

## A new Five Year Strategy for Surrey Heath Borough Council

### Summary

This report provides an overview of work of the cross-party Five Year Strategy Task & Finish group in steering the development of a new Five Year Strategy for Surrey Heath Borough Council. It contains an update on the issues and feedback emerging from the public, business and partner consultation. The report also seeks the Committee's comments on an initial draft of the Strategy.

**Portfolio: Leader**

**Wards Affected: All**

### Recommendation

The Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee is advised to

- i) note the headline issues and feedback raised during the public, business and partner consultation to inform priorities for the Council's new Five Year Strategy;
- ii) comments on the draft Strategy aims and targets attached at Annexe B

## 1. Key Issues

### Background

- 1.1 The Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee received updates about the preparation of a new Five Year Strategy at its meetings on 17 March 2021 and 7 July 2021.
- 1.2 At the Executive on 25 May 2021, a cross-party Task & Finish group was appointed to input into and steer the development the production of the new strategy and the analysis of feedback received during the public and partner consultation exercise.
- 1.3 Two all-Member workshops to identify key issues for the strategy took place in June, and these workshops informed topics to be included in the public, business and partner consultation. Two partner workshops also took place, and positive feedback was received from partners that they appreciated and valued the collaborative approach that the Council was taking as a community leader to bring stakeholders together and engage partners at an early state.
- 1.4 In considering all of the feedback at its meeting on 23 June, the Task & Finish Group proposed that the three overarching priorities for the Strategy should be **Environment, Health & Quality of Life and Economy**. These were reported to this Committee at its meeting on 7 July 2021. **Effective and Responsive Council** was added at a subsequent meeting of the Task & Finish group and **all** the issues and objectives for the Strategy would then flow from these key areas.

## **2. Five Year Strategy Task & Finish Group**

- 2.1 A cross-party Five Year Strategy Task & Finish Group was established by the Executive at its meeting in May 2021 to steer the development of the new strategy and the analysis of feedback received during the consultation. It was agreed that the Task & Finish Group would be politically proportionate with 3 Conservative and 4 non-Conservative members, including the Leader and 1 other Executive member. Following the Executive, nominations were invited from Group Leaders.
- 2.2 The Task & Finish Group comprised Cllr Alan McClafferty (Chairman), Cllr Sashi Mylvaganam (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Dan Adams, Cllr Graham Alleway, Cllr Peter Barnett, Cllr Cliff Betton and Cllr Robin Perry.
- 2.3 The Task & Finish Group has met five times on 23 June, 19 July, 2 August, 16 August and 25 August and has produced the initial draft strategy aims and objectives which are attached at Annexe B for the Committee's comments. The Task & Finish Group has:
- Ensured representation and input from different political groups and areas of the borough,
  - Identified ways of improving the response to the consultation, and endorsed the Council trying a variety of new approaches as part of the consultation, to be built on for the future,
  - Ensured the views and needs of residents and businesses are reflected in the strategy, taking into account the emerging feedback from the consultation,
  - Called for the targets set within the strategy to be comprehensive, ambitious and focus on delivery,
  - Determined that the strategy should not only focus on those services that are the responsibility of Surrey Heath Borough Council to deliver, but also the issues that are important for the borough where the Council will lobby and influence partners on behalf of its residents.
- 2.4 A further meeting of the cross-party Task & Finish Group will take place at the end of September to consider the feedback of Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee from this meeting, feedback from the meeting of the Surrey Heath Partnership on 22 September 2021 and analysis of all the consultation feedback. A final draft strategy (together with the full report of the consultation feedback) will be presented to the Executive on 19 October 2021, and Council on 27 October 2021 for final adoption.

## **3. Consultation Approach**

- 3.1 Following early engagement with partners in June, the wider public, partner and business consultation was launched in July and closes on 27 August 2021. The consultation exercise has been very positive, with growing interest and engagement through its duration.
- 3.2 The public consultation survey is attached at Annexe A, which was available both online and in paper form. In addition, a shorter survey focusing on the three key questions (*'What do you love about Surrey Heath'*, *'What needs improving in Surrey Heath'* and *'Looking ahead over the next five years what*

would you like Surrey Heath to be known for?') was also made available to boost responses. An accessible version of the survey was also available.

3.3 Other methods of feedback were:

- Partner online survey
- Business online survey
- Social media comments from residents on SHBC posts about the consultation
- Attending public events to promote the survey and have conversations with residents
- Online public focus groups

3.4 The aim of the survey was to gather both quantitative and qualitative data in variety of methods, to find out what issues matter most to those who live and work in the borough, and their aspirations for the future of Surrey Heath. The decision was taken to follow this broader approach to consultation rather than publishing a draft survey and asking for feedback.

3.5 A significant promotion campaign of the consultation took place across many different channels using the **'We're all ears'** strapline emphasising that the Council is listening to residents and will act on the responses. Promotion of the public consultation included:

- Significant promotion of the consultation on social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, NextDoor, LinkedIn) – the initial 'boosted' Facebook post targeted at local people aged 18+ reached more than 16,000 people.
- Targeted posts on Instagram aimed at local 18-30 year olds to try to reach the younger demographic.
- Promotion of the survey via the Surrey Heath Youth Council
- Article about the consultation signposting to both online and paper versions delivered to all households in the July edition of Heathscene
- Hard copies available in the Contact Centre. Contact Centre staff encouraged those calling to complete the survey and completed the short survey over the phone with residents when capacity allowed.
- Email signature templates promoting the survey for staff and councillors
- Hard copies distributed via the Meals at Home service
- Promoted via posters on the Borough Boards, and smaller posters distributed with scannable QR codes
- All Councillors provided with posters and surveys
- Stands at the Celebrate Camberley and Camberley Car Show, with a stand planned at an upcoming BID Business Breakfast
- Asking partners to promote to clients / users
- Contacting residents associations and neighbourhood watch schemes to share the survey

- Trial promoting the survey via Whatsapp messages being circulated organically by Councillors and local staff who volunteered to take part
- Promoted via homepage of the SHBC website with link to details about the consultation and surveys
- Specific promotion of the business version of the survey on LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, biz e-newsletter, via business associations, on SHBC website and on the 'Business in Surrey Heath' website.

3.6 Details have been gathered during the exercise of residents who would be happy to take part in future consultations. This consultation and promotion has been the most significant that the Council has undertaken for a number of years, and officers are assessing what has worked well and what can be improved and built on for future consultations and engagements.

3.7 Strengthening the Council's ability to engage with residents, and also improving the perception of SHBC as a 'listening organisations' are important areas of work. Feeding back to those who have taken part the impact of their feedback, and ensuring that the Council uses and acts upon the feedback received are critical elements of this.

3.8 The feedback received as part of the consultation will be shared widely with Surrey Heath Borough Council services and partners and used as proactively as possible. For example, officers are preparing a response to the Surrey County Council's consultation on a Local Transport Plan (to be reported to the October meeting of the Executive) and the feedback received as part of this consultation will form an important part of this response.

#### **4. Consultation Responses**

4.1 The consultation closes on Friday, 27 August 2021. The results and numbers of responses in this report are correct at the time of writing, and a verbal update will be given to the Committee at their meeting.

4.2 At the time of writing over 600 full surveys had been received as part of the consultation, as well as thousands of people engaged via other means including social media and through more detailed conversations at public focus groups and feedback from local events. The numbers are continuing to increase ahead of the closing date.

#### **4.3 Emerging key headlines**

4.4 The survey included several 'free text' questions, and many respondents have taken the time to provide full responses to these which are being categorised and reviewed in a detailed way. A full analysis of the survey responses from the public, partner and business surveys is being undertaken and will be reported to the Executive and Council alongside the final draft Strategy in October. This will also be shared with the Surrey Heath Partnership at its meeting later in September.

4.5 Initial emerging headlines from the survey are set out below. Analysis of the results is evolving as more responses are received.

## Common areas raised

**“What do you love about Surrey Heath? – free text question”**  
(Analysis of first 450 responses to ‘long’ public survey – short survey responses to be included)



**“What need improving in Surrey Heath? – free text question”**  
(Analysis of first 450 responses to ‘long’ public survey – short survey responses to be included)



4.6 Respondents were presented with a list of 19 issues and rate how important they are to them. The ranking options were: 'very important', 'somewhat important', 'not very important', 'not important at all', 'don't know'. The top five issues by percentage of respondents that ranked them 'very important' were:

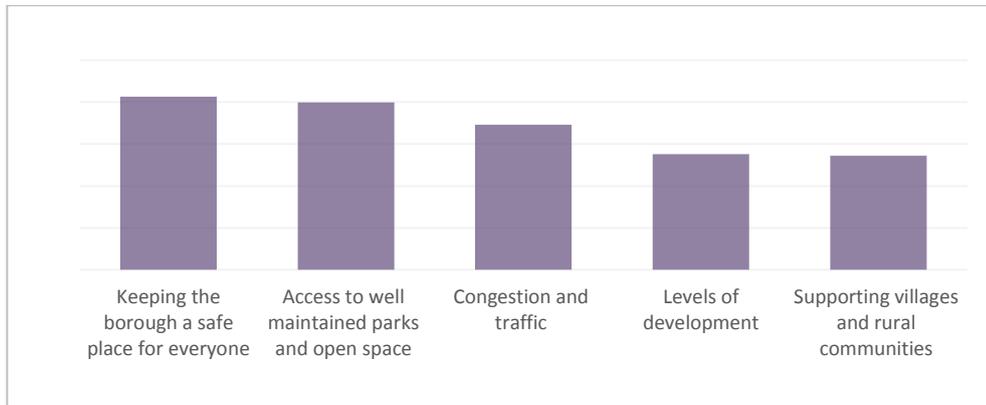
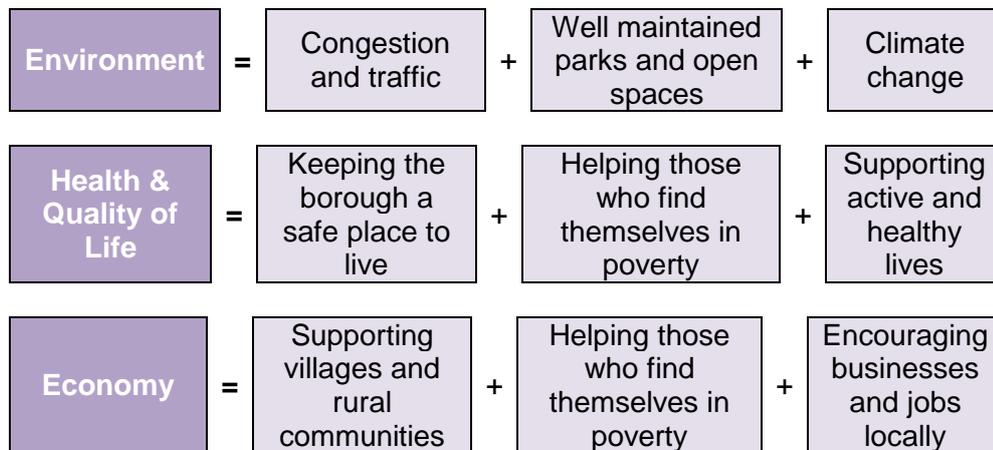


Figure 1- Top five issues by % of respondents rating them as 'very important' [based on responses received by 24 August 2021]

4.7 Respondents were then ask to rank the issues by importance under the different themes of 'Environment', 'Health & Quality of Life' and 'Economy'. The top ranked issues under the different themes were [based on responses received by 24 August 2021].



4.8 Breakdown of respondents by location (NB - the locations are based on location names submitted by respondents who answered this question and are based on responses received by 25 August 2021):

Location	Number of respondents
Bagshot	27
Bisley	21
Camberley	68
Chobham	76
Deepcut	6
Frimley and Frimley Green	49
Heatherside	25
Lightwater	62
Mychett	22

<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of respondents</b>
Old Dean	10
Parkside	5
St Michaels	4
St Pauls	9
Town/ Town Ward	4
Watchetts	6
West End	72
Yorktown	2
Windlesham	52
Other	34

4.9 The surveys also asked respondents about how confident they felt returning to normal activities following the Covid-19 pandemic. The majority of respondents to all versions of the survey felt fairly/very confident returning to normal after the pandemic. Of the answers to 'what, if anything, will support respondents in returning to normal post-pandemic', there were a variety of responses. The most recurring themes, however, are continuation of mask-wearing and social distancing as well as reduced levels of infections.

## **5. Draft Five Year Strategy**

5.1 A first draft of the Five Year Strategy themes, aims and objectives is attached at Annexe B and the Committee are asked for their comments and suggestions.

5.2 The draft has been guided by the Five Year Strategy Task & Finish Group and reflects feedback from Member and partner workshops in June, agreed priorities of the Council such as poverty and climate change, together with the feedback from the public, partner and business consultation. Efforts have been made to link targets with existing policies and work with key partners, and also distinguish between those which the Council can deliver or facilitate, and those aspirations where the Council, as community leader, will lobby and seek to influence outcomes on behalf of residents.

5.3 An evidence base showcasing key facts about Surrey Heath, its unique story, strengths and challenges has been gathered, shared as part of the introduction to the consultation and is a key driver of the final strategy.

5.4 The Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee are asked for their comments and suggestions on the attached draft.

5.5 Following this meeting, the draft will be further refined in light of the Committee's comments and further analysis of the consultation feedback. The Task & Finish group agreed that a further column should be included in the strategy document with the implementation year of each action and this will added ahead of the final draft being presented to the Executive and Council.

5.6 A further meeting of the cross-party Task & Finish Group will take place at the end of September to consider the feedback of Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee from this meeting, feedback from the meeting of the Surrey Heath Partnership on 22 September 2021 and analysis of all the

consultation feedback. A final draft strategy (together with the full report of the consultation feedback) will be presented to the Executive on 19 October 2021, and Council on 27 October 2021 for final adoption.

## **6. Resource Implications**

- 6.1 Mostly officer time, with some additional costs for paid social media adverts and printing from existing budgets. The Medium Term Financial Strategy will be prepared alongside the Five Year Strategy and reflect the priorities in it.
- 6.2 In the preparation of the new Five Year Strategy, the Council will need to have regard to the funding available, and ensure that the aspirations set out reflect this.

## **7. Corporate Objectives and Key Priorities**

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

## **8. Policy Framework**

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

## **9. Legal Issues**

- 9.1 No specific legal issues arising.

## **10. Governance**

- 10.1 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.

## **11. Risk Management**

- 11.1 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.

## **12. Equalities Impact**

- 12.1 An equalities impact assessment will be carried out on the Draft Strategy before it is reported to the Executive.

## **13. Human Rights**

- 13.1 No specific Human Rights implications arising from this report.

## **14. Environmental Impact**

- 14.1 The Strategy is likely to include the Council's commitment to reducing Climate Change.

## 15. Consultation

15.1 Public and Partner consultation forms a key part of this report.

## 16. PR And Marketing

16.1 See Consultation above.

<b>Annexes</b>	Annexe A – Public Consultation Survey Annexe B – draft Five Year Strategy
<b>Background Papers</b>	Surrey Heath Borough Council Five Year Strategy 2016 - 21
<b>Author/Contact Details</b>	Sarah Bainbridge, Senior Organisational Development Advisor, <a href="mailto:sarah.bainbridge@surreyheath.gov.uk">sarah.bainbridge@surreyheath.gov.uk</a>
<b>Head of Service</b>	Louise Livingston - Executive Head of Transformation <a href="mailto:Louise.livingston@surreyheath.gov.uk">Louise.livingston@surreyheath.gov.uk</a>