



# Ashtead Independents

Keep national party politics out of local government

## **Mole Valley District Council Corporate Strategy**

24th October 2014 by admin

The Council have recently commenced a consultation (through the website and otherwise) to establish the views of Mole Valley residents on what the Council should be concentrating on over the next few years to enhance their lifestyle. A few simple questions based on the three themes of the vitality of our towns and villages, health and wellbeing, and the sustainable environment seek to establish what aspects of these our residents think most important. Councillor Simon Ling, the Executive Member for Finance and Corporate Services, has been much involved in the development of the questionnaire, and would be delighted if lots of Ashtead residents were to give their views.

19/10/14

## **Mole Valley Access Group project**

19th October 2014 by admin

Councillor Mary Cooper, who is a member of the Mole Valley Access Group, has been involved with a project to improve access to Mole Valley businesses for disabled people. These include not only wheelchair users but also the visually and aurally impaired, and older people whose mobility is becoming affected. This accounts probably for one in every 6 of us. Businesses can apply for an award by completing a questionnaire describing their access arrangements, which will be checked by members of the group. Our own Leatherhead Theatre was one of the first recipients for improvements they have made for disabled access to the front row of the stalls.

19/10/14

## **Revitalisation of Leatherhead Town Centre**

19th October 2014 by admin

Councillor Chris Townsend, who is Leader of Mole Valley District Council, has been closely involved in developing plans for a major revitalisation of Leatherhead Town Centre, with the help of substantial European Union funds to come to us through the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership. One hundred million pounds may be available if a master plan to be developed by Mole Valley District Council to bring a major re-organisation to the town by proposing solutions to the problems of a moribund daytime economy and inadequate traffic circulation is accepted for a grant. The Council has agreed to Chris's suggestion that it should spend half a million pounds over the next two years developing the plan.

19/10/14



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## **Preservation of our Green Belt**

19th October 2014 by admin

At a Council meeting on 14 October, the question of the competing pressures to meet Government targets for new housing and the preservation of our precious green belt areas came to a head.

Councillor John Northcott, as Executive Member for Planning, was able to announce that he is recommending a change of direction in the course of Council Planning Policy taking into account the latest Government advice and recent decisions of the Planning Inspectorate, which have caused a number of other councils to withdraw or abandon their draft Local Plans, and the fact that the amount of Green Belt land that would be needed was much less than had previously been thought. John announced that, subject to the agreement of the Executive, Mole Valley will cease work on the Housing and Traveller Site Plan which was intended to find sites in the green belt to enable the housing target in our current Local Plan to be met, and instead bring forward a new Local Plan which will be fully compliant with the National Planning Policy Framework but will nevertheless recognise planning constraints such as the green belt.

19/10/14

## **New MVDC website**

19th October 2014 by admin

The Mole Valley District Council has for some years consistently been highly placed in the ranking of Council websites, being in the top 20 or so out of almost 500. Even so much effort has gone into improving it still further and a new version went live on 14 October. It is designed so that the most visited pages are easily accessible from the home page, and this will vary depending on future demand and what is topically current at any one time. Councillor Simon Ling, as Executive Member for Finance and Corporate services, will be pleased to hear your views on the new site.

19/10/14

## **School Places**

12th October 2014 by admin

Ashtead, Mole Valley and Surrey are seriously short of School places, particularly for primary age children, in the next few years. Everybody will agree that more places need to be provided so that our local children can attend a local school. Expansion plans are in place at The Greville, Barnett Wood and St Peter's Schools, and West Ashtead took an extra class last year. We hope these additional places will solve the problem locally.

Further information on this should be available at the ARA autumn meeting at the Peace Memorial Hall on 6 November, when Linda Kemeny, the Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Education will be addressing the meeting and answering questions. Further details can be found on the ARA website.



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We are acutely aware that solving one problem is extremely likely to exacerbate another, namely the issue of traffic congestion in the area of our schools at drop off and pick up times each day. Surrey County Council are seeking ways to mitigate this problem but so far we have seen nothing that will make a significant difference. An imaginative solution may be called for – but money as always is in very short supply. If anybody has any ideas that might help – do let your ward councillor or County Councillor know soon!

## **The Tesco site**

12th October 2014 by admin

As residents will know, Tesco have planning permission to erect a store on their site in The Street where the Esso filling station previously was. This permission was granted on 16 November 2012 and will expire in 2015 but could easily be renewed. Meanwhile there has been no sign of the commencement of building works on the site and there has been no contact between Tesco and MVDC planners. We cannot say therefore what exactly Tesco may be intending or in what timescale. It is public knowledge that Tesco have been going through a bad patch as regards their trading results, and they are known to be hoarding a considerable land bank.

We are aware that there has been contact between the Ashtead Residents' Association and we understand Tesco have offered to devote part of the site for community use on a temporary basis. Simon Ling, as Ward Councillor, introduced them to Transition Ashtead, who will be able to help and advise on planting and other tasks. For further details please see the ARA website.

Updated: 11/10/14