

Surrey Heath Heritage Service

Summary

Surrey Heath Heritage Service exists to preserve, manage and document the local heritage and natural history of the Borough of Surrey Heath which is delivered via a combination of exhibitions in its Surrey Heath House location and a programme of outreach work and activities. Visitor numbers to the Surrey Heath House location are decreasing; however the results of a recent survey indicate that there still exists a strong appetite for Heritage activities and events in the Borough. This reports seeks approval to adopt changes to the Heritage Service that see it move away from static exhibitions situated in Surrey Heath House to a more outward facing, integrated service that takes local Heritage to the community.

Portfolio - Business

Date Portfolio Holder signed off report: 19th February 2018

Wards Affected

All

Recommendation

The Executive is asked to RESOLVE to

- (i) adopt the proposed changes to the current heritage service; and
- (ii) adopt a mission statement, which allows the Council to seek formal accreditation for its Heritage Service.

1. Resource Implications

1.1 The heritage team facilitated the consultation which concluded at the end of 2017. Museum users and non- users were targeted and asked for their opinions on what they are looking for from a heritage service; the full list of consultees can be seen in Annex 1.

2. Key Issues

2.1 424 surveys were completed and returned. The key outcomes from the consultation were;

- 37% of people who had visited the museum had only done so once, a further 28% had only visited four times or more.
- When asked what services would encourage them to attend more frequently, 70% said talks/guided tours/hosted sessions and workshops.
- The most popular topics were local history, archaeology, famous local people, natural history and reminiscence.

- 65% of respondents asked for increased marketing to let them know about exhibits, events, walks and talks would encourage them to attend more frequently.
 - Most people would check for events, walks, talks using the internet or looking in the library. Very few checked borough boards
 - 72% of all respondents were over the age of 55.
- 2.2 Surrey Heath House Museum walk-up visitor figures have been declining over the last few years and especially since the opening of the Heritage gallery in the centre of Camberley.
- 2.3 The numbers of people attending our hosted events, walks and talks continue to be popular with ever-growing numbers. Many of the walks and events have to be booked in advance and incur attendance fees.
- 2.4 The museum was moved into Surrey Heath House as a temporary measure in 1986, with the permanent display walk-through remaining unchanged.
- 2.5 The museum has limited physical external presence in the council offices and is reliant on marketing the service as it has very little walk-up trade.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 A range of options for future arrangements for the heritage service and specifically for the Museum have been explored with a number of stakeholders. These have ranged from discontinuing the heritage service to maintaining the status quo and many variables in between. The outcomes of which identified the following:
- There is public and member support for the Surrey Heath heritage service.
 - It should continue to run events, workshops, walks and talks throughout the year.
 - There should be an annual exhibition in a Camberley Town Centre location during school summer holidays.
 - Regularly changing displays should be positioned in the Council's busy Contact Centre to promote the service and forthcoming events allowing the current Museum location to close.
 - Create a new website that will not only promote activities, walks etc. but will allow the Heritage Service to make the catalogue and parts of the collection more accessible and available for enthusiasts and researchers on- line.
 - Appointments will continue to be available for researchers to come in to view items and/or research aspects of the collection.
 - Outreach work with schools and other community groups would continue. This will help reach and engage with new customers, local schools and groups from other established service areas.

- 3.2 To raise awareness of the changing service, there will be a number of opportunities for cross/team working. For example; the talks will be held in the theatre, the historic walks will be within the walks brochure, some of the workshops will be held in the council's parks and other sites such as Windle Valley and the Council Chamber.
- 3.3 The Heritage team will re-locate from the current site to join the wider Business team in Surrey Heath House. Furthermore, the Business team is exploring relocating the collection to alternative council owned storage freeing up some of the current storage areas for alternative use.
- 3.4 The service will continue to pursue a professional accreditation for the service and collection. To do so the service must adopt a future mission statement to allow for the accreditation and having consulted with local history societies, other heritage services and stakeholders the proposed mission statement would be;
- 'Surrey Heath Heritage services exist to preserve, manage and document the heritage of this Borough. We will promote our unique heritage via public exhibitions, events outreach and research access.'
- 3.5 Work to rebrand and relaunch the service is being undertaken by the media and marketing team so that there will be a new fresh look and feel for the service.

4. Options

- 4.1 The Executive is asked to resolve
- (i) to agree to adopt the changes proposed for the heritage service;
 - (ii) to agree to adopt elements of the proposed changes;
 - (iii) to agree and confirm the mission statement to allow the collection and service to seek formal accreditation.
 - (iv) to retain the Heritage Service in its current format.

5. Corporate Objectives and Key Priorities

- 2.3 This is supported within the priority for People where we are looking to build and encourage communities where people can live happily and healthily in an environment that the Community is proud to be part of.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 The consultation was carried out by the Heritage team attending community events, local groups, schools and local interested parties. The consultation is also published on the council web site.

7. PR And Marketing

- 7.1 The Media and Marketing team are working closely with the Heritage service to promote forthcoming exhibitions, events and workshops.
- 7.2 The Media and Marketing team will be instrumental in helping to deliver the new website so that the collection can be researched and viewed on-line.

Annexes	Annex 1 – Consultees
Background Papers	None
Author/Contact Details	Sue McCubbin – Recreation and Business Manager Sue.McCubbin@surreyheath.gov.uk
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Consultations, Implications and Issues Addressed

Resources	Required	Consulted
Revenue		
Capital		
Human Resources		
Asset Management		
IT	✓	
Other Issues	Required	Consulted
Corporate Objectives & Key Priorities	✓	
Policy Framework		
Legal		
Governance		
Sustainability	✓	
Risk Management		
Equalities Impact Assessment		
Community Safety		
Human Rights		
Consultation	✓	
P R & Marketing	✓	

Review Date:

Version: