County Council and is occupied by the Youth Development Service.

Historically, the Rifle Club has occupied accommodation at Leacroft under a Licence that allowed two hours access per week. The amount charged reflected this arrangement.

The Leacroft Centre has recently under gone an extensive refurbishment at the Council's cost, which has directly benefitted the Club and been completed in consultation with them. The Rifle Club's accommodation has had a new access created so that Club Members do not have to pass through the Youth Club. This will enable the Club to have greater flexibility as to when it uses the premises. Furthermore, it will now have its own toilet facilities and the Club will have far more use of the Rifle Range, enabling them to promote their facilities and perhaps grow as a Club.

From the outset, I understand that it was discussed and agreed with the Club that following completion of the works, the Club would be required to complete a lease on the accommodation and pay a rent and contribution to out goings that was reflective of their use going forward. We have always been open and honest on this point. Council officers are under an obligation to achieve best value and we are unable to indirectly subsidise third party organisations by offering subsidised or reduced rents. The rent and service charge is very reasonable and in my view the Club would struggle to find better value elsewhere.

I understand from my colleagues who are directly involved in the transaction and negotiations that a meeting is to be set up for sometime in January between Property Services, Denise Saliagopoulos and the Club in order to clear up any misunderstandings."

AGENDA ITEM 7

PUBLIC WRITTEN QUESTION TIME

1. Mr Andrew McLuskey will ask the following question:

“Given that the local committee web site lists ‘Social care and health’ and also ‘learning’ as being among its concerns it seems appropriate to bring to this body for answer at the Dec 16 meeting the following question:

Why despite numerous enquiries and reports concerning the activities of Jimmy Savile at Duncroft School are we STILL (a year on from the revelations) in the dark about basic issues relating to this matter (e.g. why he was given unsupervised access to pupils, and why the police didn’t question the Head)?”

Inspector Ian St John, Spelthorne Neighbourhood Inspector Surrey Police, will give the following answer:

“Mr McLuskey has repeatedly asked this or similar questions, both of myself and Chief Inspector Laing.

The advice that has been given to Mr McLuskey still stands, i.e. that the information he is requesting is directly linked to the investigation and consequently is not a question I can answer. Mr McLuskey has been advised as to how he could request the information from Chief Inspector Laing.”

2. Mr John Carruthers will ask the following question:

“At a previous Local Committee Meeting my question on pupil exclusion and PRU’s was given a full and lengthy answer. In effect saying that I was wrong and that no pupil is permanently excluded before he/her is sent to a PRU so that they cannot be returned to the original school.

Today, Fordway PRU has pupils that actually have been already excluded before being sent to the PRU. Clearly this is against your stated policy and wrong. What please will you do about this?

I am well aware that, instead, the pupil can eventually be sent to a different school, but that is just hiding that your policy is not being followed.”

Kerry Randle, SCC Area Education Officer – NE, will give the following answer:

“The original response submitted to the Local Committee and included within Annexe 1, Item 7 of 30 September 2013 meeting did not state pupils are *never* sent to a primary PRU without first attending a prevention programme there.

Statutory and County Council exclusions guidance states that wherever possible schools should employ strategies and interventions within school to improve behaviour, after which if unsuccessful and the pupil requires further support, should consider a prevention place at a PRU.

However, there are some circumstances outlined in both statutory and County Council guidance where the behaviour of a pupil may be of such a nature or incident that a headteacher may need to impose a permanent exclusion without having employed prevention strategies.

North East Surrey currently has two pupils attending The Fordway Centre who fall into this category.

The County Council seeks to avoid exclusion if at all possible, however the decision to exclude rests with headteachers and governors. The County Council can advise maintained schools but does not have the right to advise academies unless requested to do so.”

3. Mr George Rushbrook will ask the following question:

“What steps are being undertaken to address the increasing traffic congestion at the junction and surrounding area. Have Surrey CC and their consultants undertaken traffic surveys and are improvements being taken into account for all the new planned developments?”

- There are important health and safety issues that should be addresses as well as traffic capacity. What steps are being taken to improve the air quality at the junction which has one of the highest air pollution levels in the Borough. Has air quality modelling been undertaken to look at the impact of increased traffic?

- What steps are being undertaken to avoid the flooding of the pedestrian tunnels in future?”

Nick Healey, SCC Highways Area Team Manager (NE), will give the following answer:

“The Sunbury Cross junction is shared between Surrey County Council who maintain the carriageway, road markings, and signs, and the Highways Agency who maintain the traffic signals and the slip roads to and from the motorway. Surrey County Council has no specific plans to review the operation of the Sunbury Cross junction. Neither has Surrey County Council undertaken any recent traffic surveys. Neither is Surrey County Council aware of any plans or surveys on the part of the Highways Agency. Any modifications to the junction would need to be taken forward by both Surrey County Council and the Highways Agency in partnership. The developer of any new significant development must submit a Transport Assessment, which details the anticipated impact of the proposed development on the transport and highway network. The County Council would scrutinise the Transport Assessment with the Highways Agency. As the Highways Agency control and maintain the traffic signals they would assess whether a new development would affect congestion at the Sunbury Cross roundabout junction itself. Surrey County Council would assess whether any new development would affect congestion on the network beyond the junction. In the context of a

planning application mitigating measures may be identified for the developer to provide or contribute to. Such mitigating measures, if agreed by Spelthorne Borough Council as Local Planning Authority, would then be formalised in planning conditions or obligations.

Spelthorne Borough Council is responsible for monitoring air quality in the borough of Spelthorne.

There are permanent pumps at this junction to ensure the subways do not flood. The pump control equipment was damaged in a recent road traffic collision, which rendered the pumps inoperative until the equipment could be repaired. There are no specific plans to improve the flood protection of the subways, as for all normal circumstances the existing pumps are considered adequate."

4. Mr John Seaman will ask the following question:

"This question relates to the Cabinet meeting held on 30 October 2013.

- If the plant at the proposed Eco Park at Charlton Lane, Shepperton is transferred to Surrey after year 9 of operation which costs, including those for maintenance and insurance will Surrey County Council be responsible? (Cabinet agenda paragraph 31)

- When the proposed Eco Park ceases to be operated which costs including dismantling, demolition, site clearance, site remediation and waste disposal will be the responsibility of Surrey County Council? (Cabinet agenda paragraph 31)

- When Surrey County Council's external financial adviser carried out value for money (to the UK taxpayer) and affordability (to the Council) assessments were these and similar costs and potential liabilities fully considered? (Cabinet agenda paragraphs 47 -51) "

Richard Parkinson, SCC Waste Group Manager, will give the following answer:

"Following hand back of the plant from SITA in 2024, the responsibility for operating the plant including the cost of maintenance and insurance will transfer to Surrey County Council. These costs were included within the financial assessment presented to Cabinet.

Decommissioning costs would be the responsibility of Surrey County Council in the event that the plant ceases to operate at some point after hand back.

Decommissioning costs have not been included within the financial assessment since it is not possible to say at this stage what, if any, costs would be incurred. That would depend on future use of the site."