

Minutes of a Meeting of the External Partnerships Select Committee held at Council Chamber, Surrey Heath House, Knoll Road, Camberley, GU15 3HD on 9 June 2020

+ Cllr Robin Perry (Chairman)
+ Cllr Morgan Rise (Vice Chairman)

+ Cllr Dan Adams	+ Cllr Emma-Jane McGrath
+ Cllr Richard Brooks	+ Cllr Pat Tedder
- Cllr Vivienne Chapman	+ Cllr Helen Whitcroft
+ Cllr Sarah Jane Croke	+ Cllr Kristian Wrenn
+ Cllr Paul Deach	
+ Cllr Tim FitzGerald	
+ Cllr Shaun Garrett	

+ Present
- Apologies for absence presented

In Attendance: Cllr Rodney Bates, Cllr Alan McClafferty, Cllr Victoria Wheeler and Cllr Valerie White

1/EP Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 February were confirmed and to be signed by the Chairmen.

2/EP Surrey Heath Borough Council's Covid-19 Response, Surrey Heath Prepared and Surrey Heath Age Concern

The Committee received a presentation from Louise Livingston, Executive Head of Transformation, on the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the local authority's statutory duty to respond to the emergency. This was followed by presentations by James Robinson, Chairman of Surrey Heath Prepared, and Tracey Hiney, Charity Manager, Surrey Heath Age Concern; whose organisations worked in close collaboration with the Council during the Covid-19 response.

Surrey Heath Borough Council

The Council worked as part of the Local Resilience Forum, which included the other Surrey Boroughs and Districts and representatives from bodies such as the Police, Health, Surrey County Council and the military. The forum disseminated instructions from Central Government and coordinated implementation of these instructions accordingly.

Some key features of the Surrey Heath response included:

- The redeployment of staff to allow the making of more than 20,000 welfare calls to Council identified 'vulnerable', and 'centrally' shielded residents.

- The payment of over £13.8 million in business grant support to over 1000 local businesses and a pledge of £57,000 in emergency grants for charities.
- The successful management of increased demand for Council refuse collection services and meals at home services.
- Only 16% of Council staff continued to solely carry out their day job; and 65% of staff split their time between their day job and the Council's Covid-19 response. 17% of Council staff worked solely on Covid-19 response related activities.

The Council was now in the process of moving into the recovery plan and maintenance stage of its response. The Council's Welfare Cell had been reconfigured to be led by the Contact Centre and Welfare Calls were being realigned so that the emphasis would be for the public to call in for help.

Surrey Heath Prepared

Surrey Heath Prepared (SHP) was a voluntary organisation that was formed to provide Surrey Heath residents with emergency support through the Covid-19 pandemic.

It was emphasised that the structure of Surrey Heath Prepared took the form of a 'coalition of the willing', rather than a top down 'off the shelf' modelled organisation. SHP centred on a 'good neighbours' approach, where each electoral ward had individual coordinators and a group of street volunteers. The organisation had formed 8 days before formal 'lockdown', as a result managed to refine its governance structures and processes before its workload spiked.

SHP's main outputs focussed on the coordination of food deliveries and the delivery of prescriptions. It was acknowledged that the delivery of food parcels, was a major logistical challenge on its own and took the forms of a click and collect service, a deposit service scheme for volunteers to buy food on a resident's behalf and an emergency food parcel scheme.

Looking ahead SHP's active services were to draw down to an end on 1 July 2020. However the framework, structures and utilities were well placed for reactivation in case of a further need. SHP's website had been built in consultation with risk management consultants and would be a ready-trying solution for a second wave.

Surrey Heath Age Concern

Surrey Heath Age Concern (SHAC) was an independent, local charity which worked to provide services to enhance the lives of older people within Surrey Heath. The Charity befriended socially-isolated individuals within their homes and in social-settings, such as the Rainbow Café, where possible.

Before Lockdown, following an effort to work closer with local partners and organisations, SHAC successfully applied for a grant to employ a befriending coordinator. This in turn significantly reduced SHAC's waiting list of those waiting for a befriender within Surrey Heath to 16 from previously double that number.

SHAC worked quickly in response to the news of the outbreak of Covid-19 in the UK; and rapidly moved to transfer all necessary paper work to home offices. In addition the charity, enhanced its befriending services to reassure isolated residents and to alleviate worries with a familiar voice. Befriending calls were increased from one to two or more calls a week and SHAC set up an out of hours phone number, in case of emergency help being required. SHAC also worked in partnership with the Council's Welfare Cell and Surrey Heath prepared to provide practical help in respect of food and medication worries and arranging the topping up of energy top up cards.

The service and support, which SHAC provided, evolved post-lockdown with the sending of postcards and email befriending services; in addition to phone calls. SHAC also provided increased support to older residents in respect of accessing online services, which held greater prevalence during lockdown. Going forward SHAC was looking at provision to enable befriending in residents' gardens with use of suitable PPE requirements.

Having to alter its services during the peak of the pandemic had caused challenges to SHAC, including a drain on staff resilience, and although many new befrienders were recruited, it was anticipated that many of these befrienders would be lost as people started to return to their jobs.

Arising from Members' questions and comments the following points were noted:

- It would be useful to know the number of liable parties who took up the option of extending their Council Tax instalments from 10 instalments a year to 12 instalments. Whilst the Council had not experienced any recent reduction in the payment of Council Tax, this may alter as a result in the reigning back of the national Furlough Scheme.
- Whilst the Council did a successful job in providing the homeless within Surrey Heath with emergency accommodation, there was an acknowledged need for a longer term plan for those individuals, whilst also striking the balance with the Council's financial constraints.
- Surrey Heath Prepared was ready to 'reactivate', in case of a second wave of Coronavirus cases and that a 'Lockdown' situation naturally freed up a group of people to become volunteers.
- Closer collaboration between Surrey Heath Prepared, the Council and Surrey Heath Age Concern would be desirable, but not necessarily possible. The organisations successfully partnered in order streamline food parcel deliveries and frequently referred cases between themselves. However due to data sharing issues they were not able to work in partnership around nationally shielded individuals.
- The Council needed to be ready to react to a large a number of residents facing financial hardship within Surrey Heath in light of the bleak economic situation. It was acknowledged that Surrey Heath had a duty of care to its disadvantaged and vulnerable residents; and as a result, whilst its welfare calls would be reconfigured, its Welfare Cell would continue to offer first-hand support and also accept referrals from the formally-drawn down Surrey Heath Prepared Service.
- A specific workstream of the Council's Recovery and maintenance stage of the Council's pandemic response was dedicated to bolstering and

maintaining resilience in the local economy. In practise this meant the creation of grant schemes, giving advice to businesses on Covid-19 processes and joined up work and advice via the Council's Economic Development and Business Rates teams. In addition the Council was working with bodies such as the Local Enterprise Partnership and Business South to work on providing new training and skills initiatives.

- There was a significant volume of informal; underlying ground level support between neighbours, which may be naturally drawn-down as a result of normal life returning. Surrey Heath Prepared was in liaison with its local ward coordinators in respect of this and was in a position to identify levels of need on a local basis and feed this back to the Council's Community Development Officer.

The Committee thanked the presenters for their presentations and their respective organisations' work during the crisis.

3/EP Surrey Police

Surrey Police

Detective Inspector Allick James, Surrey Heath Borough Commander, gave a presentation in respect of his role as new Borough Commander and the Challenges facing Surrey Police in Surrey Heath.

Inspector James joined Surrey Heath and brought significant experience from his background in investigations and working with Chief Constables on their respective criminal justice and neighbourhood policing portfolios.

In his role as Borough Commander, Inspector James had the goal of making Surrey Heath Residents, 'Being Safe and Feeling Safe', via formal and informal engagement with the community and the prioritisation of prevention. The overarching prevention focus would take the form of the concentration of resources on the most vulnerable groups and people, and in the most dangerous locations according to statistics. In addition it was key to focus and target the activities of repeat offenders, drug abusers and those highlighted by the Prevent strategy. This was intertwined with implementation of a problem solving approach to work with the community to make early interventions.

Operation Apollo was run as Surrey Police's response to the Covid-19 Pandemic. Particular attention was paid to the analysis of the peak times and locations for Anti-Social behaviour instances which had gone up during the pandemic. This analysis fed into active patrols, which engaged, explained and encouraged dispersal of groups before the implementation of fixed penalty notices; as well as specifically focussed social media messages.

In addition there was an awareness of risk during the lockdown that many victims were potentially trapped in homes with their abusers; with supermarkets and pharmacies being their only sanctuary. As a result Surrey Police maintained more of a presence at supermarkets in order to pick up cases of domestic abuse.

Looking forward, a Youth Engagement Officer and 2 safer neighbourhood specialists were in the process of being recruited to the safer neighbourhood team; in addition to the future planned use of analysts whom were part of the wider prevention of harm strategy.

Following Members' questions and comments the following points were noted:

- There was a perception from Members' constituents that Surrey Police took little action in relation to low level crimes and this in turn discouraged the reporting of such crimes. It was acknowledged by Inspector James that such patterns of low-level crime caused 'harm', and fear amongst communities and whilst residents visited certain locations. Inspector James planned to tackle these patterned instances of low level crime by specifically targeting locations where crime takes place and the specific times.
- There was a chance of a rise in crime levels as a result of a potential economic downturn. Surrey Police was continuing to monitor the crime statistics, to identify any such trends which may develop. In addition the structures set up by Operation Apollo encouraged intelligence sharing across the organisation which allowed for an overarching analysis of crime rates.
- There had been a case of door to door scammers on the Old Dean; which in future could be tackled by PCSOs carrying out preventative work in the form of warning local residents of scammers in the local area by both door to door methods and via social media.
- Engagement work needed to be undertaken in areas where reports of crime and ASB were low potentially showing high levels of disengagement. It was acknowledged that there was great value in community engagement events to allow for communities to get to know and trust their PCSOs. Inspector James had meetings in the pipeline to discuss ways to improve the current engagement strategy.
- Despite this, it was reminded to Members that the best way to report non-emergency crimes was to report them through Surrey Police's contact centre, to ensure efficient recording and management of resources.
- Relationships between Councillors and individual Officers had changed; and as a result it would be useful for Councillors to be sent round the details for the specific officers covering their individual wards.
- Engagement with the Surrey Police social media pages, in particular with younger residents. In addition there was an appetite for a fostering of two way dialogue between residents and the Local Neighbourhood Team on social media; rather than a one way feed of information from Surrey Police.

The Committee thanked Inspector James for informative presentation and update.

4/EP Committee Work Programme

Members asked Officers to invite Enterprise M3 to a meeting in the near future to look at how they were looking to provide business relief during the economic downturn.

Chairman