

Briefing Note for Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee 2nd October 2018

The portfolio for Places and Strategy includes Infrastructure and Public Realm and this note summarised activity and issues in those areas over the past year.

Infrastructure

The Council has been involved in a number of infrastructure projects in the last year and these are summarised below.

Highways

A320 – if all the housing proposals between Woking Town centre and the M25 junction 11 materialises then some 11,500 new homes will feed traffic onto this route. This is in addition to any traffic from the DERA site near Chobham. Runnymede and Surrey Heath Borough Council's with the support of Surrey County Council (SCC) and Woking Borough Council have undertaken a study to assess the likely impacts of this amount of development upon this part of the A320. That study is publicly available on the Runnymede BC website.

A320 Housing Infrastructure Fund bid – arising from the A320 study the government have accepted an expression of interest from SCC to apply for funding to improve the A320 and the EM3 LEP is supporting a bid for feasibility funding. That work is being taken forward by Runnymede and Woking Borough Council's with SCC, we are maintaining a watching brief on that project and supporting part of the highway officer resource.

Meadows Gyrotory - the work on this £5m improvement has now commenced. The scheme is funded by local contributions and EM3 LEP grant. Lessons have been learnt from the problems experienced during the A331 works and, as far as is possible, SCC is ensuring that work is being undertaken overnight to minimise disruption to the businesses in the area and local commuters.

London Road A30 – SCC with support from SHBC have now submitted a bid to EM3 LEP for £3.5m of grant funding to improve the A30. This will be supported by local funding by SCC and SHBC. This scheme will improve the A30 including at Camberley Town centre with improvements to the highway, landscaping and footpath/cycleway.

Drainage

Drainage – the Council is continuing to work with the Environment Agency on improvements to reduce the impact of flooding in the Chobham Area. We are also continuing to look for opportunities for attenuation measures to reduce flooding arising from the River Blackwater in the Frimley area

Transport

SCC and Hampshire County Council (HCC) have submitted a bid for funding to the EM3 LEP to support the Blackwater Valley Gold Grid transport improvements. This will support the improvements in the bus service with new vehicles and an enhanced timetable. Improvements will include real time bus information and better bus stops across the Blackwater Valley. Camberley has two very popular bus services (Route 1 and Route 3) these now operate 7 days a week and it is hoped to eventually include a night bus service.

The Council is continuing to work with SCC to lobby for improved rail services and will be meeting the rail companies again shortly to understand how they propose to deliver the service improvements promised in their franchise bid.

SANGs

This is probably the most important piece of infrastructure that the Council currently has to provide. No house can be built anywhere in Surrey Heath without SANGs provision. Indeed it is only with the provision of the Windlemere SANGs that new homes can now be built in Bagshot for the first time since 2007. The search for new SANGs provision remains an ongoing issue for the Council. These sites are funded from developer contributions through Community Infrastructure Levy and since 2014 we have collected £5.2m for that purpose as funding is required to be 'in perpetuity' so far as possible and thus costs are significant. A list of SANGs is available on the Council's website.

Of particular concern is the issue of private SANGs where funding is through management company provision rather than SANGs contribution. This is causing issues on sites where residents are finding the consequent management charges to be onerous. It is not possible to refuse developments that adopt this approach but work is underway to consider whether more stringent financial requirements can be placed on the developer to prevent funding of SANGs on such sites from failing.

Public Realm

Camberley Town centre

The Council has been successful in attracting a £3.5m grant from EM3 LEP to fund £4.4m public realm improvements in the east of Camberley Town Centre centred on the High Street but including Princess Way east and Knoll Walk. These improvements will support and celebrate our local heritage, culture and independent retailers.

The works will improve the pedestrian experience in the town, with new street lighting, and public art to enhance the character of the area. Creating spaces for people to sit and relax.

We have appointed Project Centre as the designers and Musson Retallick as the public artists and we will be letting the construction contract this Autumn and aim to be on site in Spring 2019.

Other schemes

The Council was awarded £85,000 by the government to take forward work in support of better design in the Borough. We have tried, so far unsuccessfully, to recruit an urban designer on a 2 year contract. Once we have managed to recruit, this will allow us to work up public realm schemes for other parts of the Borough, providing 'oven ready' scheme proposals to take forward as future funding opportunities arise.