



WOKING JOINT COMMITTEE

DATE: 29 JUNE 2016
SUBJECT: WRITTEN PUBLIC QUESTIONS
DIVISION: WOKING

1. Question from Phil Stubbs, Knaphill Residents Association

Scaffolding outside Boots at 11 - 13 Broadway is limiting the use of the pavement. This scaffolding was erected back in November 2015 but it is very rare to see anyone working on the building. In fact since the new year there have only been two days when either I or residents have reported workmen on site. We have asked WBC Neighbourhood Officer to investigate and the response was that it had been reported to SCC because they are responsible for issuing permits for the erection of scaffolding on the public highway.

The scaffolding means that parents with a double buggy or a resident riding a mobility scooter have to move onto the road to either get round the scaffolding or to try and enter Boots.

The Residents' Association would like SCC to investigate.

Answer from Chairman on behalf of the committee:

Surrey Highways issued a licence to permit scaffolding to be erected outside of Boots in Knaphill. The scaffolding was in place to permit work to the roof of the property. Boots confirmed that there was a delay in works taking place due to a disagreement between the building owners and their insurance company, and in consequence works did not proceed as anticipated. The licence was renewed following a request to grant an extension, as works were anticipated to commence. However, as the disagreement had not been resolved, works still did not proceed. Surrey Highways advised the applicant that no further extension would be granted due to the length of time the scaffolding had been in place, and in consequence the scaffolding has now been removed.

Where it is necessary to place scaffolding on the public highway, every effort is made to afford the best possible access for pedestrians. However, scaffolding support posts have to be set back from the kerb line for safety reasons, and due to the limited width of the pavement at this location, the available footpath width was restricted during the time that the scaffolding was in place. The only alternative would have been to close the footpath to pedestrian traffic which would have had a bigger impact on the local community.

2. Question from Mrs Marshall

When the cycling was being progressed a pedestrian/cycle path was put in on the edge of the Basingstoke Canal & Brookwood Country Park. A bridge was proposed to cross the canal to the towpath side which had a small tunnel under Hermitage Road. The money for this project was transferred to the station of Woking to complete the project.

To go onto Hermitage Road to cross to the other part of the canal bank is potentially very dangerous either way. When is the bridge to be effected and if not what is being done to make the pedestrians and cyclists using the route safe.

Answer from Chairman on behalf of the committee:

The former Cycle Woking project included a potential scheme to install a pedestrian/cycle bridge adjacent to the existing Hermitage road bridge. However, during the development of the scheme it became apparent that there were issues with land ownership and the scheme was undeliverable within the timescale of the Cycle Woking project.

The local contribution associated with the pedestrian/cycle bridge was transferred to the Woking railway station Cycle Hub, which has been a very successful scheme.

The pedestrian/cycle bridge is still included within the Local Transport Strategy for Woking but funding for such projects is normally obtained from business cases put to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) covering this area. However, the objectives of the LEP are related to retention and creation of jobs and new housing. Therefore, it would be difficult to make a business case for this bridge based on those objectives. In addition, it should be noted that the land ownership issues still exist and therefore the scheme would be difficult to deliver.

The estimated cost of delivering this bridge (if land was available) could in the region of £2 million.

3. Question from Chris Dougherty

When will the proposed playground at West Byfleet Park will be improved. The summer holidays for the children is nearly here and Ray Morgan allocated £35,000 nearly a year ago, and nothing has been done. Are they waiting for the winter?

Answer from Chairman on behalf of the committee:

Since the funding to replace the climbing frame that was removed last year was agreed for our Investment Programme in this financial year, we have been in contact with a few play area suppliers to discuss options for the new unit. We are currently awaiting proposals from these suppliers and intend to consult with local children and parents based on these proposals during the autumn school term. Subject to the consultation, we would envisage installing the new unit over the winter.

4. Question from Penny Hoskyn and Pauline Hedges, West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum

The West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum (WBNF) was designated by Woking Borough Council (WBC) on 27 March 2014. Following considerable engagement with local businesses and residents, our Neighbourhood Plan is close to completion and we hope to see it adopted by WBC in early 2017.

West Byfleet is facing major changes over the next few years especially with the development of the ex-MOD Broadoaks site and the Sheer House complex. Such developments will have a significant impact on the village and its surroundings, its residents and businesses, the local infrastructure and road network.

In 2014, WBC adopted the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2010 as its primary means of securing developer contributions towards infrastructure provision in the Borough with the tariff coming into effect from 1 April 2015. There is considerable interest within Woking's neighbourhood forums, residents' associations and the wider community regarding CIL and how it is going to be applied. We need to be reassured that WBC will be ring-fencing an element of the levy for the direct benefit of the local community in any area where such developments are taking place.

Taking the case of West Byfleet, we understand that the regulations demand that if an application is approved for development in our area, eg. Broadoaks, then a minimum of 15% of the levy will be set aside for spending on community projects in our area and that once our Plan is brought into force that figure rises to 25%. There is a strong feeling in our community that, if further housing development occurs in West Byfleet, developers should make a significant contribution towards improving our local community and social facilities. Equally we believe that major highways and engineering work associated with any development should be paid for by the developer and not paid out of CIL.

Our assertion is therefore that:

- A formal mechanism should be put in place to identify the community element (ie. a minimum of 15% or 25%) of any CIL funds arising from a development. This should be kept separate to the 123 'wish list' as it is specifically for use by the community in areas where development takes place
- A list of such allocations should be regularly shared with forums and be in the public domain
- A formal process should be put in place for neighbourhood forums to discuss and agree community project priorities and the use of CIL funds
- The ToR's of the Infrastructure Working Group should have their objectives amended to include specific reference to the local community element of CIL (ie. the 15% or 25%)

Question: How does the Woking Joint Committee intend to make sure that the community element of CIL is identified, ring-fenced and allocated to local projects in collaboration with the West Byfleet Forum, other forums and community organisations?

Answer from Chairman on behalf of the committee:

Woking Borough Council has already committed to pass on the community element of the CIL income to local communities where development takes place. This is clearly expressed in the adopted CIL Charging Schedule. The proportion of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) that is to be passed to local communities where development takes place is prescribed by Government. The Council's intends to act accordingly to make sure that whilst it has the responsibility to keep the community element of the money; it is ring-fenced for local community projects. Communities without a Neighbourhood Plan where development takes place will receive 15% of the total CIL income in the area (Ward). If there is an adopted Neighbourhood Plan, it is 25% of the CIL income in the Neighbourhood Area. To qualify for the 25% the Neighbourhood Plan should have been adopted by the time that the development is granted planning permission, so for example, the 25% will not apply to the planning permission at Broadoaks given that the West Byfleet Neighbourhood plan is not yet adopted. The Council working in partnership with the County Council has set up the Joint Committee with the responsibility to oversee the management of CIL funds and the coordination of infrastructure delivery in the area. The Joint Committee has set up an Infrastructure Working Group to make sure that detailed arrangements for the use of CIL money is appropriately managed, including the community element of the CIL fund. The Joint Committee has also asked Ward Members to liaise with Neighbourhood Forums, local organisations and Resident Associations to decide what projects the CIL money could be used. Officers are aware that Ex Councillor Gary Wilson had written to West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum about his intention to liaise with them on this matter. Hopefully, the new Ward Members will be liaising with the Forum in due course. It should be noted that Officers have also in the past discussed with West Byfleet Neighbourhood Forum about options for identifying projects that CIL income could be used. Based on the above, there is already a clear governance structure in place to administer CIL income, including the element for local community projects. Officers will be notifying Ward Members when CIL income is received and the proportion that will likely be earmarked for local community projects. As an update, no CIL income has been received to date as CIL payment is by commencement of development. The operation of CIL and its governance is relatively new. It continues to evolve and lessons learnt will inform any operational changes that might be necessary in the future.