

**Surrey Heath Borough Council**  
**Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee**  
**15 March 2023**

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**Leisure, Culture & Community Portfolio Update**

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Rebecca Jennings-Evans, Leisure, Culture & Community  
**Strategic Director:** Nick Steevens, Strategic Director Environment and Community  
**Report Author:** Various

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**Summary and purpose**

The purpose of this report is to update the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee on the areas of work carried out by services within the Leisure, Culture and Community portfolio. The report covers information such as key activities, events and performance over the last 12 months and reference to future work activities within the portfolio.

**Recommendation**

The Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee is requested to consider and comment on the update on work areas contained within the Leisure, Culture & Community Portfolio.

**1. Background and Supporting Information**

- 1.1 The Leisure, Culture & Community Portfolio covers a wide range of public facing services. The Services covered are:
- a. Camberley leisure Centre
  - b. Camberley Theatre
  - c. Community Events
  - d. Community Services
  - e. Grounds Maintenance
  - f. Heritage Services
  - g. Leisure & Sports Facilities
  - h. Parks & Open Spaces Management
  - i. Sports Development

**2. Leisure Centre Camberley**

- 2.1 Places Leisure Camberley continues to be an extremely popular centre with membership take-up far-exceeding forecasted projections. Membership numbers increase month on month since opening and this trend has continued. Fitness memberships are anticipated to reach 5500 by the end of March 2023 with junior membership reaching 3,036 (1,200 of these are aged between 11-15).
- 2.2 Places have confirmed that the level of membership at Camberley continues to be the highest achieving Centre in their portfolio and have exceeded the anticipated year 5 membership levels before the end of year 2 which allows for further investment into the Centre. For example, with the gym being so popular and an ever increasing demand, in December 2022, Places Leisure have invested £20,000 to purchase

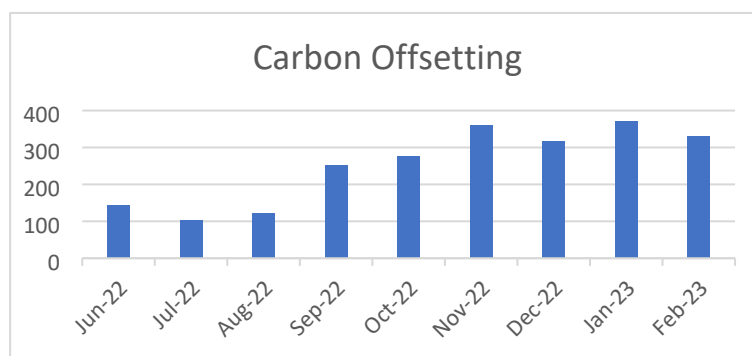
additional fitness equipment and reconfigured the gym.

- 2.3 Total visits to the Centre are approaching 880,000 per annum and it should be noted that very few complaints are received in relation to the operation of the Centre with customer satisfaction remaining high.
- 2.4 Increasing the number of car registration points and signage within the Centre along with adjustments to the free parking time allowance has seen a complete reduction in concern from customers in relation to parking penalties.
- 2.5 The pool and sports hall programmes are under regular review so as to meet customer demand. In particular, the swimming pools remain under pressure for 'family' and 'Just Swim' availability. There remains a significant demand for swimming lessons with 1550 children currently enrolled on the learn to swim programme. In addition, there are 23 schools who have booked sessions for teaching their children to swim.
- 2.6 Birthday parties bookings continue to grow and are being driven mainly from clip and climb, soft play and pool inflatable sessions. The Centre is averaging 69 parties a month.
- 2.7 Group Exercise classes continue to be very popular the Centre offering 101 instructor lead classes and 52 virtual classes available each week.
- 2.8 Places Leisure work closely with a number of local charities and groups to raise awareness of Health and Wellbeing in hosting events such as the Zumbathon and British Motor Show that cycled a little over 750 miles and raised £1000 for the Dementia Appeal. Places Leisure also continue to support many local charities with various events that have included Frimley Health Charity, (Zumba-thon), (Sellebrity Soccer) raising money for brain tumour research, Sight for Surrey, (Clip n' Climb sessions), Frimhurst Wellbeing Club, Children's Hospital Pyjamas UK to name but a few. They have strong links with the local CCG.
- 2.9 They continue to support the community by not only providing flexible memberships types and pricing to suit individual needs but also, working with Homes for Ukraine and Active Surrey in providing access to the Centre for refugees and care workers.
- 2.10 Although this report highlights several positive performance indicators, it should be noted that Places Leisure have experienced a significant increase in their utility costs with their bills as an organisation tripling over the last year. Facilities that operate swimming pools and air conditioned fitness gyms and studios will inevitably be high energy users.

### **3. Camberley Theatre**

- 3.1 The Theatre has had its first year of full capacity since Covid and this has resulted in higher ticket sales and attendance levels across a range of events. The average ticket sales across performances this financial year is 250 per performance of a potential 368 - 400 seats available. This exceeds pre-covid figures by 20% compared with 2018/19 sales and 10% against 2019/20 sales. Hires have also increased this year largely influenced by an increase in the number of dance schools returning to perform previously postponed shows creating a doubling in bookings against last year's figures.

- 3.2 Regular hirers such as U3A and NHS Clinics have rebooked throughout the year and we secured a large scale hire with Lapland UK last autumn which generated a higher than projected hire revenue. Lapland UK undertake all of their recruitment, training and rehearsals in our venue and have confirmed they wish to return to do the same in 2023. This means we will expect the increase in hire revenues to continue this year as we look to add more bookings into our schedule around these regular hires.
- 3.3 The Theatre has successfully introduced Ticket Protection Insurance with SecureMyBooking which customers can choose to pay a £2 per ticket for when purchasing tickets, of which the theatre retains 66p per ticket. The policy has had a positive impact in giving customers the confidence to return to indoor venues and offers a layer of protection in these uncertain economic times. We have seen an increase in sales of this insurance on last year with 930 *more* tickets insured so far this year vs. last year. So far this year, ticket protection has generated £4162.76 in net revenue.
- 3.4 The introduction of a Carbon Offsetting initiative in June 2022 has proved popular with customers, who are able to donate £1 during the ticket purchasing process to offset the carbon emissions associated with their visit to the theatre. These donations are made to Ecologi and each £1 will facilitate the planting of 4 trees in the UK and offset up to 80kg<sup>2</sup> of CO<sub>2</sub>. To date, 2,243 donations have been made, equating to up to 179.5 tonnes of carbon offset. Monthly sales of this donation are shown in the chart below:



- 3.5 Our successful pantomime, Beauty and the Beast ran from 10<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> December and resulted in our highest pantomime sales to date with 86.4% of all seats sold.

Year	Show	No. of Performances	% Capacity Sold	Gross Revenue
2017	Peter Pan	37	93%	208,231.70
2018	Sleeping Beauty	39	86.1	211,678.60
2019	Robin Hood	42	85.0	229,804.90
2021	Jack and the Beanstalk	40	69.1	205,223.90
2022	Beauty and the Beast	40	86.4	286,423.50

- 3.6 This year not only were there signed performances of the Pantomime but the theatre was fortunate to receive funding from the UK Prosperity Fund to allow for the hire of equipment for a captioned performance of the pantomime. This is a very large screen that has the script showing and so can be read as the pantomime is performed. These performances are well received and allow a wider community to enjoy this Christmas tradition.

- 3.7 The 2023 production of Cinderella will go on sale in April and we are looking to add 2 additional shows to expand the capacity further. There will be additional signed and captioned performances added to the programme too.
- 3.8 Replacement of ageing theatre lighting has resulted in much higher quality lighting for all productions and the newer fixtures are more energy efficient which will aid our efforts to reduce consumption throughout the venue. We are in the process of sourcing a specialist energy auditor who can provide energy efficiency analysis of theatre operations specifically. This will allow us to ensure sufficient cost benefits in terms of energy consumption throughout our upgrade programme and to ensure we are sourcing fixtures which meet our energy efficiency and ROI needs as well as meeting professional production standards.
- 3.9 Customers are increasingly using the e-tickets sent out via text prior to each performance via CrowdEngage. We are also seeing a steady use of the pre-order function within this system for customers to order their interval drinks ahead of time. This is starting to take pressure off of Box Office on a performance evening as well as the bar staff as customers are much better informed ahead of their visit and are able to place orders without queueing (which frees up more time to serve others).
- 3.10 The Camberley Comedy Festival returned on 9<sup>th</sup> July to a sold out audience of 400 at London Road Rec. This was a significant increase on the capacity of 280 the previous year and this year's event has an increased capacity of 550. The headline act is Phil Wang with supporting acts including Sophie Duker who is well known on comedy panel shows such as 8 out of 10 cats, Mock the Week and Taskmaster. The event is gaining good momentum and further discussion around this and other outdoor theatre events such as Frimley Lodge Live are ongoing.
- 3.11 The Theatre ran a 3 day Theatre in the Park event in August visiting Bagshot Playing Fields, Windlesham Field of Remembrance and Frimley Lodge Park. All three events were well received and utilised flexible staging which required less technical support than previous years. This is something we will look to replicate again this year with a focus on growing audience numbers and considering other outdoor spaces around the borough in order to reach as many people as possible. In previous years, we have also visited Lightwater Country Park and London Road Recreation Ground.
- 3.12 A recent restructure of the theatre team has seen the introduction of a Business Development Officer who will have a focus on increasing the use of our hire spaces and developing relationships with local groups and schools/colleges. They will also work with the Venue Manager and technical department to develop new events and explore alternative uses of the theatre spaces in order to generate more revenue. We hope to have this post filled within the next few months.

#### **4 Community Events**

- 4.1 Events within parks are returning seeing a total of 18 separate events delivered in park settings during 2022/23. 12 at Frimley Lodge park, 2 at Lightwater Country Park and London Road Rec and one each at Frimley Green rec and Watchetts recreation ground. The bookings for the coming year are starting to come in with 5 booked already that will see the circus, outdoor theatre, funfair and Coronation events coming to Frimley Lodge Park.

#### **5 Community Services**

- 5.1 The Community Services Partnership between Surrey Heath and Runnymede Borough Council is in its second year of the contract between authorities. The

Partnership incorporates several prevention services that are delivered by each authority including:

- Community Alarms & Telecare
- Community Transport
- Meals at Home
- Social Prescribing
- Windle Valley Centre

- 5.2 In addition, officers within Community Services work together with colleagues across the Council, working within the integrated health and care agenda locally, representing the Council and its services in a range of partnership meetings.
- 5.3 With a commitment to transparency and equal partner status within the arrangements between Councils, there are agreed governance arrangements including the requirement for four Community Services Partnership Board meetings per year. In 2023/2024, these meetings have developed from the understandable year one position of finding its feet, to discussing service development and review, finances, resourcing, and other items.
- 5.4 In acknowledgement of the importance of the partnership Runnymede have introduced additional management capacity to the structure to ensure not only the delivery, but also the development of services to take place at a greater pace. These changes have been at no cost to the Council, but has already been recognised as a benefit to the partnership arrangements.
- 5.5 2022/2023 has seen Community Services continue to support some of the most vulnerable residents in the Borough, supporting them to continue to live independently at home and remain active within their local community. This is considered the mission statement for Community Services in relation to its core service provision and officers across all roles have displayed commitment, passion and energy to achieve this.
- 5.6 All residents, including our vulnerable and older residents have been impacted by the cost-of-living crisis and as a result, whilst the impact experienced so far has not been as detrimental as anticipated, it is recognised that choices are having to be made in relation to paid for services such as Community Alarm & Telecare and Meals at Home. This is both in relation to the number of referrals received and also residents choosing to leave the service.
- 5.7 Focussing on services, the Community Alarm and Telecare service has continued to work hard to maintain the number of service users within Surrey Heath, standing at circa 1,100 at the end of Quarter 3 in 2022/2023.
- 5.8 The service continues to provide support for residents at home through the installation of a Community Alarm and attached telecare peripherals that provide added support through personal (falls detectors etc.) and environmental sensors (smoke detectors, flood sensors etc.).
- 5.9 Service users continue to be supported by timely installation of new services, routine maintenance and review visits and reactive visits to support with equipment when required. In doing so, staff are being encouraged to make a wider assessment of needs of residents and refer to other services provided by the Council (both in Community Services and other business areas, as appropriate). This adds further value to the interaction to the Council has with its vulnerable residents.

- 5.10 Whilst 1,100 residents are directly supported, the service through the provision of 24/7 support, also provides support, reassurance, and peace of mind to family members and informal care givers that help is available via the service provided by the Council.
- 5.11 Community Transport has been an area of significant challenge, primarily due to an inability to recruit Drivers to vacant posts. Driver vacancies as a result have impacted the ability to grow the service, and it is noted that ambition around targeted and wider promotion have not been possible due to the inability to support additional capacity.
- 5.12 Despite this, the staff who are in post have worked hard to ensure that services are delivered to as many residents as possible, with it likely that receipt of 10,000+ journey requests will be received in 2022/2023. Considering the pre-pandemic passenger journey number of circa 26,000, this shows the work that has been achieved with approximately 40% of the capacity available against full resource. This demonstrates that the team have worked hard to be as efficient as possible in the delivery of the service, to reduce vehicle down time, mileage without passengers etc. to support as many residents as possible.
- 5.13 Meals at Home continues to be a vital service for some of the very most vulnerable, having delivered circa 30,000 meals in the first three quarters of 2022/2023. The continued benefits to residents accessing the service are like the Community Alarm Service, providing direct support to the resident and also support to care givers and family members.
- 5.14 The service is delivered by a committed staff team who not only deliver a warm, healthy and nutritious meal, but ensure they engage with each resident and also regularly check on their welfare and wellbeing, acting as the eyes and ears for others and connecting with partner agencies and next of kin where any concerns or issues are identified.
- 5.15 Meals at Home has faced financial challenge, with the cost of food products increasing by around 10%. However, as far as possible, this increase in cost has been absorbed within budget profiles, through controlled financial management and also maximising the resources available within the partnership. This has been considered the most appropriate approach as opposed to reviewing charges to service users during the middle of a cost of living crisis.
- 5.16 Working in partnership with NHS partners, most notably the GP Federation, and with Citizens Advice Surrey Heath, the Council delivers Social Prescribing across the borough. One full time Social Prescribing Officer is employed within the partnership and provides support to residents aged 18+ with their individual wellbeing needs, as opposed to residents looking to access primary care for such discussions.
- 5.17 The subject areas covered by Social Prescribing are wide and varied, including mental and emotional support, benefits, finance and budgeting, access to local interest groups and leisure activities and practical support to continue to live independently and remain active within their local community. Invariably, residents are referred for one element of support, however all too often when conversations are held and support needs are explored further additional areas of support are identified, providing a more holistic approach.
- 5.18 In Q1-Q3 a total of just short of 693 referrals were received by Social Prescribing for residents in Surrey Heath. Understanding the outcomes reached and the wellbeing benefits to residents engaged in Social Prescribing has been identified as a key next

step, and in 2022-2023 new software has been implemented linking social prescribing and primary care platforms, providing an improved facility for service coordination and also providing the ability to record and report on outcomes, including wellbeing outcomes. Officers within Community Services have been a key part of the implementation, trouble shooting and use of this software in Surrey Heath, and the experience of doing so is being used to support other health footprints, most notably North West Surrey, where software is yet to be procured. It is hoped that in 2023-2024, more detail on success measures and outcomes will be available to share with Members.

- 5.19 Windle Valley Centre has been open without any restrictions and with a relaxation of control measures for covid related risk since the end of quarter one, providing a facility where older residents have a place to meet, socialise, engage in activities, and have access to hot meal provision. The service experienced a significant reduction in use post pandemic, with many regular service users no longer attending for a number of reasons, including those who have sadly passed away, have moved into residential care or moved to live with family members. Also, the impact of successive lockdowns has meant that some former service users have experienced a deterioration in health conditions which the centre, designed for low-medium acuity levels, are unable to support. As a consequence numbers of residents in attendance averages between 20 and 25 per day, and Members and officers alike are committed to ensuring that this number increases in 2023/2024.
- 5.20 Plans have been devised to re-establish Windle Valley Centre, under the direct management of the Operations Manager (SHBC) which will commence in April 2023. These changes are intended to refresh the service, enhancing its reputation and offer, building on the positive and favourable experience at the Saturday Club, which also operates from Windle Valley Centre and linking with health and social care partners, social prescribing officers to generate an increased stream of referrals. Supporting this, a promotion strategy working with Communications and commencing with the spring Heathscene magazine has been organised.
- 5.21 The Saturday Club at Windle Valley returned in 22/23 and is currently supporting 20+ residents a week with access to opportunities to engage with others over the weekend, participate in activities and attend events or go on trips and outings. The service continues to offer a place for Carers to attend with those they care for, allowing staff to provide support by engaging the person cared for in activities, providing a form of respite and time to relax, participate themselves if wanting to, and also meet others and share experience with other Carers.
- 5.22 Finally, the wider benefit of the Community Services Partnership in both councils having access to a wider staff resource has been evident throughout 22/23, where staff have been deployed across both locality areas to cover service demand and resource pressures.
- 5.23 In addition, the support that the partnership provides to welfare response in the event of a Borough emergency was tested for the first time in 22/23, during the events of Storm Eunice, and was proven to work successfully. Officers, working with colleagues in other areas of the Council, came together to provide support to the most vulnerable.
- 5.24 In reference to the role the partnership played, representation at a County-wide welfare meeting was led by the Head of Community Services, whilst 20 members of staff completed welfare calls to all identified vulnerable residents in affected areas, in advance of a team of colleagues at the Council following up with door-to-door visits.

The success was that of 20 officers who supported by making calls, at least half were officers who prior to the partnership would have been “Runnymede employees” only.

## 6 Grounds Maintenance, including verge maintenance

6.1 SHBC provides Grounds Maintenance and Greenspace services to Windlesham Parish Council and Verge Maintenance for Surrey County Council although the latter is due to revert to Surrey County Council from 1 April 2023. Plans are being developed to ensure that this transition of verge maintenance responsibilities back to the County is as seamless as possible. The Senior Contract Manager is the client officer for these two contracts ensuring smooth delivery of service, contractor liaison and performance management for these. Performance is key to managing these contracts and there are performance measures for both. The leisure operator has performance measures that are industry wide benchmarked by Sport England along with localised contractual performance around membership levels and service delivery.

6.2 The performance of the Council’s grounds maintenance contractor (Glendale) is linked to key performance indicators which is monitored through regular routine inspections and reactive investigations. It should be noted that Glendale, like many organisations, have faced staffing and recruitment challenges and a high staff turnover. At times, this has led to an inconsistent level of service delivery, particularly relating to litter bin and dog bin emptying in some pockets across the borough. In immediate response to the inconsistencies in service agency staff and support from Glendale’s teams in neighbouring boroughs were drafted in to assist with the backlog of work and complaints.

	Date (W/E)	Bins Collected	Bins reported as Overflowing	% Collected Successfully	Notes
January	6/1	332	10	97%	
	13/1	304	15	95%	
	20/1	256	13	95%	
	27/1	551	13	97.7%	Increased collection due to two teams collecting
February	3/2	487	7	98.5%	
					Increased collection as collection frequency increased for problem area bins
	10/2	544	6	98.9%	
	17/2	442	2	99.5%	
	24/2	459	4	99.20%	Slight increased in reported overflowing as increased collection frequency causing backlog

6.3 A number of ‘instructions to remedy’ and ‘default notices’ have been issued. These attract financial penalties to reflect the shortfall in service and non-compliance with the service specification. Each penalty notice costs the contractor £250. Increased monitoring and communication with the contractor has been implemented to ensure that service returns to acceptable levels as quickly as possible and this will continue until things stabilise.



### Glendale - Summary of Defaults

<b>Year 1</b>												<b>Totals</b>
Nov-20	Dec-20	Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	
								3			2	5

<b>Year 2</b>												
Nov-21	Dec-21	Jan-22	Feb-22	Mar-22	Apr-22	May-22	Jun-22	Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	
	2	1				1	2	1	3	5	5	20

<b>Year 3</b>				
Nov-22	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	
1	2	5	3	11

Total to date 36

6.4 In 2021 a condition survey of all Borough-owned trees was completed and mapped on the GIS system. All urgent works were completed and officers are now working through the list of trees that pose a potential high and moderate risk. Two tree works packages and a specific tree felling package were developed as a result of the surveys totalling £20,000 of works being undertaken to care for the boroughs tree stock. A further work package has been identified for completion after the bird nesting season and will be completed in the autumn months.

6.5 For the last few years Surrey Heath has undertaken grass cutting operations on behalf of the County within the borough. However, as of the 2023 grass cutting season, the County have decided it would take all grass operations back in-house. Surrey Heath were contracted to cut the grass four times each year and took the decision to increase the number of cuts to a total of 12 per year, so it is likely that residents will see a change in 2023. The County will be carrying out four grass cuts per season on urban grass and two cuts for rural grass. Officers have been working closely with the County Council to help make this transition as smooth as possible. More information can be found on the below link along with maps to show which authority is responsible for which areas of grass;

<https://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/leisure/parks-countryside-and-verges/grass-cutting-operations-vegetation-and-hedge-cutting>

## 7 Heritage Services

7.1 The museum continues to thrive in its town centre location and will finish the 2022/23 year having received close to 6,000 visitors. This represents a 50% increase on 2021/22 visitor numbers. Pre-pandemic figures saw circa 8000 visitors. Whilst visitor numbers are slowly increasing there is now a significant on-line presence which sees between c.2000 to 3000 monthly visits to the surrey heath museum website. Regular museum posts on Facebook are gaining up to 1000 engagements for each post.

7.2 The heritage outreach service- which includes schools, care homes and other groups will have reached over 1500 and we handled over 300 research enquires relating to local history and the collection. The museum's archive is available on our website. Our Poulter architectural drawings featured in the 2022 updated Pevsner Guide for Surrey.

7.3 We ran the following exhibitions in 2022 - Platinum Jubilee, local historian Alf Tarry, Serve to Lead (military themed exhibition), The Changing Faces of Surrey Heath (community engagement exhibition), contemporary Italian art from a local collection and First World War Internment.

For further details see our website -

<https://e-voice.org.uk/surreyheathmuseum/exhibitions-and-events-program/>

- 7.4 During 2022, the heritage service held children and adult events including talks, walks and holiday workshops. The Toddler's sessions were delivered in partnership with Squish (the youth theatre that was in the town centre) but are now based back at the museum and run the first Tuesday in the month. They are themed craft, activities and play sessions that are aimed at 1 -5 year olds which usually see between 15 – 20 attendees at each session.
- 7.5 The 2022 Heritage Open Days (9-18 Sept) were the first to be held since the end of the pandemic with local venues opening including churches, museum and historic walks, 350 people attended. The event was during the national mourning period for the late Queen Elizabeth II.
- 7.6 Our Heritage Supporters' Group has over 50 members which saw arranged visits to a number of local heritage sites including Farnborough Hill, Timber Hill Gardens, Brookwood and Aldershot Cathedral.
- 7.7 For 2023 - we have a busy year ahead, beginning with the 'First World War Internment' exhibition – in partnership with Knockaloe Centre for WWI Internment on the Isle of Man. In March, we celebrated Camberley's role in establishing the Make-A-Wish Foundation UK, making seriously ill children's wishes come true. In May, we partner with Surrey Museums Consultative Committee for a lottery funded 'Get Wild about Surrey' project and exhibition – exploring the wildlife locally and the impact of climate change. Our Summer exhibition is the 'Nepali Connections' of the area and in the Autumn we cover the centenary year of Elmhurst Ballet School and its origins in Camberley.
- 7.8 The Heritage service continues working towards gaining accreditation and is currently auditing the collection with a group of 10 volunteers. A total of 30 volunteers support the Museum by manning the front desk. The Museum Foundation are looking to sign a 10 year lease and we have regular partnership meetings with them. Coupled with this the creation of an overarching advisory group will be established in 2023, consisting of councillors, community, business and society members to help shape and steer the Heritage service over the coming years.
- 7.9 Income from shop sales and fees/charges is increasing slowly. The museum team are looking to change the museum entrance and shop area to create more interest amongst passers-by. This coupled with new stock and approach will encourage more visitors to come in to visit the shop during 2023..
- 7.10 Visitor surveys are completed to seek feedback, a list of quotes is below:
  - "Interesting information about local history."
  - "great dedication and professionalism."
  - "Good local history displays."
  - "I have taken my grandchildren to several of the holiday activities. Kathy made it such a fun way of learning. They loved it."
  - "Informative display and helpful staff."
  - "It is a friendly and compact museum with many local interesting displays."
  - "For such a compact area, it's crammed with lots of interesting exhibits. The staff are both pleasant and knowledgeable."

## 8 Leisure and Sports Facilities

- 8.1 A new café provider has recently taken over the cafes in both Frimley Lodge park and Lightwater Country park. Both are operating a hatch service until the refurbishments are completed this spring, following which they will fully open. Since opening on the 4<sup>th</sup> February the new provider has had in the region of 2700 transactions with lots of positive comments about the quality of the products that are being sold.
- 8.2 Lightwater adventure golf has been open for a year and is going from strength to strength with 14000 customers who have enjoyed a round of crazy golf.
- 8.3 Pitch bookings for grass pitches have seen a decline in recent years which continues to be the case and is in line with the national picture. This year a total of 477 pitches have been booked and played. The demand for the 3G pitches has remained constant and the 3G at Frimley Lodge continues to be over-subscribed at peak times. This year the pitches have accommodated 2050 football games which is an all time high.

<b>Pitch Bookings</b>		
	Grass Pitch	3G Pitch
2014/15	835	
2015/16	809	
2016/17	731	
2017/18	555	494*
2018/19	812	1711
2019/20	597	1707
2020/21	250	507
2021/22	575	1734
*new facility, 3 months figures only		

- 8.4 Fishing permits continue to be popular selling a little under £1k worth of permits annually which is not dissimilar to last years position.
- 8.5 Cricket pitch bookings have increased exponentially with a new cricket club starting to play out of Frimley Green Recreation Ground. This year all pitches are fully booked at the weekends which has not been the case for a number of years.
- 8.6 Fitness training permits re operating in all of our open spaces seeing permits available for individuals and groups. Permit charges have been benchmarked against neighbouring boroughs and are comparably priced. Annual inspections and permit checks have been established to encourage those operating in our parks to do so with a permit to operate.
- 8.7 Re-surfacing the borough's tennis courts has become a priority, especially with significant weather damage to a number of courts rendering them unplayable. Working with the Lawn Tennis Association the team have secured a grant of £185k that will see all of the borough's courts re-surfaced with works commencing imminently at Mytchett Recreation Ground, Frimley Green Recreation Ground and Watchetts Recreation Ground. The floodlighting works at the Watchetts recreation ground have been paused as a result of Scottish and Southern Electricity Network

withdrawing their initial quotations with revised quotations for the electrical installation seeing the costs literally double. This element of the works can be re-visited and fitted retrospectively at a later stage. Works to secure flood lit courts for both tennis and netball will be brought forward as part of a planning application for the Mindenhurst developments sports hub.

## 9 Parks and Open Space Management

9.1 The Greenspace team cares for a little over 300 hectares (774 acres) of Council owned greenspace including parks, countryside, conservation sites, woodland, Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANG) and all other open spaces that are within the Council's ownership.

9.2 The Greenspace team in conjunction with Glendale and the wider Recreation and Leisure services department are responsible for responding to customer requests. The table below gives an idea of the level of requests that come through the contact centre annually. Bookings are managed between the Contact centre and Recreation & Leisure Services.

	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	
BBQ Bookings	24	56	79	152	182	122	96	24	2	4	1	2	744
Glendale	29	12	30	56	86	35	32	62	86	29	11	55	523
Greenspace	64	78	74	60	81	60	87	79	65	42	23	45	758
Grounds Maintenance and Contracts	14	7	7	11	26	10	2	5	19	8	2	11	122
Leisure Services General Request	23	39	37	28	36	27	30	16	13	14	6	18	287
Pitch Bookings	211	182	128	210	219	240	213	194	170	169	123	228	2287
	365	374	355	517	630	494	460	380	355	266	166	359	4721

9.3 The team ensure that all statutory inspections are undertaken within our pavilions, out-buildings, and changing facilities to ensure the safe operation of facilities and equipment. These include all health and safety checks along with fire and water safety (legionella testing).

9.4 The team work closely with a team of regular conservation volunteers, they support local school groups in their educational activities with talks, walks and children's activities. Many of these events support the national curriculum for schools, conservation aims and group badges (for Brownies, scouts etc.). During school holiday periods they ran 'learn to fish' sessions at Hammonds Pond in Lightwater Country Park. The Education centre within the Country Park is more active seeing regular hires, bookings and events that we host held in the park. The Christmas event was delivered in partnership with the Thames Basin Heath Partnership that saw nearly 100 people come along and join in Christmas crafting activities and trail within the park.

9.5 All of the team are qualified in noxious weed management, the team are responsible for treating and controlling the weeds on the Councils' land. This includes annual ragwort and Himalayan balsam pulling and Japanese knotweed controls. Japanese knotweed is treated twice a year which is the legal requirement. They remove the Ragwort from countryside grass to allow for the annual grass cutting to be able to be used as animal feed. From April 2023 SHBC hand back all of the Japanese knotweed sites that they treated on behalf of County along with all of County Verge maintenance. This will be delivered by County directly and result in 4 Urban and 2 rural cuts per annum.

9.6 With a priority for planting trees, this year and with support from volunteers, the team will have planted 5040 trees by the end of this month, which is over the target of 4000 which we set at the beginning of the year. The Councils commitment to planting and protecting the boroughs trees is further demonstrated in developing a

Tree Strategy that supports the Council's aspiration in being a responsible tree owner and encouraging our residents to do the same.

- 9.7 The team have carried out conservation work at Lightwater and Turfhill to a standard that we have secured our Higher Level Stewardship funding from Natural England) to continue the higher level of conservation works. This is an annual grant of 11k a year until 2028.
- 9.8 A number of play projects have been delivered including replacement equipment at Southcote Park, a new playground at Bentley Copse and soon to be installed replacement trim trail at Frimley Lodge park. These have been funded as part of the capital programme from Community Infrastructure Levy contributions.
- 9.9 Empty pavilion buildings and our community garden have all been successfully let to local charitable groups including Mens Sheds at London Road Rec Pavilion, @TheOldDeanRec at the Old Dean Rec Pavilion and Catalyst at Frimley Lodge Community Garden.
- 9.10 The site security enhancement project in consultation with local residents was delivered to a number of sites across the borough that saw bunds and/or bollards installed to add improved security measures to vulnerable green space areas.
- 9.11 Working to secure an £80k borough-wide Environmental investment programme funded by Esso will see a number of projects delivered within the borough during the next 2 years. More information and link to the projects can be found here; <https://www.surreyheath.gov.uk/esso-replacement-pipeline-environmental-investment-programme>

## **10 Sports Development**

- 10.1 The current cost of living crisis coupled with the after effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic have continued to have effects on physical activity levels of residents. The main way of measuring these activity levels is the 'Active Lives' Survey. There is an adult survey (16+) and a young people survey which provide in-depth pictures of how many people take part in sport and physical activity. The rough sample for each Borough and District in Surrey is 500.
- 10.2 Residents are classified as either active (at least 150 minutes a week), fairly active (30-149 minutes a week) or inactive (less than 30 minutes a week). The survey is now annual rather than twice annually so latest figures for Surrey Heath were for November 20-21, released in April 2022. In this survey, 68.9% were active (up 2.7%), 9.9% were fairly active (down 2.9%) and 21.3% were inactive (up 0.3%). This ranks Surrey Heath above the Surrey average of 66.8% of active residents and very close to average of 21.1% for inactive residents.
- 10.3 Although the parameters are slightly different for Children and Young People, 28.7% are deemed to be inactive and do less than 30 minutes of physical activity a day which is a reduction from 30.5% in academic year 20-21.
- 10.4 The health impacts of being 'inactive', and the health benefits of moving from 'inactive' to 'fairly active' are far greater than moving from 'fairly active' to 'active'. As a result Surrey Heath Borough Council implemented and completed the first year of 'Moving Forward' in 2022-23, its Physical Activity Strategy for the Borough. Most notably, this strategy aims to improve the Environment and Health and Quality of Life from the Council's Five Year Strategy. Higher level aims incorporated in this strategy include "enhance and improve access to green spaces", "net zero carbon emissions

and resilient to the impacts of Climate Change”, “strong community identity”, “improving health and wellbeing” and “access to leisure and recreation”.

- 10.5 Council officers administer walking programmes such as the Ramblers Wellbeing Walks, Surrey Heath Diabetic Walks, Walking Football and Walking Tennis to enable residents to access physical activity in an accessible format. The Ramblers Wellbeing walks take place across the borough and are led by volunteers to be a social, beginner friendly walk. The scheme has averaged 33 walkers in the previous year with Surrey Heath Diabetic Walks combine clinical education from local Primary Care services with weekly walks and average 10 walkers a week. The Walking Football sessions average 20 players a session and Walking Tennis has averaged 10 players a week, which has been funded by the LTA.
- 10.6 The Specsavers Surrey Youth Games returned in 2022 and took a much more targeted approach. Officers worked with referral partners such as school home-link workers, Family Support Teams and local youth organisations to engage with young people who could benefit most. 56 young people took part in the project which offered 6 weeks of free tasters in 6 different sports, working in partnership with local clubs and coaches.
- 10.7 30 people applied for Free Access for County Sportspeople memberships in the last year which enables talented athletes free access to either Places Leisure Camberley or Lightwater Leisure Centre during peak times. This number has steadily increased from last year, most likely due to the new facilities at Places Leisure Camberley.
- 10.8 Officers successfully organised the Surrey Heath Sports Awards in 2022 although time did not enable a rebrand to something less ‘sporty’ to encourage recreational physical activity. The Camberley Theatre was full with over 150 guests from a variety of clubs, charities and organisations. A new award, called the ‘International Sporting Achievement Award’ was awarded to Luke Preston of Camberley Judo Club for his contribution to Olympic, Commonwealth and British Judo. Thanks to sponsorships for this event, it was run at break-even.
- 10.9 A new Youth Club was opened on the Old Dean estate for young people aged between 11 and 16. The club partnered with a youth organisation who led sessions at the Surrey Heath Young People and Family Centre on a Tuesday from 6-8pm in partnership with Surrey Heath Police and the Old Dean Community Group. The project is funded via Sport England, Active Surrey and Councillor Allocations. Over 100 people accessed the project in the first 3 months of delivery but the project has had to pause whilst a new lead organisation is sought.
- 10.10 The team have been piloting a ‘Whole Systems Approach to Obesity’ project which aims to make whole system changes and reduce the obesogenic environment in Surrey Heath. ‘Happy Health January’ grants of up to £500 were awarded to Hope Hub, Frimhurst Charity, Girl Guides at Crabtree, St Martins Church and Camberley Breast Feeding Hub. The grants have been approved for use towards encouraging healthy eating and evaluations are to follow. With these learnings it is hoped the project can continue to facilitate whole system changes to reduce obesity. With the end of the current project manager’s contract in April 2023, a new post is being recruited for in partnership with the ICB to continue current work for the next 2 years.

## **Annexes**

None

## **Background Papers**

None