



Surrey Heath Borough Council
Surrey Heath House
Knoll Road
Camberley
Surrey GU15 3HD
Telephone: (01276) 707100
Facsimile: (01276) 707177
DX: 32722 Camberley
Web Site: www.surreyheath.gov.uk

Department: Democratic Services
Division: Legal & Democratic Services
Please ask for: Eddie Scott
Direct Tel: 01276 707160
E-Mail: democratic.services@surreyheath.gov.uk

To: The Members of the **External Partnerships Select Committee**
(Councillors: Rob Lee (Chair), Mary Glauert (Vice Chair), Louise Ashbery, Jonny Cope, Julie Hoad, Sarbie Kang, Liz Noble, Emma-Jane McGrath, Lewis Mears, Jacques Olmo, Murray Rowlands, Kevin Thompson and Richard Wilson)

In accordance with the Substitute Protocol at Part 4 of the Constitution, Members who are unable to attend this meeting should give their apologies and arrange for one of the appointed substitutes, as listed below, to attend. Members should also inform their group leader of the arrangements made.

Substitutes: Councillors Mark Gordon, David O'Mahoney, Ying Perrett, Jonathan Quin, Bob Raikes, Pat Tedder and Valerie White

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **External Partnerships Select Committee** will be held at Council Chamber, Surrey Heath House, Knoll Road, Camberley, GU15 3HD on **Tuesday, 28 November 2023 at 7.00 pm**. The agenda will be set out as below.

Please note that this meeting will be recorded.

Yours sincerely

Damian Roberts

Chief Executive

AGENDA

	Pages
1 Apologies for Absence	
2 Chair's Announcements and Welcome to Guests	
3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting	3 - 10
To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2023.	
4 Declarations of Interest	
Members are invited to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and non-pecuniary interests they may have with respect to matters which are to be considered at this meeting. Members who consider they may have	

an interest are invited to consult the Monitoring Officer or the Democratic Services Officer prior to the meeting.

5 Public Question Time

To answer any questions received in accordance with Part 4, Section E of the Constitution.

6 Camberley Sewage Treatment Works

11 - 14

7 Committee Work Programme

15 - 18

Minutes of a Meeting of the External Partnerships Select Committee held at Council Chamber, Surrey Heath House, Knoll Road, Camberley, GU15 3HD on 5 September 2023

+ Cllr Rob Lee (Chairman)
+ Cllr Mary Glauert (Vice Chairman)

+ Cllr Louise Ashbery	+ Cllr Lewis Mears
+ Cllr Jonny Cope	+ Cllr Jacques Olmo
- Cllr Julie Hoad	+ Cllr Murray Rowlands
+ Cllr Sarbie Kang	+ Cllr Kevin Thompson
- Cllr Liz Noble	- Cllr Richard Wilson
- Cllr Emma-Jane McGrath	

+ Present
- Apologies for absence presented

Substitutes: Cllr David O'Mahoney (In place of Cllr Julie Hoad), Cllr Ying Perrett (In place of Cllr Richard Wilson) and Cllr Bob Raikes (In place of Cllr Liz Noble)

Members in Attendance: Cllr Cliff Betton, Cllr Shaun Garrett, Cllr Nirmal Kang, Cllr Shaun Macdonald and Cllr Jonathan Quin

Officers Present: Sally Kipping, Renee France and Nick Steevens

Guests:

Steve Bailey, Trust Secretary and Manager, Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership

Charles Barbour, Chair, Surrey Heath Age Concern

Guy Burnett, Executive Director for Development, Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing

Sarah-Jane Croke, Charity Manager, Surrey Heath Age Concern

Dan Fielder, Senior Project Manager, Safer Buildings, Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing

Helen Frary, Chair, Voluntary Support North Surrey

Sharon Hall, Trustee, Camberley and District Job Club

Pete Nyman, Treasurer, Camberley and District Job Club

Mags Mercer, Chief Executive, The Hope Hub

Kate Sawdy, Chief Executive, Surrey Heath Citizens Advice

Greg Scott, Vice Chair, Citizens Advice Surrey Heath

Solette Sheppardson, Chief Executive, Voluntary Support North Surrey

James Taylor, Strategic Manager, Basingstoke Canal Authority

7/EP Chair's Announcements and Welcome to Guests

The Chair welcomed Committee Members and guests to the meeting, and invited Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing (MTVH) to provide an update in respect of

the remediation works taking place in relation to North Court, Upper Church Street, Camberley.

Following building safety investigations, initiated in 2020, it was found that there were cavity barriers in the external walls and around the windows, which needed to be upgraded. In addition, it was also found that there were cavity barriers which were all-together missing in common areas and flats, and there were areas where cables were passing through walls but unsealed gaps meant there was an inability to stop the spread of fire and smoke. Furthermore, many of the fire doors were poorly fitted or had damage.

MTVH planned remedial repairs work, in a programme of over 55 weeks. Commercial negotiations had been finalised, and the internal and external plans had been signed off by the Institution of Engineers. It was planned that works would take place with residents in situ; and works were comparable in anticipated levels of disruption as having a kitchen and bathroom replaced. It was affirmed that MTVH would be managing the communications and resident liaison throughout the process, as opposed to the contractor, Liang O'Rourke.

Moving forward in the interests of quality assurance, MTVH had appointed Tenos Ltd, as fire engineer to carry out inspections at an estimated 2 per month, including unannounced visits. Furthermore, a Customer Liaison Officer would aim to attend the site at least a month in order to keep up to date with the ongoing works.

Following Members' questions, the Committee were advised that during the course of the construction management of any development, which was the size of North Court, building control would normally visit on a fairly regular basis, notionally once a week in order to ascertain whether non-compliance was being achieved. This method of inspection routine would not provide full oversight of the build, and it was the responsibility of the developer to achieve compliance with building regulations. During routine visits building control surveyors from the Council did not identify any non-compliance with building regulations which weren't rectified.

It was acknowledged, that initially North Court residents were given an initial estimate of 70 weeks for the remediation works. This estimate was provided at an initial stage before provision of the full programme of work by Lang O'Rourke. Works were intended to ensure a EWS1 certification was achieved, and would satisfy required building safety certificates. MTVH would be in touch within 2 weeks in order to arrange residents' meetings, to give further detail in respect of the programme, including scheduled levels of disruption and diagrams, as well as indicative dates for internal works on specific units. It was emphasised by MTVH that internal works would be undertaken on a unit by unit basis in order to minimise length of disruption, and there would be a concerted effort to engage with residents on an individual basis.

8/EP Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2023 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

9/EP Declarations of Interest

Councillor Mary Glauert declared a non-pecuniary interest that she was the Council's Outside body appointment on Surrey Heath Age Concern.

Councillor Murray Rowlands declared a non-pecuniary interest that he was a trustee and volunteer of Camberley and District Job Club.

Councillor Shaun Garrett declared and it was noted for the record that he had previously been the Council's Outside Body appointment on Surrey Heath Age Concern and he was shortly due to appointed a trustee of the organisation, independent from the Council.

Councillor Shaun MacDonald declared and it was noted for the record that he was a regular donator to the Hope Hub.

10/EP Revenue Grants Introductory Background Paper

The Head of HR, Performance and Communications reminded the Committee that the consideration of the Council's Revenue Grants Scheme, was a key part of the Committee's Terms of Reference. It was explained that Revenue Grant holders would provide a very short summary of their reports, before Members' had an opportunity to ask the organisations' representatives, before it made assessments on potential recommendations to the Executive in respect of Revenue Grants for 24/25.

The Committee were also made aware that in contrast to what was written on the agenda front sheet, the correct name for the organisation which was subject of agenda item 12 was 'Camberley and District Job Club'.

11/EP Surrey Heath Citizens Advice (CASH)

Members asked as to the trends which CASH was observing in relation to those who sought advice. It was noted that there were an increased amount of people with debt and money problems, who were accessing CASH services and this was anticipated to increase as a result of higher levels of inflation, and as a result of higher interest rates. Whilst previously advice was provided to those with debts, CASH observed that an average person had on average approximately £30 at the end of the month to service or repay debts, now 60% faced the challenge of having a negative income. This was now also increasingly a phenomena which faced those in work.

CASH had fortunately been able to successfully bid for project funding to employ a third money advice advisor. However, it was increasingly hard for CASH to be able to recruit and retain the people with the right skills for the organisation.

With one of the highest percentage of properties owned via mortgages, CASH had slowly started to see a number of people who sought advice in relation to financial problems as a result of higher interest rates. It was added that Citizens Advice had campaigned nationally for a higher local housing allowance, as it was noted that the allowance wasn't high enough to rent a property within the borough. In addition, following Members' queries, it was not anticipated that there would be further Central Government money which was due to be received for a continuation of the Household Support Fund.

12/EP The Hope Hub

Following Members' questions on the how the Hope Hub worked with clients who were suffering from mental health conditions, it was advised that in 2019, 19 out of 100 clients had a diagnosed mental health need. Now 83 out of 100 clients now suffered from a diagnosed mental health condition. However, although the Hope Hub worked closely with GPs, NHS mental health teams and Adult Social Care, there was no uniform route for Hope Hub Clients to receive treatment.

It was noted that there were hurdles for clients who suffered from mental health conditions but took substances, and in addition the Hope Hub sometimes came to different mental health needs assessments to the NHS and it was not uncommon that on first engaging with the organisation that clients were on the wrong medication.

Whilst it was acknowledged that the Hope Hub's building located behind Camberley Library could benefit from being renovated in the long term, the Committee were advised that the building was not currently a barrier from the services which The Hope Hub wanted to provide. Whilst roof repairs had to recently be undertaken, the building was structurally sound and the charity benefitted from 3000 square foot to provide its services.

Members congratulated the Hope Hub on the success of the recent One-Pot Cooking scheme, which had been the focus of very positive feedback. It was noted that the scheme would benefit from more funding, such as from Councillors' Ward Councillor funds.

13/EP Voluntary Support North Surrey (VSNS) and VSNS Time to Talk Project

The importance of the work of Voluntary Support North Surrey in the provision of support, the infrastructure and the offer of advice and the legal framework for the third sector was highlighted by the Committee.

Following questioning from members of the Committee, a discussion ensued which acknowledged the merits of longer-term funding, and potential ring-fenced revenue grant funding for Surrey Heath third-sector organisations. Longer-term guaranteed funding allowed VSNS and other third sector organisations to better plan and commit to staff and projects. It also allowed less time to spent on writing grant applications, which was estimated to total at roughly 16 hours per funding

bid; which for VSNS was exacerbated by its operation over multiple borough and districts.

Kate Sawdy, Chief Executive, CASH, emphasised that over the whole of the third sector, long-term funding eased difficulties relating to the recruitment and retention of staff. Long-term funding, which resulted in longer contracts for key roles, meant a better calibre of staff could be recruited and benefited from. It was noted that roles, which relied on one year project funding, in reality suffered from staff being trained during the first 6 months of the role, before they looked towards new opportunities at the end of their year-long contract. It was added by further third sector representatives that secure, longer-term funding also allowed charities to invest time and money in developments to secure alternative funding streams and raise funds, instead of having to prioritise short-term matters.

14/EP Basingstoke Canal Authority

The Basingstoke Canal Authority was a partnership between Hampshire County Council, Surrey County Council, supported by 6 Borough and District Councils.

Following Members' questions and comments, it was noted that despite employing 6 rangers, 3-4 part time members of staff, and an Operations Manager, although currently a vacant post, the Canal was largely free to use. Moreover, the value of the canal was highlighted during the pandemic, where at the height of lockdown canal towpath usage trebled. Canal usage has continued to be higher than pre-pandemic levels and it was acknowledged that the effect of recreation on the canal had a positive effect on local residents' mental health.

Members enquired as to the effect of climate change on the management of the canal. It was noted that during last summer's drought, the canal became unnavigable for the first time. Furthermore, larger areas of development and high levels of surface run off meant it was becoming increasingly important for the canal to act as body for water attenuation. The canal's capacity was increased by careful management of the canal prior to high levels of rainfall by trimming water levels before forecasted high levels of precipitation.

15/EP Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership

The Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership (a partnership project between Hampshire County Council, other local authorities and community organisations) worked to improve and maintain and conserve the River Blackwater and the many open green spaces which sat alongside it.

The Partnership worked with the Council on the maintaining and the enhancement of its greenspaces. The Partnership worked alongside the Council to maintain paths, and mow grass at sites including Diamond Ridge Woods, St Catherine's Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), Blackwater Park and Turf Hill Park.

Following Members' prompts to give some further information on the meadow and tree-planting work which the partnership had undertaken, it was stated that it had recently adopted the management of the Waters Edge SANG, which was still under developer control, but had not be maintained. Moreover the Partnership worked in close association with groups such as the Surrey Heath Tree Wardens and the Friends of Frimley Fuel Allotments.

16/EP Surrey Heath Age Concern

Surrey Heath Age Concern's mission was to prevent loneliness and isolation amongst the elderly. Surrey Heath Age Concern (SHAC), mostly supported the elderly who suffered from isolation and their spouse had either passed away or move into care.

SHAC's most notable service was a befriending service which was provided in person and via the phone. It also ran the Rainbow Café which had recently transitioned to becoming more of a community café. SHAC also provided tea parties, agility classes, in partnership with Places Leisure, and a cinema club and Fish and Chips Lunch Club. All Activities were provided with the aim of reducing social isolationism and loneliness.

At the moment SHAC's befriending service was provided by 50 volunteers and coordinated by a social prescriber who worked 2 and a half days a week and was at capacity. It was noted from the Committee's questioning that circa 45% of CASH's clients suffered from long term health conditions or a disability which meant they were housebound. This only reinforced the importance of befriending services. In addition, it was remarked and acknowledged by the Committee that SHAC's befriending service and VSNS's Time to Talk Project were never advertised, due to a lack of capacity, which would be overwhelmed by demand if the services were widely publicised.

17/EP Camberley and District Job Club

Camberley and District Job Club had the goal of helping the long and short term unemployed back to work. The Job Club aimed to achieve this by rebuilding clients' confidence and identifying market relevant skills to employers.

Following exploration of the Job Club's report, the Committee noted that since the pandemic the traditional client base of the Job Club had changed. Whilst pre-pandemic the job club's main client base was unemployed men in their 40s and 50s, the pandemic had altered the way the organisation provided its services and thereby changed it its natural customer. Before the pandemic, the Job Club acted as a drop-in service in order to offer advice and help unemployed residents to return to employment. However, as a result of the pandemic the organisation pivoted to provision of an appointment-based service. This had the effect of drawing more women to the service, and more recently a younger demographic of service users.

The Job Club were also seeing a younger clientele as a result of its partnership with The Workshop which offered free careers advice for young people in The Square Shopping Centre. More recently the organisation was able to fund use of a Ukrainian translator, and the service had recently served a large volume of refugees from a variety of origin countries.

From Members' questions it was highlighted that 60% of the Job Club's funding had come from the Revenue Grant supplied from the Council. Furthermore, it was noted that the charity had relatively high ongoing costs, including venue-hire costs of £2500 per year as well as the salary of a part-time coordinator.

18/EP Committee Work Programme

Following consideration of the Revenue Grant holders' reports, the Committee noted grant holders' request and the acknowledged benefits of longer term, 3 year funding. It was acknowledged that an informal committee meeting would be set up to discuss potential recommendations to the Executive on the Revenue Grant applications for 24/25. The informal meeting would take place after the window for Revenue Grant applications were closed and it was agreed that there would be a discussion in respect of the opportunities for longer funding settlements.

The Committee considered the rest of the Committee's forward plan for the remainder of the 24/25 municipal year. It was agreed that Thames Water would present an item at the Committee's spring meeting. In addition, it was agreed that Surrey County Council Highways would be invited to attend the Committee's November meeting, with a specific focus on potholes, and the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities would be invited for an item on Local Government Finance.

Chair

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**Surrey Heath Borough Council
External Partnerships Select Committee**

28 November 2023

Camberley Sewage Treatment Works

Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Morgan Rise, Net Zero, Well-being & Environment
Strategic Director/Head of Service	Nick Steevens
Report Authors:	Nick Steevens
Wards Affected:	St Michaels, Watchetts
Key Decision:	No
Date Portfolio Holder signed off the report	

Summary and purpose

This report outlines the chronology of the odour issues emanating from Camberley Sewage Treatment Plant during the summer of 2023.

Recommendation

The External Partnerships Select Committee is asked to note the contents of the report.

1. Background and Supporting Information

- 1.1 Camberley Sewage Treatment Plant (CSTP) is located in St Michael's ward bordered by industrial units, the A331 and the Watchmoor Park office development. The nearest residential properties are located in Surrey Avenue, less than 100m from the boundary of CSTP.
- 1.2 Thames Water currently hold a permit to process sewage sludge at Camberley and this is subject to an Environmental Permit issued by the Environment Agency. Processing of the imported material was allowed under an exemption meaning that the controls set by the current permit were not applicable.
- 1.3 On the 21st June 2023 the Council's Environmental Health service started to receive complaints regarding a foul odour which complainants believed was coming from CSTP.

- 1.4 Officers first contacted CSTP on the 22nd June by email and officers have recounted that it took some time for Thames Water to acknowledge that they had an issue on site. Initially it was maintained by Thames Water that the odour was of the result of various other external issues including locally blocked drains and not linked to activities at CSTP.
- 1.5 After further investigations officers spoke to the Customer & Stakeholder Manager for Thames Water who then confirmed that the odour issues were due to processes at Camberley Wastewater Treatment Works who were holding a backlog of raw sewage that needed processing. Assurances were also provided that an odour suppression system was in place to mitigate any odours caused by the presence of the sewage.
- 1.6 On the 18th of July officers made an unannounced visit to CSTP where they were advised that untreated sludge had been imported into Camberley and was being stored in a large open tank. The Sewage was imported to Camberley from other facilities that had operational issues. Material started being imported in February and by March the 'strategic tank' used to store the sewage sludge was full to capacity. The sewage sludge remained held untreated in the open strategic tank until July 2023. It is believed that as the weather became warmer this increased the levels of odour arising from the sludge, ultimately triggering complaints to the Council and to Councillors.
- 1.7 The sewage sludge introduced to CSTP by tankers was stored in open tanks with the intention of processing this at CSTP. During the same period Thames Water confirmed that there were issues with the odour control system resulting in the odour suppression not working continuously as intended. As a consequence complaints to the Council continued throughout July with officers witnessing issues with odour emanating from the site.
- 1.8 It was confirmed by Thames Water in July that the sewage sludge was found to be too high in ammonia content to allow timely processing at CSTP. Alternative arrangements had to be identified for its disposal. Complaints regarding the odour continued to be received by the Council and shared on social media throughout July. Officers raised with Thames Water the need for a letter drop to all affected residents in St Michaels and Watchetts wards.
- 1.9 Officers of the Council were provided with a mechanism to contact Thames Water out of normal working hours should an escalation in odour occur. This was utilised on the evening of Friday the 28th of July and the following Saturday due to an increase in odour. Contacting Thames Water to speak to an on-call officer proved impossible through the agreed electronic bulletin board with repeated contact with Thames Water over the weekend resulting in no response to officers.
- 1.10 During a site visit on the 2nd August it was finally confirmed that action had been taken and the odour suppression system was now operational

24 hours a day whereas suppression had previously only been in place during normal working hours with intermittent failures also causing odour during normal working hours. Sludge processing had restarted and it was confirmed that it would be complete by the end of the August. Letters were eventually sent to residents on or around the 18th August 2023.

- 1.11 Thames Water completed the sludge processing operation as agreed at the end of August. The cleaning of the tanks then started with the process completed by the 25th of September.
- 1.12 The Environment Agency have confirmed their intention to revise the Environmental Permit which will remove the ability to process sewage in open tanks. Additionally, sewage processing at CSTP is now subject to the evolving Industrial Emission Directive (IED). The directive will require Camberley to comply with the latest Best Available Technology (BAT) document to control its emissions to Air land and Water. As odour is an emission to air, the permit will now add new controls to mitigate any impacts.
- 1.13 On the 27th September 2023 Councillors attended a meeting with Thames Water and Michael Gove MP to discuss the impact that the odour had on the 11,600 residents of St Michaels and Watchetts wards. During the meeting a commitment was given by representatives of Thames Water that a financial contribution would be offered towards a community project in the affected wards. In October 2023 a letter was received from the Operations Director from Thames Water reneging from the offer and stating that in the current circumstances *Thames Water is unable to contribute funding to such a project.*

Annexes:

None

Background Papers:

Letter from Thames Water, October 2023

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Work Programme External Partnerships Select Committee

Email: democratic.services@surreyheath.gov.uk

Topic	Relevant strategic aims and actions in Five Year Strategy	Purpose	Lead witnesses
12 March 2024			
Frimley Integrated Care System / Surrey Heath Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspiration: Tackle health issues in areas of deprivation with a view of improving life expectancy for these areas by working in partnership within the integrated health and social care system. • Work with health and voluntary partners to target the issue of obesity (a 'whole systems approach') to reduce the number of people in Surrey Heath who are likely to develop serious long term health issues due to obesity. In Surrey Heath 	<p>To better understand the Council's role in the Integrated Care System; and the ICP.</p> <p>Understand and scrutinise the ongoing work in developing a whole system's approach to obesity and identify further opportunities for integration with the health service.</p>	<p>Tom Lawlor, Director of Operations, Surrey Heath, Frimley Health, ICB.</p> <p>Nick Steevens, Strategic Director - Environment and Community.</p> <p>Environment and Health Portfolio Holder.</p>

	62.2% of adults are estimated to be overweight or obese, compared to 5.5% across Surrey as a whole.		
Surrey Police (Crime and Disorder Meeting).	Work with the Police and other agencies to ensure that there is a robust response to emerging national threats including County Lines, Human Trafficking, Child Sexual Exploitation, Extremist behaviour and Serious Organised Crime. Deliver a safe borough and take prompt action in response to environmental crime and anti-social behaviour building a reputation as the safest Borough in Surrey.	To sit as the Council's designated Crime and Disorder committee in order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutinise the current performance of Policing within Surrey Heath. • Scrutinise Surrey Heath Beat's actions against the Police and Crime Panel for Surrey 2021-2025. Identify areas for greater collaboration with the Council's Community Safety function.	Gemma Taylor, Surrey Heath Borough Commander, Surrey Police . Lisa Townsend, Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey Housing and Safeguarding & Support Portfolio Holder. Nick Steevens, Strategic Director - Environment and Community Richard Wilson, Council appointee to the Surrey Police and Crime Panel.
12 March 2024 / To be allocated dependent on guest availability			
Surrey County Council Highways		To receive a report/presentation from Surrey County Council to better understand its Highway Safety Inspections Standards and Procedures, with specific regard to potholes.	

		And to scrutinise its plans for highway maintenance for winter 2023/24.	
Local Government Funding		<p>To better understand the Local Government Finance Settlement.</p> <p>To receive an update on the Fair Funding Review, and proposed changes to business rates retention policies.</p> <p>To discuss opportunities to work together to explore better funding for local government.</p>	Michael Gove MP.

Sub-groups, Workshops and Briefings

Name	Relevant strategic aims and actions in Five Year Strategy	Description	Outcomes	Members
Accent Housing Workshop 12 January 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building strong communities and connections with a sense of place and strong community identity, fostering a sense of respect and consideration between neighbours and communities. Where housing is delivered, do all that we can within the confines of legislation to maximise the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To better understand the causes of the customer dissatisfaction. To understand the challenges causing the current maintenance backlog and how these could be addressed. To identify how the Council can best support Accent, excluding exploration of void properties, 	<p>A workshop findings report written by the Democratic Services Officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair is brought to the Committee meeting for consideration.</p> <p>Recommendations be made to Accent Housing and/or the Executive.</p>	All Committee Members and Relevant Portfolio Holder(s)

	<p>amount of affordable and socially rented homes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• We will increase how we work together with other Local Authorities, partners, businesses and the voluntary sector – we recognise more can be achieved by working together.	<p>communications, and outreach work.</p>		
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