

**Council**  
**22 February 2017**  
**Agenda Item 7**

**Procedure Rule 11 - Questions from Councillors**

The following questions have been submitted by Councillor David Allen under Procedure Rule 11:

**To the Leader of the Council**

“Would please give the detail of your plans for the top 5 priorities to refurbish and overhaul the Town /centre, now that we own it, to attract good high-end retailers to the Town Centre. Please give detail on when you expect we will be able to start attracting new and vibrant retailers who will bring life to our town centre. I would like a current update as of 22nd February 2017.”

**Response from the Leader**

The Council became the owner of the Mall on 11th November just over 3 months ago. Since then we have been working hard with our professional advisors to put together a programme of enhancements to deliver our aspirations to make Camberley a “destination of choice”. Our priority is to attract more retailers to the town; however new premium quality retailers will only come to Camberley if it makes commercial sense to them. Hence we have to be able to make Camberley as attractive as we can to get people to come here more often, shop here and hence attract more of the retailers we want. To this end our top five priorities currently are as follows:

1. Letting Agents

The Council, through the trust, has appointed new letting agents who are actively meeting retailers to market units in the Mall. Where these can be delivered early we are seeking to strike these deals. However new retailers want to see our refurbishment proposals before we can secure a deal. We do have to ensure that whilst we are making changes to our town that we maintain income to support our borrowings and services. To date our business plan is on target but it is very early days.

2. Multimillion refurbishment of the interior of the Mall.

This is vital part of our improvement programme to make the Mall look attractive as a place for shoppers and hence retailers. Architects have been appointed and designs are being costed for works to commence this year.

3. Ashwood House

The redevelopment of Ashwood House by our appointed developer will help to improve the look of this key town centre building by providing a high quality

development but also bring more residents in to the town centre. Tenders again have been awarded and contracts are being worked up. Work will start this year.

#### 4. Public Realm

A number of surveys are currently being carried out to understand the costs and prepare for public realm improvements. This survey work is being funded by the LEP. The profit generated by Ashwood House will be invested in to public realm improvements in Princess Way.

#### 5. London Road Block

Tenders have been prepared and we are in the process of appointing advisors to look at the opportunities for the redevelopment of this key part of the town centre. Work is underway for a phased mixed development approach. Initial thoughts for this are likely to be available in Autumn 2017.

It is vital we work quickly to deliver these projects to attract high end retailers we want. We can only create the right environment for them to come, based on our professional advice, but in the end their decision will be driven by commercial factors.

Finally, whilst I agree that Camberley does need new retailers to enhance its offer, let us not forget the retailers and town centre we already have. I have met with a number of them who have expressed how pleased they are that the Council has invested in our town. I believe that we already have a vibrant town centre – footfall over the last quarter was above the south east average –we do have areas that can and will be improved and we naturally want to expand the offer for our residents and wider community to enjoy but we have to be careful that we do not talk down what we already have. Our objective is to ensure that we maintain a position where Camberley is attractive to investors and drive its potential further to deliver on these projects which will sustain it for the future.

### **To the Transformation Portfolio Holder**

The "Internet of Things" (IOT) and "Big Data" are having a dramatic effect on the operations of most businesses and some councils. Could you give a summary of how we are integrating these two vital technologies into our work? And then how you intend to expand their use going forward?

### **Response from the Transformation Portfolio Holder**

The Internet of Things (IoT) is a system of interrelated computing devices, mechanical and digital machines, objects, etc that are provided with unique identifiers and the ability to transfer data over a network without requiring human interaction.

Surrey Heath Borough Council make use of data sourced from an 'umbrella' of IoT using a cloud based product called FME (a software platform). This ensures the

data does not enter our network and potentially introduce viruses, but enables us to use the data for Business Intelligence.

The Geographic Information System (GIS) Team have been experimenting with data relating to car parks. This is captured from sensors at Knoll Road and Main Square multi storey car parks. This data can be used for analysis purposes and also runs the parking space availability map on our website.

Previously we have also monitored the Environment Agency river gauge data feeds to put dashboard information together on river levels and the likelihood of flooding during high rainfall events.

We are also looking to monitor DEFRA's new tipping bucket rain gauges.

We will be working with our new Joint Waste contractor to take advantage of IoT devices on the refuse vehicles including camera sensors to respond to missed bin complaints – For example, we will be able to prove the bin was not out in time by reviewing the camera footage. They also have new load cell / gps technology they are developing which weighs the lorry as it's travelling on its round.

We have also used GPS sensors on mobile phones to locate the current position on a map for capturing information such as dog bins in parks.

**Big data** is a term that describes the large volume of data – both structured and unstructured – that inundates a business on a day-to-day basis. Being a small Local Authority, 'Big Data' is not having a dramatic effect on our data management.

Surrey Heath have been evaluating Business Intelligence tools to help analysis of potentially useful data for decision making. For example website hits and parking analysis.

Information Governance have been developing an Information Asset database which includes retention and disposal schedules which are being implemented with automatic disposal of data as it falls outside of retention periods.