

Five Year Strategy 2021 – 2026 - update

Summary

The Council's Five Year Strategy is being reviewed, and a new Strategy being developed for consultation. This report updates the Executive on the timescales for the preparation of the new Strategy, key themes to be included and proposals for public and partner consultation during the summer.

Portfolio: Leader

Wards Affected: All

Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that

- (i) the timetable for the preparation of the Council's new Five Year Strategy set out in paragraph 2.2 be noted;
- (ii) proposals for public and partner consultation set out at Annex A be noted, and make any comments be noted;
- (iii) the comments of the Performance & Finance Committee on 17 March 2021 at paragraph 2.8 be considered;
- (iv) the key themes for inclusion in the Strategy set out at paragraphs 1.2, 2.9 and 2.10, and make any comments be noted; and
- (v) a cross-party Task and Finish Group of seven members be appointed to input into and steer the development of the new strategy and the analysis of feedback received during the consultation.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council's Five Year Strategy sets out its overall priorities for the Borough under key themes, which are then translated into yearly targets and projects set out in the Annual Plan. The current Five Year Strategy 2016-2021 was agreed in August 2016, and then a refreshed version agreed in March 2017.
- 1.2 The emerging Five Year Strategy can be informed by a number of existing policy areas, data sources and emerging legislation. The Council has recently agreed Climate Change, Health and Wellbeing (including Poverty) as priority areas of work. The Town Centre and Villages Working Group ensure a focus on investments and improvements across the Borough. The Council is preparing a new Local Plan to promote the environment and shape future prosperity of the Borough while meeting local Housing need. The impact of Covid-19 on the Borough will be a key driver and data is already available about the socio-economic impact of the pandemic on residents and businesses. The Five Year

Strategy will also need to recognise that more of the Council's priorities will need to be delivered in partnership with others including other local authorities, statutory organisations such as the Police, Health, and Housing Associations, local businesses and with local community and voluntary organisations. The Council has a strong track record of collaboration to achieve positive outcomes for residents which can be built on as part of the strategy aspirations.

- 1.3 Workshops also took place in 2020 with the Executive and Corporate Management Team, supported by the Local Government Association (LGA), to start work identifying priorities for the new Five Year Strategy.
- 1.4 An evidence base showcasing key facts about Surrey Heath, its unique story, strengths and challenges has been gathered to drive conversations with Members, partners and staff on what needs to be addressed and identified within the Five Year Strategy. This evidence base is being shared with all Councillors and members of the Surrey Heath Partnership as part of scoping workshops.
- 1.5 These workshops will inform the 'Strategic narrative' and themes for the Five Year Strategy which will be brought back to the Executive in June, and form the basis of the wider public and partner consultation exercise.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The proposed timetable for the preparation and agreement of the new Strategy is set out in the table below.

2.2 Timetable for Five Year Strategy 2021 – 2026:

Timescale	Actions
May/June 2021	Workshops based on the Five Year Strategy evidence base with all Councillors and members of the Surrey Heath Partnership.
June 2021	Task Group considers outputs of Member/Partner workshops and reviews/discusses the draft strategic narrative and challenges to inform the Five Year Strategy and proposals for public consultation.
June - August 2021	June – early August Public & Partner consultation. Task Group kept updated with feedback and results from consultation and informs the preparation of the draft Strategy.
July 2021	Report to Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee 7 July 2021 to consult them on draft strategic narrative / challenges.
September 2021	Feedback from consultation and final proposed Strategy reported to Performance & Finance Scrutiny 7 September 2021.
September 2021	Feedback from consultation and final proposed Five Year Strategy (and Medium Term Financial Strategy) to Executive 21 Sept 2021.
October 2021	Five Year Strategy 2021 – 2026 sent to Full Council for approval 27 October 2021, together with the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

- 2.3 In addition to the Committee/Executive/Council dates set out above, it is recommended that the Executive appoint a cross-party Task and Finish Group to input into and steer the development the production of the new strategy and the analysis of feedback received during the consultation. It is proposed that the Task and Finish Group should have 7 members and be politically proportionate with 3 Conservative and 4 non-Conservative members, including the Leader and 1 other Executive member.

2.4 The Task and Finish Group will:

- Monitor progress against the Five Year Strategy timescale and milestones
- Considers outputs of the initial Member/Partner workshops
- Discuss and review the draft strategic narrative / challenges to inform the Five Year Strategy and proposals for public consultation
- Monitor the public consultation
- Review and analyse the results of the public consultation
- Input into the preparation of the draft Strategy
- Ensure cross-party input into the detailed preparation of the Five Year Strategy

2.5 An important part of the preparation of the Five Year Strategy will be consultation with the public and partners to ensure the Strategy reflects the needs and aspirations of those living and working in the Borough.

2.6 The Strategy will take account of previous and current strategies, projects and priorities of the Council, relevant data, – particularly around the likely impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on residents and businesses – and input and feedback from partner organisations and the public. The planned consultation exercise will share a draft 'strategic narrative' showing the journey of the Council, the challenges and opportunities faced and draft key objectives/areas of focus.

2.7 **Annexe A** sets out the proposals for the consultation exercise. The Executive is asked to note and comment on these.

2.8 The Performance and Finance Committee considered a report outlining the timetable for the Five Year Strategy review and consultation proposals at its meeting on 17 March 2021 and was asked to submit any comments to the Executive. The following points were raised at the Committee:

- *The Committee noted the terms of office for the current cohort of councillors would expire in 2023 and it was suggested that a five year strategy could potentially commit the incoming administration to a course of action that did not necessarily align with their manifesto. It was suggested that a three year strategy followed by a four year strategy would better align with these terms of office.*
- *Officers confirmed that the Five Year Strategy would include the Council's commitment to addressing climate change.*

2.9 Key areas for inclusion in the emerging Five Year Strategy:

- Continuing to support residents and businesses through the Coronavirus pandemic and the response to it and enable economic and social recovery.
- Investing in a thriving Camberley Town Centre, including developing a 'Unique Selling Point'
- Invests across the borough, meeting the needs of residents wherever they live, particularly vulnerable people and those experiencing poverty.
- Working in partnership to deliver more schemes to address local housing needs such as Pembroke House.
- Contributing to residents' health and wellbeing and working with partners on particular issues such as obesity, using the new leisure centre as a key tool.

- Promoting the borough's natural environment and shaping the future prosperity of the borough. Addressing the Climate Change emergency declared by the Council in October 2019.

2.10 Key aspirations for Surrey Heath Borough Council: to be recognised as a council which:

- Delivers on its promises, on time and to budget.
- Has improved its capacity to engage, inform and consult residents.
- Works closely with our partners, including the voluntary and community sector, NHS, Surrey County Council, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).
- Ensures that our investment and resources are well-managed and that we achieve value for money.
- Has effective project management.
- Participates in discussion about greater collaboration with other Councils and organisations to support the delivery of these priorities.

3. Resource Implications

3.1 The proposals for the public consultation can be carried out within existing budgets due to the mainly 'online' nature of the exercise and the most significant resource needed will be officer time.

3.2 The review of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) will be aligned with the preparation of the new Five Year Strategy, with a refreshed MTFS also reported to Council in October 2021 for approval.

4. Proposals

4.1 The Executive is advised to

- i) Note the timetable for the preparation of the Council's new Five Year Strategy set out in paragraph 2.2;
- ii) Note the proposals for public and partner consultation set out at Annex A, and make any comments;
- iii) Consider the comments of the Performance & Finance Committee on 17 March 2021 at paragraph 2.8;
- iv) Note the key themes for inclusion in the Strategy set out at paragraphs 1.2, 2.9 and 2.10, and make any comments; and
- v) Appoint a cross-party Task and Finish Group of seven members to input into and steer the development of the new strategy and the analysis of feedback received during the consultation.

5. Corporate Objectives And Key Priorities

5.1 The Council's Five Year Strategy is the main vehicle for agreeing Corporate Objectives and Key Priorities.

6. Policy Framework

6.1 The Five Year Strategy is one of the key elements of the Policy Framework of the Council.

7. Legal Issues

7.1 No specific Legal issues arising.

8. Governance

8.1 The proposed timetable for the preparation and adoption of the new Five Year Strategy includes significant opportunity for scrutiny, public and partner input and transparency of decision making.

9. Risk Management

9.1 Without a coherent Five Year Strategy in place there is a risk that the Council's work and resources do not achieve the desired outcomes for the Borough, residents and businesses.

10. Equalities Impact

10.1 An equalities impact assessment will be carried out on the final public consultation arrangements and the final Draft Strategy.

11. Human Rights

11.1 No specific Human Rights implications arising from this report.

12. Environmental Impact

12.1 The Strategy will include Council's commitment to addressing Climate Change.

13. Consultation

13.1 Public and Partner consultation forms a key part of this report - see Annexe A.

14. PR And Marketing

14.1 See Consultation above.

Annexes	Annexe A – Proposals for Five Year Strategy Consultation
Background Papers	Surrey Heath Borough Council Five Year Strategy 2016 – 2021, refreshed March 2017.
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Annexe A – Proposals for Five Year Strategy Consultation – June – August 2021

- **Purpose** – to share the Council’s ‘strategic narrative’, current challenges and opportunities, draft key priorities and areas of work for the Five Year Strategy (together with background information that informs these) with the public and partners, with a view to the responses being used to update the priorities and areas of work, and inform the outcomes and targets for the Strategy.
- **Content** to share the Council’s ‘strategic narrative’, current challenges and opportunities, draft key priorities and areas of work for the Five Year Strategy and ask a series of questions such as:
 - *Are these the right areas to focus on? Any comments?*
 - *Is anything missing?*
 - *What are the key issues from your local area? / What are the key issues for your organisation?*
 - *Asking people to rank the issues/ areas in terms of importance*
 - *Whether they feel the strategy is full inclusive to all*
- **Format** of consultation (aim for it to be open for 8 weeks for the public)
 - *Open on-line survey for the public which can be shared on Council social media and can be promoted via Members. Will be promoted in Heathscene and on our website as well as issued as a press release for local media and shared via public noticeboards across the Borough. Could consider some additional advertising e.g. radio.*
 - *Specific consultations at relevant partner / public meetings led by Wider Management Team / Corporate Management Team colleagues (e.g. Surrey Heath Partnership, CCG, parishes) – a presentation and/or video to be prepared so any Manager can lead the discussion. Managers and Members to be asked for suggestions of groups which should be included.*
 - *5 or 6 public online events for a group of wards, which the relevant Ward Members can also attend.*
 - *A paper summary of the consultation to be included in the summer HeathScene with signposting either online or to ways a paper copy can be obtained.*
 - *No general face-to-face public consultations (e.g. in shopping centre) would be planned, due to resource implications and social distancing requirements.*
- **Feedback** – results to be shared with the public and partners, together with the final Five Year Strategy and a ‘thank you’ for participating. Regularly sharing how many have responded and how their views have been taken into account could help engage public to respond to future consultations.