

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**WAVERLEY LOCAL COMMITTEE**

**DATE: 17<sup>th</sup> June 2016**



**LEAD OFFICER: DOMINIC FORBES  
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT GROUP MANAGER**

**SUBJECT: TDP CONSULTATION WITH LOCAL COMMITTEES**

**DIVISION: WAVERLEY**

**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The Transport Development Planning Team (TDP) has introduced a new process for the Districts and Boroughs Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to consult the County Highway Authority (CHA) on planning applications.

The aim of this new process is to bring the CHA into line with all other statutory consultees on planning applications and standardise the consultation process across the Surrey LPAs, to include consultation with County Members.

This will minimise the time consuming administrative work which TDP officers previously spent providing a no response to non-highway related matters, such as conservatories, trees and rear extensions, and allow more time to be spent on providing technical highway and transportation advice to the LPAs.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- (i) Waverley Local Committee is asked to note that TDP will receive planning application consultations from each LPA which meet the criteria as set out in the new protocol (see attached document).
- (ii) Waverley Local Committee is asked to note that TDP will consult County Members on all planning applications which they receive from the relevant LPA, and this process is currently being refined. County Members are asked to inform the relevant TDP officer of any transport or highway related issues they may have to allow the TDP response deadline of 21 days to be met.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

To inform Members of the Local Committee of the new protocol for planning application consultation between LPAs and CHA and of the need for these changes in order to make efficiency savings on the work conducted by the CHA, to allow TDP officers to spend more time providing technical highways and transportation advice to the LPAs on development related matters.

**1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**

- 1.1 TDP now has far greater demands in terms of volume and complexity of applications to consider. With Surrey's population and economy growing, this places demands on growth for housing and businesses. TDP plays an important role ensuring the increased access demands of this growth will not negatively impact the highway network. The role of TDP in these projects is vital to ensure economic growth is delivered safely and sustainably, and is not hampered by access issues and undue congestion.
- 1.2 Over the past decade TDP have had much involvement in the changing infrastructure provision policies. Planning Infrastructure Contributions (PIC) and more recently Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), introduced in 2013, have required significant input from TDP working with local authorities to write their development plans, lists of infrastructure projects and to identify funding gaps which CIL is required to fill.
- 1.3 The Schools Expansion Project, with Surrey's target to provide 16,000 new school places over the next 5 years, is a key project for TDP. Major transport schemes, such as the Greater Redhill sustainable transport package, Redhill Balance Network, Runnymede Roundabout and Guildford Town Centre Transport Package, all require TDP input by securing developer funding through to scheme delivery.
- 1.4 TDP intend to target their service and resource in a way that better serves each LPA's needs, by using smarter ways of working, ensuring that the focus of work is on delivering greatest benefits to the residents and businesses of Surrey. Work is now able to be done in a variety of ways with colleagues and data accessed from virtually anywhere, so consultations and responses can be made without the need to be tethered to a desk.
- 1.5 In July 2015 TDP reduced their officer attendance at the planning offices on what was previously a weekly basis. From the majority feedback from each LPA this is working well with more efficient use of communication mediums such as the internet, email and the phone. It is worth pointing out that this does not reduce the TDP officer time in each District and Borough. Weekly or fortnightly site visits are still conducted and are a very important part of the TDP assessment of each planning application.
- 1.6 The "SCC Highway Consultation Protocol" (as attached), launched in January 2016, specifies the criteria in which each LPA should consult the CHA. Planning applications with no highway impacts, such as trees, conservatories and rear extensions, have been identified as those which require no consultation. The aim is to reduce the time consuming administrative work which TDP officers carry out on providing a response to these non-highway related planning applications, allowing better use of time providing technical advice to planning officers.
- 1.7 Some planning applications require consultation with the CHA, and in these cases TDP undertake an assessment of the development in terms of the likely net additional traffic generation, access arrangements and parking provision. Following this assessment, TDP may conclude that the application would not have a material impact on the safety and operation of the adjoining public highway. This is often not reported fully in the planning officer's report, and is

summarised as a no objections response. Unfortunately this summary by the LPA does not reflect the fact that the TDP officer has actually considered the planning application fully.

- 1.8 The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 sets out the consultation requirements of a LPA. It refers to the type of development which requires consultation with the local highway authority as being development which is likely to result in a material increase or change in the use of the highway. The attached protocol meets these General Development Procedure Order (GDPO) parameters for consultation.
- 1.9 This list of consultation criteria within the protocol was initially introduced to be as simple as possible to ensure the new consultation process between the LPAs and TDP progressed successfully. In some cases, there are still many applications received by the CHA which have no material impact on the highway and which fall beneath the GDPO parameters for consultation. The new protocol now seems to be running smoothly, and so further work is being undertaken to develop a more complex set of consultation criteria to further reduce the number of planning applications the CHA receive.
- 1.10 As with the reduction in officer attendance at the LPA offices, this is a two way process, and TDP officers are in constant communication with the LPA planning and technical support teams to ensure that we can continue to deliver our service as Statutory Consultee in a smarter way, whilst still providing the input that the LPAs need in the determination of development proposals.
- 1.11 As part of this process, the consultation between TDP and County Members is being streamlined to ensure all Members are informed of the planning applications which TDP are consulted on. This is currently work in progress as TDP establish a process as simple as possible for all involved. Currently County Members will receive an email on a weekly basis, detailing the applications which have been received (if there are consultations received by TDP in that week), as follows:

Planning Application No.	Site Address	Application Description	Date Consulted
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- 1.12 The County Council gives independent, professional and objective advice. Planning consultees like the County Council must give consistent and justifiable advice to local planning authorities. In their assessment of planning applications, the CHA has to consider each planning application on its own merits, is unable to take cumulative impact into consideration, and also has to allow for previous uses on the site.
- 1.13 Local planning authorities are at risk of an award of costs if they fail to produce evidence to substantiate each reason for refusal. Consequently, a considerable amount of time goes into the professional assessment of planning applications by TDP in their recommendation to the LPA. The proposals are considered against relevant policy, both national and local, as well as technical guidance and standards, and also other decisions which are made both locally and county wide, so the decision that the Highway Authority comes to is well considered and informed.

## **2. ANALYSIS:**

- 2.1 The aim of this new process is to bring the CHA into line with all other statutory consultees on planning applications, and to meet the policies within the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, which sets out the consultation requirements of a LPA.
- 2.2 The benefits will be to target the service and resource which TDP provide in a way that better serves each LPA's needs, by ensuring that the focus of work is on delivering the greatest benefits to the residents and businesses of Surrey, as well as providing a more uniform consultation process across the Surrey LPAs, to include consultation with County Members.
- 2.3 This will minimise the time consuming administrative work which TDP officers previously undertook in providing a no objections response to planning applications without highway impacts (trees, conservatories, rear extensions etc) and allow more time to be spent on providing technical highway and transportation advice to the LPAs.

## **3. OPTIONS:**

- 3.1 TDP continue working in the previous process, of checking each Borough/District's weekly planning application list, which historically was set up when more reliance was on paper copies of plans and prior to electronic submissions of planning applications and electronic response methods. This was time consuming and TDP officers were spending a significant amount of time on administration duties which are considered technical support responsibilities of the LPAs.
- 3.2 As there are now greater demands in terms of volume and complexity of applications to consider the new process allows TDP officers to spend more time to target the service and resource in a way that better serves the needs of each LPA, by ensuring that the focus of work is on that which delivers greatest benefits to the residents and businesses of Surrey.

## **4. CONSULTATIONS:**

- 4.1 The new process has been through consultation with each LPA through the Development Management meetings, face to face contact between TDP Officers and Planning Officers, and Technical Support Team meeting attendance.
- 4.2 The LPAs consider this new protocol is bringing the process in line with other statutory consultee processes and are generally pleased with the outcomes.
- 4.3 This is a two way process, and TDP officers are in constant communication with the LPA planning and technical support teams to ensure TDP deliver a service as Statutory Consultee in a smarter way, whilst still providing the input that the LPAs need in the determination of development proposals.

## **5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:**

- 5.1 Efficiency savings will mean that TDP officers are able produce more technical work rather than administrative work. A recent survey carried out within TDP identified that the number of non-transport related planning applications (such as trees, conservatories and rear extensions) looked at each week has reduced significantly.
- 5.2 Offset against this is the rise in the number of major commercial and housing developments which TDP deal with to support the increase in Surrey's population and economy.
- 5.3 There are no direct costs with the new process.

## **6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:**

- 6.1 There will be no equality or diversity implications with the change to the TDP consultation process. All planning applications which TDP are consulted on will still be determined in the same way taking into account equality and diversity implications.

## **7. LOCALISM:**

- 7.1 The local communities will benefit from the proposals as time savings on administration duties which TDP officers previously carried out can now be focused on providing the service and resource which better serves the needs of each LPA, delivering greatest benefits to the residents and businesses of Surrey.

## **8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising from this report
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	No significant implications arising from this report
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report

## **9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 9.1 The new consultation process will achieve efficiencies for TDP and allow officers to spend more time providing LPAs with technical transport and highways advice. With the increase in work load, such as delivering the increased housing supply and school places, and the complexity of work areas, such as changing infrastructure provision policies which TDP support, this additional resource is much needed.

## ITEM 10

- 9.2 The new process of consultation between each LPA and with County Members was launched in January 2016 and is currently work in progress with adaptations being made to ensure the process is as streamlined as possible with all benefitting.
- 9.3 Waverley Local Committee is asked to note the recommendations within this report,
- (i) Waverley Local Committee is asked to note that TDP will receive planning application consultations from each LPA which meet the criteria as set out in the new protocol (see attached document).
  - (ii) Waverley Local Committee is asked to note that TDP will consult County Members on all planning applications which they receive from the relevant LPA, and this process is currently being refined. County Members are asked to inform the relevant TDP officer of any transport or highway related issues they may have as soon as possible, so that the TDP response deadline of 21 days can be met.

### **10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

- 10.1 Waverley Local Committee is asked to note the changes to the TDP consultation process within this report. The refinements to this consultation between LPAs and County Members, as highlighted in this report, will be developed and communicated to Members of the Local Committee in due course.

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#### **Contact Officer:**

Dominic Forbes, Planning and Development Group Manager

#### **Consulted:**

County Members  
LPA Heads of Planning and/or Development Managers  
LPA Planning Officers  
LPA Technical Support Teams  
TDP Officers

#### **Annexes:**

SCC Highways Consultation Protocol

#### **Sources/background papers:**

The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

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