

## Scrutiny of Portfolio Holder - Corporate

Portfolio	Corporate
Ward(s) Affected:	All

### Purpose

**To provide a progress report on the Corporate Services Portfolio.**

### Background

1. The Corporate Portfolio covers a wide range of services and functions as set out below:

Children's Champion  
Communications and Marketing  
Community and Revenue Grants  
Contact Centre and Post Room services  
Corporate complaints and Ombudsman matters  
Equalities  
Town Twinning

### Children's Champion

2. Part of this remit includes safeguarding, where both Officers and Councillors attend meetings to ensure that the council is fully aware of changes to the statutory responsibility and a wider understanding of the bigger picture relating to this subject. The Safeguarding policy has recently been updated through the Joint Staff Consultative Group, which coincides with the introduction of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) across Surrey.
3. Other events the children's champion gets involved include:
4. **Democracy week**, which is an event where schools are invited to the Council Offices and briefed on how the Council works. This includes meeting the Mayor and holding a debate in the Council Chamber.
5. **The Surrey Heath Young Citizen Event.** The objective is to teach young people how to lead safe, healthy lives and to understand how their behaviour can have an impact on others. This scheme is an ideal way to encourage the teenagers of tomorrow to remember essential life skills, and to have consideration for others in their community.
  - a. Over three days in November in excess of 400 Year 7 pupils from Kings International College and Collingwood College will have an opportunity to learn about: road and fire safety, understanding and reporting anti-social behaviour, personal safety including online safety and Prevent strategy, alcohol awareness and healthy relationships and First Aid.

## Communications and Marketing

6. The Media and Marketing team is responsible for all content across multiple customer facing channels to improve and maintain the brand and reputation of Surrey Heath Borough Council, communicate with residents, visitors and businesses and sales and marketing for all events at Camberley Theatre. The team also manages all press enquiries on behalf of the Council.
7. The team is led by a Marketing Manager and has 5.5 permanent FTE staff. There is an additional 12 month fixed term contract position following acquisitions in Camberley Town Centre and other key projects.
8. 2017 saw the second Camberley International Festival and the re-launch of the Camberley Carnival. This provided local residents with a community event and over 10 days, drove footfall into Camberley Town Centre for a range of arts and cultural entertainment as well as putting Camberley on the map in terms of excellent press coverage.
9. Talk Surrey Heath – A local Question Time style online live streamed panel debate. A panel debates a chosen key topic with questions from the public in advance and during the event. Four events have taken place over the last year with combined viewing figures of 13,625 generating more than 200 comments from the public.
10. Showcasing Camberley: A number of new initiatives to showcase Camberley are underway. Designed to promote the town centre to a broader audience, driving footfall and promoting the town to new businesses and retailers.
11. Two Camberley magazines have been sent to more than 100,000 homes in the secondary catchment area. The first Camberley Business Expo was held in September and two trade shows (REVO and MIPIM) will showcase Camberley as a business, retail and leisure destination.
12. The Business Breakfast continues to attract businesses from across the Borough and provides a consultation opportunity for the Council. We have welcomed more than 300 local businesses to this event in the last year – introduced a more relaxed format, increased the number of stands available for hire and improved the marketing collateral at the event including innovative consultation stands for the town centre. Entries to the Business Awards were up 37% on the previous year.
13. The team has delivered marketing campaigns across a number of services to increase sales and event attendance in the last year. New marketing collateral has been created, including leaflets, photos, posters, banners, videos, both in print and digitally, for a number of key services and events; Surrey Heath Show, Frimley Lodge Live, all products and services provided by Community Services, Leisure Services and Camberley Theatre to name a few. This programme of

work has raised the profile of services and events, enhanced SHBC's reputation by increasing the quality of our materials, reached new audiences and in some cases, by expanding the numbers of businesses and partners buying space in Heathscene, so reducing the impact on SHBC budgets.

14. An increase in promotion of our website and its continued development has resulted in a 16% increase in traffic year on year. We release on average 3 press releases a week and 3 issues of HeathScene are delivered each year to every resident in the Borough (38,000 homes) at a total cost of 19p per copy.

#### Community and Revenue Grants

15. The Council has its own Community Grant Fund Scheme from which it provides grants that will assist local 'not for profit organisations' with the delivery of community projects. To qualify for a grant from the Community Grant Fund all applications must fit with the Council's objectives and must clearly demonstrate benefit to the local community or a section of it.
16. Grants are available for amounts up to £25,000 from which those that are below £2,000 can contribute up to 75% of the project cost; and for application costs between £2,001- £25,000 a maximum contribution of up to 50% can be available.
17. The Council also provides funding in the form of Revenue Grants to a number of voluntary and community organisations which either work in partnership with the Council or perform functions on the Council's behalf.
18. For the year 2017/18 a total of £159,900 was awarded to supporting nine groups including Citizens Advice Surrey Heath, Voluntary Support North Surrey, Surrey Heath Age Concern, and Basingstoke Canal Authority.
19. The grants have been allocated for the past 14 years, with the funding reviewed annually by the Council.

#### Contact Centre and Post Room services

20. The Contact Centre and Post Room are the first points of contact for all Surrey Heath residents, businesses and visitors. It shares its location on the ground floor of Surrey Heath House with Surrey Police and more recently the Jobcentre Plus, to provide more joined up and cost effective public services.
21. Currently the Contact Centre is staffed by a Customer Relations Manager, one Team Leader and 7.2 FTE Customer Service Advisors, including one CSA recently appointed on a 1 year fixed term contract.

22. In 2016/17 the Contact Centre handled an average of 4400 telephone enquiries and 320 face to face interviews each month. Additionally over 500 emails were answered and 850 web enquiries were handled monthly.
23. Of all the enquiries dealt with by the Contact Centre, 83% were dealt with at the first point of contact. This means that the customer is not referred on to other departments across the Council, enabling staff in the service areas to concentrate on more detailed/complex areas of their business. 98% of customers rated the service they received from the Contact Centre as being either good or excellent.
24. More recently the Contact Centre has extended the level of complexity of work it delivers including; licensing, leisure, noise pollution and theatre box office calls, as well as proactive outbound calls to promote and sell tickets for events such as the Camberley International Festival and Christmas Panto.
25. Discussions are on-going with the Job Centre to establish closer and more joined up working opportunities as well as supporting the Housing department further following new legislation being introduced in 2018. Planning enforcement and validation work for householder planning applications are also areas of work being considered for the Contact Centre to undertake to support the Regulatory service.
26. The Post Room is staffed by one part time Team Leader and 3 FTE post room assistants. A total of 170,000 letters were sent last year with almost 10,000 cheques processed to a value of over £3.3million. 4241 transactions took place via the Kiosk amounting to just over £500,000. The Post Room also prepare and scan all Revenues and Benefits post, a total of 103,160 documents.

#### Corporate complaints and Ombudsman matters

27. Complaints were an item included on the agenda for the Performance and Finance Committee meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2017. At the time of the previous meeting the 2016/17 annual report from the Local Government Ombudsman had not been received and is attached. Of the 16 complaints and enquiries received by the LGO (compared to 12 last year) 8 were referred back for local resolution, 4 were closed after initial enquiries with the remaining 4 not upheld. No complaints were upheld.

#### Equalities

28. (i) Internal Disability

Since January 2015, the Council has been awarded the 'Two Ticks - Positive about Disability' scheme accreditation by Jobcentre Plus. This scheme has since changed and after a

migration process the Council has achieved a Level 2 – as a Disability Confident Employer.

(ii) External

The Council's Faith Forum – Update June 2017

The Faith Forum is a local group consisting of up to 30 members from the diverse range of faith groups that operate and are based within the community. It meets quarterly and in February it agreed that for 2017 an action plan would focus upon three main events these being:

**The Museum Exhibition - Take 10** which was displayed from the 20th May – 2nd September 2017.

**Faith Safari Supper** – This took place on Thursday 28th September.

**The School Project** based upon offering a service to local schools whereby a discussion/presentation is made available focussing upon our British Values.

The Group are also very keen to facilitate the offer a home to a Syrian Refugee Family, an information event was hosted at The Camberley Mosque on Saturday 8th July to promote how the community can assist to enable this to happen and a crowdfunding page is to be set-up when the Council advise of what is required for the family.

Town Twinning

29. Each year the Council makes funds available for town partnership activities for young people under the age of 25. Grants are available to individuals and non-statutory, not for profit groups/organisations who provide a service to the local or the wider community associated with advancing the objectives of Town Partnerships with either Sucy-en-Brie or Bietigheim-Bissingen.
30. Grants are available for one-off type costs and listed below are a few examples of the sorts of activities that the grant aid might support.
  - School exchange visits
  - Travel and accommodation expenses scout/guide groups.
  - Training costs to help a new friends group get established.
  - Costs associated with sporting exchanges