

**NOTES OF A JOINT MEETING WITH TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS  
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL  
ON MONDAY 6 JULY 2009 AT 7.00 P.M.**

Present:

Waverley Borough Council

Cllr Mike Band (Deputy Leader of the Council)  
Cllr Stefan Reynolds (Portfolio Holder, Community & Partnerships)  
Cllr John Sandy (Portfolio Holder, Environment)  
Paul Wenham (Deputy Chief Executive)  
Graeme Clark (Head of Finance & Performance)  
Iain Lynch (Head of Economic Development & Partnerships)  
Robin Pellow (Head of Democratic & Legal Services)  
Elizabeth Sims (Head of Development Control)  
Roger Standing (Head of Customer & Office Services)

Representing Town and Parish Councils

Alfold Parish Council, Cllr Mrs Betty Ames  
Alfold, Dunsfold & Hascombe Parish Councils, Mrs Lynne Enticknap  
Bramley Parish Council, Cllr Peter Wadham  
Busbridge Parish Council, Cllr Mrs Maxine Long  
Churt Parish Council, Mrs Shirley Burrill  
Churt Parish Council, Cllr Derek Sibley, Chairman  
Cranleigh Parish Council, Cllr Brian Ellis  
Cranleigh Parish Council, Pauline Whitehead  
Elstead Parish Council, Cllr Denis Holmes  
Farnham Town Council, Cllr Chris Storey  
Godalming Town Council, Miss Louise Goodfellow  
Godalming Town Council, Cllr Mrs Joy Poulter  
Godalming Town Council, Cllr Ms Jane Thomson  
Witley Parish Council, Ms Joy Nye  
Wonersh Parish Council, Cllr Michael Harding

Visitors

Mr Jack Griffin, Chair of Mediation  
Waverley

1. INTRODUCTION

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Mike Band, welcomed representatives of Town and Parish Councils to the meeting.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Charles Orange, Hascombe Parish Council, Cllr Alan Ground, Dunsfold Parish Council, Jane Woolley, Hambledon Parish Council, and Cllr Mrs Melanie Odell and Mike O'Neill, Haslemere Town Council.

3. ITEMS REQUESTED BY TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS

- i. Bramley Parish Council asked for a discussion on the new change in the 3<sup>rd</sup> party planning appeal process. This had been discussed at a

recent meeting of town and parish councils on planning matters. It was noted that the new procedure would streamline the appeal process, but there was concern that town and parish councils no longer had a right to make representations at appeals, and there had been no consultation on the introduction of the new procedure.

Mrs Sims, Head of Development Control, reminded the meeting that the new procedure only applied to householder development, e.g. residential extensions, outbuildings, etc. and to applications received after 6 April 2009. As a result of the more streamlined appeals process for these relatively minor developments, it was important that representations made at the application stage considered all the usual planning issues, and put special emphasis on any aspects that it was felt the Inspector should focus on in the event of an appeal. It was important to remember that an appellant would have to justify their development on planning grounds, so arguments objecting to a development should also be related directly to planning grounds.

Whilst the majority of householder applications were dealt with under officer delegation, Town and parish representatives were reminded that they had the opportunity to ask for an application to come to the relevant planning committee to be determined, if they had particular concerns.

- ii. Cranleigh Parish Council had requested a discussion on the devolution of responsibilities to towns and parishes. In particular, they asked what responsibilities might be considered for devolution, and what funding would transfer with those responsibilities.

Graeme Clark, Head of Finance & Performance, advised that responsibilities that had been transferred included public conveniences and cemeteries. It was not the intention of Waverley to impose onerous responsibilities and costs on to the towns and parishes. However, if local councils identified services where they felt that they could offer a better service, Waverley would be willing to discuss arrangements on a case-by-case basis.

Cllr Storey, advised that Farnham TC had taken over responsibility from Waverley for a number of public conveniences in the town. Whilst there were transitional financial arrangements, ultimately there would be an additional cost to the Town Council. However, they had accepted this as the cost of having local control and being able to provide a better service than previously.

- iii. Cranleigh Parish Council had requested an update on the review of Compensatory Grants for leisure facilities provided by parishes, and the likely impact on parishes such as Cranleigh, who currently provided this service to their residents, for the next financial year and into the future.

Graeme Clark reminded town and parish representatives that at the meeting on 2 March 2009 Cllr Morgan had proposed review of the Compensatory Grant Scheme. Since then Waverley's financial position had become clearer, and it felt that a review at this time would create uncertainty; and so this was not being progressed at this time. However, there was a strong indication of a cash freeze for 2010-2011 grants. Whilst this was not good news, it did offer some certainty. Parish Councils had received a letter setting out the current position, and were invited to submit their comments by 10 August.

- iv. It was noted that the item requested by Hambledon Parish Council on Compensatory Grants had been withdrawn following receipt of the letter referred to above.

## 5. MEDIATION WAVERLEY

The Chairman welcomed Jack Griffin, Chair of Mediation Waverley, who gave an informative presentation on the services provided by Mediation Waverley in the resolution of neighbourhood disputes.

Mediation was a relatively new approach to resolving disputes and was a way of achieving outcomes that were acceptable to all parties. It was a clear alternative to judgements via the courts, or arbitration, or the continuing festering of issues. The process was impartial and looked to the future rather than the past. It was important that both parties entered into the process willingly.

Referrals to the mediation service came from a variety of agencies, including local councils, housing associations, police, CAB, and community organisations. The mediation process was independent of the referring agency, free, and confidential – no details of any agreement or resolution would be passed to the referring organisation by the mediation service.

Cllr Band reported that Mediation Waverley had been engaged to help resolve a local dispute in Shamley Green, and had made a valuable contribution to the eventual settlement.

Mr Griffin confirmed that information about the Mediation Waverley service could be quoted from the leaflet circulated to be included in town and parish council newsletters or on their websites.

The Chairman thanked Mr Griffin for his talk, and encouraged town and parish representatives to make the availability of Mediation Waverley known among their councils and community.

## 6. SURREY SAVE CREDIT UNION

The Director of Finance outlined the project to establish the Surrey Save Credit Union. A Credit Union was a mutually owned, not for profit financial institution, registered with the Financial Services Authority. It operated by

pooling the savings of its owners, who then had the ability to borrow funds at low cost. The Surrey Save project had been initiated by Guildford and Woking Borough Councils, and they had now been joined by Mole Valley Housing Association, The Co-operative Fund, and Surrey County Council. Surrey Save was preparing to launch in 2010, and Waverley was now investigating the feasibility of joining for the benefit of its residents.

The aims of Surrey Save were to reduce financial exclusion by providing a safe and convenient way to save and easy access to loans at a fair rate of interest. A range of other ethical financial services would also be available, and access would be via a number of outlets, possibly including post offices.

Membership of Surrey Save would be open to people who lived and worked in Guildford, Woking, Mole Valley, and Waverley if it proved feasible to join. There was a possibility that the scheme could be extended to include small businesses. Surrey Save would get its funding from local authorities, registered social landlords, corporate sponsors and savers. It was noted that Surrey Save was working with consultants who had a successful track record in creating credit unions in Sussex and elsewhere.

Further details would be communicated as Waverley's involvement became clearer.

## 7. PARTICIPATORY BUDGETING

Graeme Clark outlined the scope and timetable for undertaking a budget consultation exercise during the summer/autumn of 2009.

Budget consultation, also known as participatory budgeting, was a process in which local people were engaged in taking decisions on the spending priorities for their area. There were a number of benefits for Waverley, including helping to understand the priorities of local people, generating buy-in and ownership from local people, raising awareness of the range of services provided by the Council and the difficult choices needed in deciding the budget, and meeting the government's agenda for giving people a say over public budgets.

In order to achieve the maximum benefit from this process, the Executive had agreed to engage a professional market research company with experience in managing budget consultations for local councils. A variety of consultation methods were envisaged, appropriate to the participants and setting, including face-to-face interviews, forums, and web-based tools. As a wholly parished borough, the input from the town and parish councils would be very important and would carry a high weighting; as would information already available via Healthchecks.

It was only proposed to include discretionary services in the consultation and to specifically exclude any service areas that the Executive was certain it did not wish to change at this time. In order to provide a useful input to the 2010/11 service planning process a full analysis of the results from the

consultation would be needed by early October. To this end, finalisation of the surveying and sampling methodology would take place in August, and surveying would take place in September.

It was noted that Surrey County Council would probably carry out a similar exercise at some stage, but due to the change in administration it was unlikely to be in the next budget round.

The Chairman encouraged town and parish representatives to participate fully in the consultation process, as their contribution would be greatly valued.

## 8. CASH AND LOCALITY OFFICES

Officers updated representatives on the outcomes of reviews into the services provided by Waverley's locality offices at Farnham, Cranleigh and Haslemere, and its reception and cash desk at Godalming.

The first review had looked at the collection of payments at the Council's four cash counters. This had identified that over the past 10 years the number of payments made over the cash counters had gone down by over 40%, as more and more customers moved to paying by direct debit, over the phone, or online. As a direct result, the unit cost of providing this service to declining numbers had increased.

Whilst recognising that a number of its customers still preferred to pay Waverley in cash, more cost effective ways of continuing to provide this service had been explored. Arrangements had now been made to enable customers to make payments at Post Office counters and PayPoint retail outlets. This would not only provide more choice to customers about where to make their payments, it would also increase the number of customers using the Post Offices and other shops in the Borough. The cash counters at Waverley's offices would close on 30 October 2009, and the timetable for sending out bar-coded documents to existing locality office customers was phased through mid-July to September.

The second review had followed on from the decision to close the cash counters, and had considered the on-going operations of the locality offices. The intention was to continue providing an enquiry and information service from the existing locations, but on slightly reduced hours – Farnham, 5 days/week + Saturday morning; Cranleigh and Haslemere, each 4 half-days/week + Saturday morning; Godalming, normal week-day business hours + Saturday morning. In addition, departments were exploring what additional services might be delivered via the locality offices, including planning, benefits surgeries and member surgeries. It was also possible that locality offices could provide a portal for services offered by Surrey County Council, CABx, Age Concern, and other community organisations.

The new arrangements for the locality offices would be monitored and reviewed after 6 months.

Mrs Ames noted that she would find it inconvenient to have to remember that Cranleigh LO was closed on a Wednesday.

Peter Wadham asked whether a more mobile service would be of more benefit to residents in more rural parts of the Borough, possibly making use of parish council facilities. Representatives were advised that Waverley was committed to offering a local service to its residents but was feeling its way in terms of what services could be provided, where to provide them and what the demand was for them. It had been felt that to try and roll out a radically different type of mobile service would have been too big a step in the short-term, but the proposed arrangements would be reviewed after 6 months at which time a longer term strategy for the locality offices would be developed.

There was some concern among representatives that there would be too much reliance on the website for communicating the message about the changes in the cash payment arrangements. Representatives were advised that all those who regularly paid in cash had been written to, to advise them of the changes, and over the coming months they would receive additional information with their new bills, and when they made payments at the cash counters. It was agreed that a copy of the letter sent to customers would be sent to parish clerks, for information.

#### 9. COMMUNITY EVENTS AND STREET TRADING

Officers outlined the background to the review of street designations. There was a need to provide a street trading solution that would enable community- and council-run events to take place in key locations in the borough. A light touch review of Street Trading Controls had been agreed to determine a policy that would allow such events on an occasional basis, but not individual traders.

Iain Lynch confirmed that the intention was to allow community events that had taken place over a number of years, and which brought vitality to town centres, to continue. Whilst there was no way to prevent individual traders from seeking permission to trade on a consent street, the existence of a Street Trading Policy would give a strong indication of the circumstances in which trading would and would not be permitted.

A consultation would be taking place over the summer, with the aim of having new arrangements in place for the autumn. Louise Goodfellow thanked officers and members for their efforts to ensure that community events in Godalming might continue.

#### 10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 14 September 2009 at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, The Burys, Godalming.

(Towns and Parishes are requested to submit any issues they wish to raise at that meeting by Monday 24 August 2009).

The meeting ended at 8.36 p.m.