

DRAFT

Minutes of the meeting of the
Elmbridge LOCAL COMMITTEE
 held at 4.00 pm on 21 March 2016
 at Council Chamber, Elmbridge Civic Centre, High Street, Esher, KT10 9SD.

Surrey County Council Members:

- * Mrs Margaret Hicks (Chairman)
- * Mr Mike Bennison (Vice-Chairman)
- * Mr Ramon Gray
- * Mr Peter Hickman
- * Rachael I. Lake
- * Mrs Mary Lewis
- * Mr Ernest Mallett MBE
- * Mr Tony Samuels
- * Mr Stuart Selleck

Borough / District Members:

- Cllr Nigel Cooper
- * Cllr Andrew Davis
- * Cllr Chris Elmer
- Cllr Brian Fairclough
- * Cllr Neil J Luxton
- * Cllr Dorothy Mitchell
- * Cllr T G Oliver
- * Cllr John O'Reilly
- * Cllr Peter Szanto

* In attendance

1/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE [Item 1]

Apologies for absence were received from Surrey County Councillor Mary Lewis and Borough Councillor Brian Fairclough.

2/16 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING [Item 2]

The minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2015 were agreed.

3/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interest.

4/16 THE ROLE OF ELMBRIDGE BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING AND BENEFIT SERVICES [FOR INFORMATION] [Item 4]

Julie Cook, the Head of Housing Services at Elmbridge Borough Council, introduced her presentation about the Service, which is attached as Annex A.

ITEM 4

The current service is made up of 3 teams, Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support, Housing Options and Private Sector Housing with 45 full time equivalent (FTE) posts. The Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support team process the housing benefit claims. It is important to note that Council Tax support is a benefit and different from the Council Tax discount some residents receive. Approximately 1800 households are on the register for social housing, but only 200-250 units become available each year.

Universal Credit is being rolled out in stages. Once it is rolled out to other working age households including families which is expected to be in 2017/18 then the EBC benefit service will change, but will still deal with pension age households and Council Tax support will remain local.

When the benefit 'cap' is lowered to £20,000 later in 2016 the number of families affected is expected to increase to 200. The importance of the discretionary housing payment (dhp) is likely to increase and families will need more help to get them into work which will exempt them from the benefit 'cap'.

Affordable housing is a challenging area with the numbers available in Surrey not near the level of need.

Members raised the following points:

- Whether brand new carpets needed to be fitted for each new tenant
- The standard of the green areas around the Paragon social housing sites
- The valuation of the right to buy housing
- The links between housing and the family support programme

In response Julie Cook explained that it is the responsibility of the tenants to provide their own carpets, that Councillors can approach Paragon directly to discuss any issues, but that a session is run with Borough Councillors and Paragon to which County Councillors could be invited. She explained that the BC has a responsibility to house vulnerable people and children, but not single people or couples. The service is working to help the 200 families not in work who will be affected by the £20,000 'cap' through close links with the Family Support Programme and also it has put in a bid to the DWP.

Tenants with a tenancy of over 3 years wishing to take up the 'Right to Buy' opportunity will receive a discount of approximately £75,000 but with the current Elmbridge house prices they will still need to raise a significant sum.

5/16 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS [Item 5]

Margaret Hicks, the Chairman, updated the Local Committee that all the allocations had been spent this financial year and gave a few examples of the types of projects which had been funded by the Members.

6/16 LOCAL COMMITTEE DECISION TRACKER [FOR INFORMATION] [Item 6]

The Local Committee noted the updated tracker document.

7/16 PETITIONS [Item 7]

No petitions had been received for this meeting.

8/16 PETITION RESPONSE [FOR INFORMATION] [Item 7a]

Nick Healey, the Area Highway Manager (NE), presented the response which detailed that the road would be kept safe, but currently was not on any programme to be resurfaced.

9/16 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME [Item 8]

Seven public questions had been received for this meeting and the questions and responses are attached as Annex B.

Question 1

Clare Hillman said she appreciated the information provided in the response, spoke about her experience in the Netherlands and asked as a supplementary question whether a feasibility study could be carried out for Ember Lane.

Comments from local Members included that:

- Ember Lane should be included in the cycling strategy
- For an effective solution funding from Government was needed

Nick Healey responded by explaining that the culture and approach to town planning was very different in the Netherlands and in addition much of the town planning had been done from scratch which had led to the building of good quality, wide segregated cycle lanes. In the UK there also exist different groups of different types of cyclists. The Local Committee has prioritised the development of a cycling strategy and expects to reach Ember Lane, but is focussing on Weybridge to start.

Question 2

As a supplementary question Cllr Barry Fairbank asked why the officers don't identify the shortcomings of the contractors and why we have to wait for months for the lines to be replaced.

Nick Healey explained that the service was already aware of the lines which the Councillor had identified in his original question, but due to the cost of the mobilisation of the road marking gang and the materials it is more efficient to do a number of roads at one time. He also confirmed that the re-doing of the road marking is included in the cost of the resurfacing, but as a batch not individually.

Councillor Dorothy Mitchell reminded the officers of the marking error in Freelands Road Cobham which still has not been resolved.

Question 3

David Bellchamber thanked County Councillor Mary Lewis for her help with this issue. As a supplementary question he asked why the public had not

ITEM 4

been made aware earlier of the matters holding up the work and what confidence they can now have in the current promises.

Mike Bennison asked what is happening as regards the contractor breaking its permit and whether the Police are happy to do the 30 mile trial once the work is finished, which Nick Healey confirmed they were.

Richard Parr, the SCC Network Co-ordinator, explained that the contractor is being paid a price to do the whole job and is not paid on a daily rate so there is no benefit to the contractor to extend the time taken to complete the work. Once the ground was dug up plant not shown on plans was found and the work had to stop as other services cannot be 'knocked out'. A new route for the main has been identified which will not impact on the A245. A further meeting is taking place on Thursday 24 March which will provide more details of timescales and the work involved. He added that by law SCC need to give access to the utility company and that it is difficult to please all residents, as in fairness to local residents the contractor was not working 24 hours.

Margaret Hicks suggested that, although the service was liaising closely and regularly with the local Divisional Member, Mary Lewis, that perhaps it could also communicate directly with key residents.

Question 4

As a supplementary question Hussam Raouf asked whether the Council intended to continue increasing the cost of parking at Walton-on-Thames Station, and whether they could prioritise adjusting the restrictions within the existing CPZ to areas adjacent to the station as the residents of Silver Tree Close (of whom more than 75% have signed a petition) are concerned that there will be nowhere to park by the time of the next review in circa 18 months.

Local Committee Members Cllr Chris Elmer and Tony Samuels commented that the CPZs near both Walton and Hershams stations needed to be reviewed, saying that exemptions to the strategy need to be made as the current situation is not convenient.

Rikki Hill, the Parking Project Team Leader, explained that the CPZs around the stations are huge areas and there were no plans to increase the on-street parking charges in the area. He added that the number of residents parking permit spaces had been increased at the last 2 reviews to try to help improve the situation.

Question 5

Cllr John O'Reilly spoke on behalf of the resident, Sarah Tourell. As a supplementary question he asked the cost for maintaining the tree and what other options there were for funding this tree maintenance.

Nick Healey responded by explaining there is a huge demand for discretionary tree works and due to the limited budget, SCC must concentrate on safety issues. Pollarding costs between £40 & £100 per tree, but once it is started the pollarding needs to continue as trees grow faster after pollarding, therefore SCC continues to pollard any previously pollarded trees, but is not starting any new pollarding unless the cost would be greater in the long term

due to damage. The LC cannot make any long term commitment to tree maintenance and Community Infrastructure Levy cannot be used for tree maintenance. Cllr O'Reilly asked whether a householder could pay for pollarding themselves. Nick Healey said as a one-off a householder could pay to lift or thin the crown, but not pollard the tree.

Question 6

In response to the supplementary question from Mark Sugden, the Chairman confirmed that SCC's responsibility is to guarantee a school place for every child. Mike Bennison asked if school transport could be provided for those Claygate pupils who had been offered a place at a school in Epsom. The Chairman explained transport would only be offered if the pupil lived over 3 miles away from the allocated school and their first preference had been their closest school.

Question 7

Jeremy Coombs asked as a supplementary question whether the Local Committee could make an exception to the parking strategy due to his particular circumstances.

County Councillor Rachael Lake said she believed it was planned to make this bay mandatory, if unsuccessful as non-mandatory, and felt this issue was already on-going when the Parking Strategy was introduced and therefore unfair on the resident. She asked for it be added to the next review rather than waiting until the review to take place in Walton.

Rikki Hill said that at no time was it proposed to automatically make the bay mandatory. He explained that disabled bays are not usually mandatory unless they are within areas with other parking restrictions. This particular issue will be discussed at the next meeting of the Parking Task group.

Peter Hickman left the meeting.

10/16 MEMBER QUESTION TIME [Item 9]

No Member questions were received.

11/16 HIGHWAYS UPDATE [EXECUTIVE FUNCTION] [Item 10]

Nick Healey introduced the report and explained that up to paragraph 2.12 was a summary of the work for 2015/16. He added he would like a task group to oversee the Esher Transport Study, for which £50,000 from Community Infrastructure Levy fund had been allocated. Three Members, County Councillors Stuart Selleck and Mike Bennison along with Borough Councillor Tim Oliver, were proposed by Margaret Hicks and seconded by Rachael Lake, to sit on this group.

Nick continued that when the Local Committee agreed the allocation of the 2016/17 budget in September 2015, it was based on an assumed budget of

ITEM 4

£460,050. The budget has now been confirmed as £548,700. As per table 4 it was the Pooled Revenue which was reduced in the assumed budget so the recommendation was to increase the Pooled Revenue to make it broadly similar to the 2015/16 budget.

Stuart Selleck said he did not agree with the recommendation to increase the Pooled Revenue, but proposed that the extra budget to be divided between the nine Members. Ernest Mallett seconded this proposal. A vote took place and the Local Committee voted to agree recommendation (ii).

Ernest Mallett left the meeting.

In response to a question about carried forwards, Nick said he hoped to be able to report on any at the meeting in June. He also confirmed that the list of Horizon footways and the year 4 roads will be circulated soon. Roads not listed in year 4 will be included in year 5 of the Project Horizon programme. In addition he pointed out an error in the papers – Old Esher Rd in table 7 is no longer a reserve scheme.

The Local Committee resolved to:

- (i) Appoint a member Task Group, comprising of both Borough and County Members, **County Councillors Stuart Selleck and Mike Bennison and Borough Councillor Tim Oliver**, to steer the Esher Transport Study (paragraphs 2.29 and 2.30 refer)
- (ii) Approve the recommended budget allocations for the next Financial Year 2016-17 as detailed in Table 5, now that the Local Committees' Highways budgets have been confirmed (paragraphs 2.31 to 2.34 refer)
- (iii) Authorise the Area Highway Manager in consultation with the Chairman, vice Chairman, and relevant Divisional Member(s) to undertake all necessary procedures to deliver the agreed programmes

Reason for decision: to establish a Member task group to oversee the Esher Transport Study for which Elmbridge Borough Council has allocated £50,000 of CIL funding, to approve the allocation of the confirmed Local Committees' Highways budgets and to provide the necessary authorisation to deliver the already agreed programmes of work without the need to revert to the Local Committee as a whole.

12/16 ELMBRIDGE JOINT YOUTH STRATEGY UPDATE [FOR INFORMATION] [Item 11]

Chris Beck, the Services for Young People Elmbridge Team Manager, introduced the report.

Members raised the following points:

- Whether the youth service access into schools will be the same if all schools become academies
- A preference for a one page report providing more clarity and summarising what has been achieved

- A need for the organisations involved to state clearly a starting point for their work, what is being done and the current position
- The suggestion that 10 key performance indicators are identified at the youth task group meeting

In response Chris Beck explained that the schools had been successfully contacted with a combined 'youth' offer of pooled resources and a clear route has now been established. In addition a baseline data document was being put together and an outcomes document will follow. Emily Pentland added that the consultation was still at an embryonic stage, but would feed into the Joint Youth Strategy action plan.

The Local Committee noted:

- (i) How the Joint Youth Strategy has been working in partnership across the borough to achieve the goal of improving outcomes for young people in Elmbridge including a focus on those young people experiencing inequality and social exclusion.

13/16 MEMBERS' ALLOCATIONS UPDATE [EXECUTIVE FUNCTION - FOR INFORMATION] [Item 12]

The Local Committee noted

- (i) The amounts that have been spent from the Members' Allocation budget, as set out in Annex 1 of this report.

Meeting ended at: 6.25 pm

Chairman

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