

Portfolio Holder Update: Business & Transformation

Summary: To provide a progress report on the Business & Transformation Portfolio

Portfolio: Business and Transformation

Wards Affected: All

Recommendation

The Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee is advised to note the report

1. Background

- 1.1 The Business & Transformation Portfolio covers a wide and diverse range of both public and internal facing services comprising of:
- Building Control
 - Camberley Theatre
 - Car Parking
 - Communications & Marketing
 - Corporate Property
 - Data Protection & Freedom of Information
 - Economic Development
 - ICT & Digital

2. Building Control

- 2.1 This is a mandatory service. In addition to operating on a commercial basis (non-profit making) in direct competition with private companies the team oversees the Councils statutory duties for dangerous structures, enforcement under the Building Acts and acts as a safety net for schemes where the registered Approved Inspector is unable to continue.
- 2.2 In 2019/20 the team processed 604 applications for Building Regulations approval and this involved 4041 separate site inspection visits as construction works progressed. In addition, the team undertook successful enforcement actions on 42 sites where there were unauthorised works, they also attended 16 dangerous structures.
- 2.3 The Team is working toward ISO 9001 Quality Management System ready for compliance with the new Building Act and validation for Building Regulation Fire Safety on Higher Risk Buildings. This work anticipates the changes that the new Building Act is likely to introduce in response to the emerging identification of the issues that contributed to the Grenfell fire disaster. This will have implications for management of risks in the operation of the Building Control service.

3. Camberley Theatre

- 3.1 Due to Covid19 restrictions the theatre closed to the public on 17th March until September. During that time the staff were redeployed to help with welfare calls, food parcel and prescription delivery and supporting the council's live stream meetings.
- 3.2 The theatre did open occasionally during the first lockdown to allow NHS Blood Donor services to continue and supplied kitchen equipment to Surrey Heath Prepared.
- 3.3 Following an extensive risk assessment and the implementation of new "covid safe" measures, including a reduction in capacity to 100 (from 400) the theatre was able to re-opened in September with a limited programme of film screenings and solo performers such as Joel Dommett and Daniel Sloss. The theatre closed again on 5th November in line with the national lockdown but is aiming to re-open again on 2 December.
- 3.4 Until Covid19 restrictions were implemented the theatre had been performing very strongly with 19/20 being another successful year with increases in Box Office sales. However the pandemic has had a dramatic impact on all income including tickets, room hire and bar sales. By way of comparison:
- 17/3/19 – 17/8/19: Gross sales during this period: £342,614.40. Number of tickets sold: 18994
 - 17/3/20 – 17/8/20: Gross sales during this period: £7,040.50. Number of tickets sold: 382
- 3.5 The Pantomime, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, has been postponed until December 2021 and in its place a varied programme of Christmas films, shows and events will be presented instead. This is lower risk and more scalable during these uncertain times.
- 3.6 The events programme including Carnival, Surrey Heath Show, Comedy Festival and Surrey Heath Show has all been postponed until 2021.
- 3.7 The Creative Minds Academy have been running youth theatre/dance/singing classes via Zoom during lockdown and this will continue until at least October 2020. Due to limited room capacities and commercial reasons; the temporary programme of fitness classes will not resume until at least Jan 2021
- 3.8 The Theatre frontage work received planning consent in September 2020 and is set to be completed early 2021.
- 3.9 The IGC continues to have a full quota of tenants.

4. Car Parking

- 4.1 Parking Services is managed by the Parking Services Manager who has a dual role and also manages the on-street enforcement on behalf of Woking Borough Council.
- 4.2 Until 2018 on street parking enforcement was delivered by Surrey Heath via an agency agreement on behalf of Surrey County Council. The change, in November 2018, was as a result of a review of management arrangements (to find cost savings)

by Surrey County Council which resulted in the transfer of responsibility for Surrey Heath on-street enforcement to Woking Borough Council.

- 4.3 The Car Parks Team manage Camberley's two multi-story car parks and the six pay and display car parks across the borough. The multi-story car parks are operated via a ticketless Automated Number Plate Recognition system (ANPR). This system reads the car number plate on entry and when the customer is ready to leave they enter their registration number into the pay machine.
- 4.4 In recent years Main Square and Knoll Road car park has seen a slight fall in visitors which is in line with Camberley town centre footfall and in 2019/20 generated just under £1.8m gross which in turn generated a net surplus of £700k for the council. The pandemic has had a significant impact on parking income in 2020/21 due to suspension of parking fees during the spring/summer lockdown and a significant reduction in town centre footfall. Estimated income is currently down by approximately 85%. 70% of this loss should be recoverable under the Government's Sales, Fees, and Charges reimbursement scheme.
- 4.5 On 14 September 2020 regular parking tariffs were reinstated in the Camberley multi-storey car park, with 2 hours free parking at Knoll Road and a new Parking Subsidy Permit was introduced for low paid workers. So far 7 permits have been issued. In October 2020 regular parking tariffs were reinstated in the out of town Pay & Display car parks.
- 4.6 It is worth noting that parking tariffs have not been reviewed since 2014 in the town centre and 2009 in the pay and display car parks, and have now fallen significantly behind inflation.
- 4.7 Recent improvements and investment include the refurbishment of all the parking levels in Main Square (including the stairwells) with the introduction of wider spaces for ease of parking. New cost efficient "smart" LED lighting has also been installed in Main Square which will have a significant impact on energy costs. Looking further ahead there are numerous possibilities for more aesthetic improvements in line with the council's plans for the SQ shopping centre as well as the installation of LED lighting at Knoll Road car park. Capital Funding has been approved for the resurfacing of Chobham car park (£50k) and Watchetts Road car park (£40k). This work will be carried out in the current FY.

5. Communications and Marketing

- 5.1 The Marketing and Communications team is responsible for all marketing and communication content across multiple customer facing channels in order to manage the brand and reputation of the Council, engage with residents and businesses, promote the Borough and support revenue generation.
- 5.2 The team is led by a marketing manager with 6.3 permanent FTE staff. During COVID 3.5 FTE were re-deployed to support vulnerable residents with welfare calls.
- 5.3 Highlights of the Communications and Marjketing Team's work during 2020 have included:

Covid Response

- Communications in a major incident covering internal communications, Member Updates and resident and business comms.

- Management of communications for major incidents including flooding, traveller incursions (Heatherside held as communications ‘best in class’ case study in Surrey) and fire at Chobham Common.
- Delivered more than 70 hosting hours of virtual council meetings

Consultation

- Sharing and engagement for new playground designs across the Borough, Windlesham Community Governance Review and the Surrey Heath Statement of Community Involvement.

Social Media

- Offers effective channels to develop SHBC brand, inform residents and manage reputation. Social media is increasingly the human face and voice of the Council as well as an increasingly popular channel for customer service. The team monitor feedback and reactions of residents on our channels as well as groups across the Borough (often out of hours) so any issues can be immediately managed. Monthly results on campaigns from social media are shared with Members.
- As detailed in regular updates shared with Members a number of campaigns helping promote Surrey Heath and share information with residents and businesses have been delivered including; launch of cartoon Keith; green flag awards; election of a new Mayor, Surrey Heath Sports Awards, Business Awards, walking for health, community fund grants, revenue grant awards, SH Lottery.
- We’re developing our profile on LinkedIn through the regeneration work in Camberley and increased content to share with businesses including the promotion of the new Surrey Heath Business website.

Public Relations

- 5.3 At end of October SHBC had issued 100 press releases/news announcements in 2020 so far (10% up on previous year) averaging 10 per month. In addition the team managed (on average) 7 media enquiries per month (down 40% on previous year) from print and online news outlets, TV, radio and trade publications.

Heathscene

- 5.4 Heathscene, the Council’s magazine is distributed three times a year across the Borough. It continues to be an excellent way to reach those in the community who are not online and has been improved with a more consistent editorial voice, more up to date content which now strongly complements digital and print campaigns. Editorial space is sold to partner organisations (Surrey Heath CCG and Surrey County Council). HeathScene costs 21p per copy to produce.

Website

- 5.6 For the full year 2019, the SHBC website had 794,404 visits (up 13% year on year) and nearly 3.5 million page views. More visits to the website are made via mobile up 5% on previous year to 40% of all visits.

- 5.7 In 2020 the most popular pages on the website so far are; Homepage, Planning, Coronavirus Information page, Recycling and Waste and 'My Surrey Heath'.
- 5.8 Due to the new public sector website accessibility regulation all 2000 pages of our website have been updated. All documents are being amended to ensure those with additional needs are able to access.

Camberley Town Centre

- 5.9 To showcase Camberley to commercial and local audiences in order to attract and retain current businesses and customers. We continue to share key project milestones and communicate regeneration project plans for the town centre with businesses and residents by visits/meetings, forum events, printed materials (vinyls, fliers and posters) press and social media as well as promoting retail and leisure activities to drive footfall and increase dwell time. Highlights include; Reducing costs of marketing campaigns for the town centre by creating artwork in-house (saving £30K in 12 months), Coverage achieved in The Guardian, BBC News, The Evening Standard, property trade press and regular coverage in local newspapers and on radio, Supporting Camberley re-opening as restrictions for COVID were eased. All signage and digital collateral produced by SHBC.

Events

- 5.10 Our usual work around events hasn't happened in 2020 due to covid but we have livestreamed as many of the commemoration or public celebrations as possible average views c. 2000 for VE Day, Pride and VJ Day.

Surrey Heath Business Awards

- 5.11 The Business Awards in 2020 were judged in March and announced virtually in October. Results: Facebook Winning Award videos viewed a total of 3,672 times with total reach of 9,110. The Shortlist announcement was viewed a total of 2,517 times and a reach of 8,287. On LinkedIn the winner films were viewed a total of just under 2,000 times with positive comments on posts shared by the winning businesses.

6. Corporate Property

- 6.1 Corporate Property is responsible for the council's property assets including:
 - Overseeing the day to day management of the operational buildings including rent, service charge, vacancies, building works, statutory compliance Leases
 - Commercial property management
 - Supporting I&D team in acquisition of investment properties
 - Community buildings
 - Facilities Management
 - Surveying
- 6.2 Since the spring Corporate Property has played a significant role in ensuring that staff were able to return to work safely after the initial lockdown by coordinating risk assessments and the subsequent work to make council buildings (including Theatre and Windle Valley) "Covid safe". This included assessment of maximum occupancy of meeting rooms and work areas, clear signage, additional cleaning and the implementation of hand sanitiser stations throughout. This meant that staff felt comfortable and safe when using the building.

- 6.3 This has also required the team to engage with the numerous partners that lease space from the Council in Surrey Heath House and ensure all under leases are renewed in a timely manner & opportunities to maximise the occupation of premises are explored.
- 6.4 Corporate Property manages the out sourcing of the day to day management of our 4 industrial estates and 1 office building investments including instructions on terms and conditions for lettings, lease renewals, assignments, dilapidations and rent reviews. The team also set up the process for approval of lettings, lease renewals and rent reviews in accordance with SHBC's procedural rules together with, as a consequence of Covid 19, a fortnightly rent arrears schedule Tenant by Tenant for SHBC's finance team to monitor arrears at this time.
- 6.5 The team also manages the annual valuation process to ensure that the portfolio value is maintained or increased. Next Valuation work starts Nov/Dec 2020
- 6.6 Corporate Property works closely with Legal, I&D and Regulatory teams on acquisitions and regeneration providing due diligence support and commercial advice on projects such as Ashwood House and London Road Development and the various initiatives to deliver temporary accommodation for the borough's homeless and rough sleepers.
- 6.7 The team also liaises closely with Business Service to ensure all rent reviews, alterations and assignments are carried in respect of the community leases (e.g. community centres, sports club etc).

7. Data Protection & Freedom of Information

- 7.1 2020 so far has seen a dramatic decline in Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) requests received by the Council compared to the previous 2 years, this is partly due to the go live of the Building Control Database in October 2019 which saw a sharp decrease in the amount of EIR requests, as well as the impact of COVID-19.

2018	2019	2020
1132	1244	576

FOI's have increased in complexity taking longer to source information or apply relevant exemptions. Examples of FOI requests by subject area is;

- CEO expenses/investigation
- Planning application/permission internal correspondence
- Business rates data
- Council spend
- Air quality / energy efficiency
- COVID Grants
- Fixed penalty notice data
- Recovery of unpaid council tax
- Council tax & disability reductions

- 7.2 There has been 34 Data Protection Subject Access Requests received and actioned so far in 2020 this is an increase from 2019 which saw a total of 33 for the whole calendar year.

7.3 There have been 10 Data Breaches reported so far in 2020, of which 1 was reported by the Council to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) due to the potential of an adverse effect to the data subject. No further actions by the Council was required by the ICO. Main themes for data breaches include:

- Personal information shared insecurely outside of the Council
- Inappropriate management of confidential information by staff member
- Personal information uploaded to website in error

For each breach a full investigation took place ensuring where possible the breach was mitigated and lessons were learnt.

7.4 A review and update of the Information Security Policy, Data Protection Breaches Policy, Data Protection Policy for Home Working and Email Guidance has been undertaken in line with Data Protection legislation.

7.5 Mandatory Information Security e-learning refresher has been issued to all staff for completion.

7.6 Work is underway on reviewing all the local departmental records retention schedules and Information Asset registers, they were last reviewed in 2016. This will then feed into a central Records Retention and Destruction Schedule and Asset Register which will help ensure the Council's compliance under Data Protection, Information Rights and Local Government Transparency Code.

8. Economic Development

8.1 Current state of the Borough

	2019	2020	Change
Population	88,900	89,300	+400
Businesses	5,365	5,265	-100
Jobs	65,000	56,000	-11,000
GVA	£3.3bn	£3.48bn	+£1.8million
Skilled workforce	48.7%	57.2%	+8.5%*
Gross Weekly Pay	£751.9	£739.4	-£12.5

8.2 The Borough has been impacted this year through a small decline in businesses registered for VAT and PAYE, and a loss of 11,000 jobs within the Borough.

8.4 GVA (Gross Value Added) is still increasing year on year, although we are anticipating that next year may be stalled due to the impact which the Pandemic is having on the economy.

8.5 Investigations are underway to attribute the loss of jobs, as the figure is significant, however it is felt from conversations this is a small number across a number of companies rather than high numbers in a few. Reduction in weekly earnings would also indicate that the loss of jobs could be attributed to more of the high earning, high skilled positions, rather than the lower skilled roles

8.6 Key work areas over the past twelve months have included:

- Account Management – The team has continued to work with businesses of all sizes within the Borough to support their growth needs. The team also work closely with the planning team to assist where possible large development proposals from businesses.
- Stihl - Planning approved (subject to Secretary of state approval) after initially Economic Development through Kevin Cantlon.
- Sale of Eli Lily Site – working closely with Commercial Agents and with Eli Lily themselves.
- Sale of KampKorp Park – again working with key stakeholders to identify site as a great location for business, eventually being sold to a local Surrey firm, Gordon Murray Designs.
- Kevin Cantlon Shop Fronts – a further 4 businesses supported in the last 12 months.
- Covid-19 – wrote the Discretionary Grant Guidance for Surrey and undertook the administration of the Scheme for Surrey Heath awarding 91 Grants to Businesses with a value of over £746,000.
- Corporate Social Responsibility Scheme for businesses launched in Surrey Heath in October 2020, open to all businesses across the Borough. Individuals can support also by volunteering their time to causes. Also open to SHBC staff.
- IOT footfall – procured contracted with Indestinate Ltd to provide footfall tracking across the Borough using aggregated mobile phone data.
- Tikspac – Economic Development is working with Enforcement and Communications to deliver the Tikspac dog waste scheme by encouraging businesses to support through sponsorship.

8.7 Key economic development communications messages in 2020 have included:

- New business facing website Business In Surrey Heath was launched in October 2020 which has received over 2,500 visits in its first month and driven up newsletter subscriptions by 100.
- LinkedIn – Economic Development increasingly utilising LinkedIn s, with interactions going up by 131% since October 2020.
- A business newsletter sent regularly to over 6,000 recipients.

Property

8.8 The Economic Development team continue to work alongside Commercial Property Investment and Development and Montagu Evans to support lettings in Surrey Heath under our ownership. This includes securing The Secret Stage School in The Square and opportunities for independents to take on units, including a Zero Waste shop, charities and other non-retail businesses.

Key Work Areas in the Next Twelve Months

8.10 Recovery – The team is trying to look ahead with a flexible view on the provision of support. A Grant Thornton Report on resilience has stated that Surrey Heath is one of the least vulnerable Boroughs in England due to the levels of skilled residents, jobs and sectors which have proven to be sustainable during the Covid-19 crisis.

- 8.11 Skills and Jobs Support - The Borough is being impacted vastly by the effects on the economy due to COVID-19. The Claimant count for Universal Credit for the Borough is growing, albeit slowly after an initial spike in May.
- 8.12 Working with DWP and JCP Economic development has applied for funding to host a Youth Hub, which will support 18-24 year old's in the Borough who have found themselves out of work or education. Delivering:
- Careers Support
 - Interview guidance
 - Job Application Guidance
 - Meet the Business Sessions
- 8.13 Self-employment and small business support – DWP have indicated that over 45% of those on Universal Credit are those who are Self-employed within the Borough, therefore through the repurposing of the Kevin Cantlon Fund:
- Pop Up Business School
 - Surrey Chambers Start Up Academy
 - Enterprise South 1-2-1 Support
- 8.14 Brexit – Economic Development continue to work with partners such as The Surrey Chambers and The Local Enterprise Partnership, and Department of International Trade to ensure information about Brexit and details about where support can be found are shared with our businesses who import and Export from Europe.
- 8.15 Retail Support projects - Through the Reopening High Streets fund, it is envisaged a range of support be delivered through workshops, skills sessions tailored to the needs of the High Street businesses over the next 12 months to help with moving online, moving from online to bricks and mortar retail, but not exclusive.
- 8.16 Co-Working – A review of the potential opportunities for delivery of co-working space within Camberley town center is being undertaken to understand the opportunities and potential revenue stream which may be available to the Council through a partnership to deliver a project.
- 8.17 5G - Economic Development continue to work with partners to build a business case for a 5G retail test bed for Camberley Town Centre.
- 8.18 Government backed support grants – We will continue to administer the government backed Covid-19 support grants which are not attributed to the Business Rates stem where Government has provided guidance on provision of Borough wide discretionary grant schemes.
- 8.19 We will continue to support businesses throughout the Borough get through the Covid-19 Crisis

9. ICT & Digital

COVID-19 response

- 9.1 The ICT team had to react quickly to the impact of Covid and a response was delivered quickly and robustly. This included:

- Mobile equipment was procured and distributed (e.g. laptops).
- Rapid support for homeworking.
- Urgent replacement of firewall to handle the amount of staff working at home with increased remote network traffic.
- Assisted the welfare teams with remote access to the cloud based storage system (Box) to allow effective collaboration.
- Worked with Surrey Heath Prepared to provide them with cloud based tools to allow them to check postcode / ward data for vulnerable residents.
- Telephony systems were quickly configured for the welfare teams to begin calling vulnerable people which was only possible due to the agile nature of the 8x8 cloud telephony system.
- Quickly organised processes and equipment to enable the Zoom video conferencing system.
- Moved quickly to cloud platforms where possible (including new CRM, XMAP GIS, Civica Financials Live and shortly Iken case management for Legal Services).
- As a response to new legislation enacted by government ICT teams worked swiftly to enable new pavement license applications to be processed through the Uniform system.
- ICT made existing cloud services available to enable Economic Development to build forms such as the Discretionary Grant Payment form and self-employed proformas to capture grant requests from members of the public.

Other Key Areas of ICT Work

- 9.2 Laptops - There are currently circa 60 staff working from the new agile laptops. These have been procured via Dell Premier Service at significant discounts through the NHS Shared Business Framework. The move to laptops is making significant impacts on our agile working agenda and also opening up the potential of Microsoft Teams to staff.
- 9.3 Unified Endpoint Management - Significant progress has been made with Microsoft Intune, the cloud service we use to securely manage our laptops and mobile phone estate. As more laptops are deployed the use and need for desk top PCs will decrease.
- 9.4 Box upgrade - Box, along with 8x8 cloud telephony and Office365 was fundamental to delivering the authority's COVID-19 response. In November the council will upgrade to Box's premium service due to the functionality upgrades and security tools it provides us.
- 9.5 Firewall upgrade - took place one in March 2020 as a direct response to increased staff needing access their work PCs from home. As the council continues with the cloud programme, deployment of laptops and collection of desktop PCs etc there is less and less reliance on our internal network and staff needing to use the firewall.
- 9.6 Cloud CRM (Customer Relationship Management system) - has been delivered in record time and to budget. It's been very well received, is integrated with the land and property gazetteer, Box and the telephony system.
- 9.7 Zoom - video conferencing implementation was a critical component of the response to COVID-19. This was introduced towards the latter part of 2019 and received minimal use. However, now staff are getting used to the 'new normal', since the start of March the service has delivered 1027 meetings with 7,427 meeting participants

with a total of 6,229 hours of meetings (259 days). We believe the authority delivered one of the first (or maybe even the first) full Council meeting via video conferencing after the government altered the legislation to facilitate this.

- 9.8 Network Switch upgrade - capital project has begun. The new switches are powered up and running in a temporary location in our server room to begin testing. This project is a significant piece of work as the switches are responsible for all network connectivity (including printers, Wi-Fi, servers, workstations).
- 9.9 Uniform migration phase 1 - All major business areas are now live including development control, tree preservation, planning policy, enforcement, land charges, environmental health and licensing.
- 9.10 Xmap Cloud GIS service - has been procured, configured and deployed quickly. It's completely cloud based facilitating remote working and we have consolidated / switched off various other GIS infrastructure as a result, with a cost saving of around £9k per annum. This service is now being deployed to Joint Waste Solutions to help manage the waste collection contract.
- 9.11 Windows 7 project - is now complete. All standard PCs in the authority are now running on Windows 10.
- 9.14 Civica Financials Live - project has completed user acceptance testing and will go live on August 24th. This will complete the move of finance to full cloud hosting.
- 9.17 New Ways of Working - The council has been presented with an opportunity to change the culture of the organisation, foster a positive agile working agenda, further reduce the reliance on Surrey Heath House and reduce the volume of floor space required by SHBC.
- 9.18 Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Audit - is currently underway with a firm called Invotra. They are checking to ensure all our online e-forms meet mandatory government WCAG requirements.
- 9.21 Iken matters management system for Legal Services - is moving to Iken Cloud hosting. This means all Legal Services ICT platforms are cloud based. This project is due to be delivered mid-December.
- 9.22 Service Desk - in combination with other ICT teams have resolved 3693 tickets between February and August 2020.
- 9.23 Uniflow cloud print services - has been implemented. The impact of this will be that all our print services will be cloud based and laptop users will have full wireless access to printing services.
- 9.24 ITrent HR and Payroll - project has started which will move these services onto a cloud based solution and provide staff with access to a smartphone app for booking leave and claiming expenses. Estimated go-live date is April 2021.

Annexes	None
Background Papers	None
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