

Five Year Strategy 2022 -2027

Summary

This report introduces Surrey Heath Borough Council's new Five Year Strategy for 2022-27. It also includes a report that summaries all the comments, issues and feedback received from the consultation that was undertaken with the public, businesses and partners. It provides an overview of the work of the cross-party Five Year Strategy Task & Finish group in steering the development of a new Five Year Strategy and the role of the Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee.

Portfolio: Leader

Date Portfolio Holder signed off report: 8 October 2021

Wards Affected: All

Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RECOMMEND to Full Council that the new Five Year Strategy, as set out at Annex B to this report, be adopted and the final amendments to the content of the strategy be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader.

1. Key Issues

Background

- 1.1 The Five Year Strategy is the document that sets the Council's overall direction and ambition and is used to inform the annual work programme of the Council in its Annual Plan. Progress against the Annual Plan is reported bi-annually to Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee, the Executive and Council.
- 1.2 The environment in which the Council operates has seen vast changes in recent years including a world-wide pandemic, Brexit, a climate emergency, economic recession, technological change and many other significant factors. Hence there is a clear need to ensure the Council's direction, focus and capacity reflects the needs, opportunities and aspirations across the whole of the borough and its residents going forward.
- 1.3 What was also made quite clear by Surrey Heath Borough Councillors at the outset of this work was the need to ensure that we consulted well with our residents, businesses and partners when developing this strategy.
- 1.4 This report sets out how the Council consulted on the development of the strategy and how it has produced the Five Year Strategy which is now being presented to the Executive asking for recommendation to Council for adoption.

Preparation

- 1.5 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.
- 1.6 At the Executive on 25 May 2021, a cross-party Task & Finish group was appointed to input into and steer the development and production of the new strategy and the analysis of feedback received during the public and partner consultation exercise.
- 1.7 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 stage.
- 1.8 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 the Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee on the 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 six times on 23 June, 19 July, 2 August, 16 August, 25 August and 29 September: The Task & Finish Group has:
 - Ensured representation and input from different political groups and areas across the whole 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 all 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.

3. Consultation Approach

3.1 Following early engagement with partners in June, the wider public, partner and business consultation was launched in July and closed on 27 August 2021. The consultation exercise was very positive, with growing interest and engagement through its duration.

3.2 The public consultation survey 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 in different locations 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. Further details can be found in the Five Year Strategy Consultation Report – Annex A.

- 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 Surrey Heath Borough Council as a 'listening organisation' 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 Following early engagement with partners in June, the wider public, partner and business consultation was launched in July and closed on 27 August 2021. The consultation exercise has been very positive, with growing interest and engagement through its duration.
- 4.2 The campaign reached thousands of people, with over 700 completed surveys received, in addition to significant feedback gathered via other means including social media and through more detailed conversations at public focus groups and local events.

Key headlines

4.3 Below is a summary of some of the quantitative data gathered from the survey.

Top-ranked important issues



Figure 2 - Top 5 issues by % of respondents rating them as 'very important' – source: long public survey responses

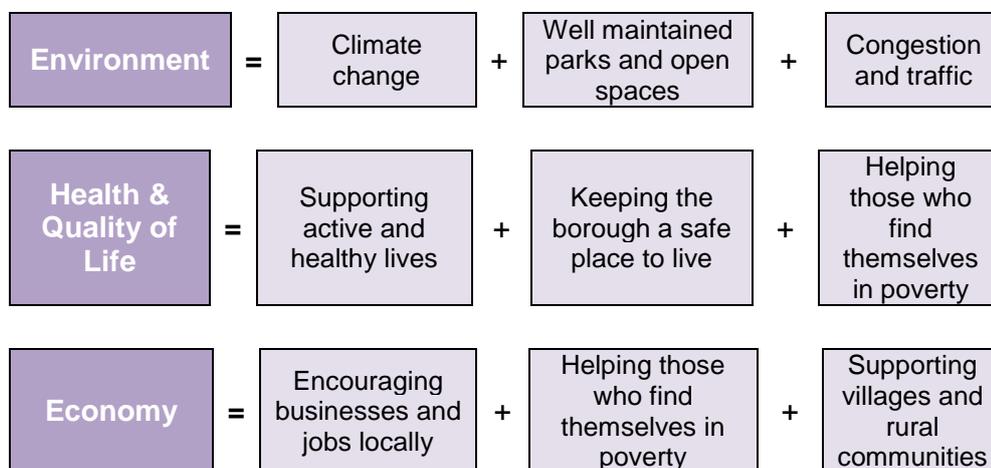


Figure 3 – top ranked issues by importance under different themes (Environment, Health & Quality of Life, Economy) – source long public survey responses

4.4 The survey included several 'free text' questions, and many respondents have taken the time to provide full responses to these which have been categorised under a 'coding framework' (a method recommended by The Consultation Institute) to allow recurring themes and points to be easily identified and reported to ensure all issues raised have been considered and included in the strategy.

4.5 The headlines from the survey are set out below and a report is attached setting out in more detail the feedback. All these areas have been included within the strategy:

- When asked ‘*What do you love about Surrey Heath?*’ – over half of the respondents mentioned some aspect of green space or open spaces or access to countryside or the rural feel of the area.
- Many people mentioned their communities and people in Surrey Heath as something they loved about the borough.
- ‘*Keeping the borough a safe place to live*’ was the issue with the highest proportion of respondents saying it was ‘*very important*’.
- Surrey Heath’s location and transport links were written about both positively and negatively.
- 37% of respondents mentioned roads (including pot holes) / traffic or congestion in their response to “*What needs improving in Surrey Heath*”.
- Cycle routes were mentioned by a number of residents as an area to improve and increase across the borough.
- Many people made reference to different local amenities and services as something they loved about Surrey Heath, often specifically referring to how easy these were to access.
- A large number of people wrote specifically about the key role of Camberley town centre and that village/smaller centres needed improving.
- A number of respondents raised issues around parking – this included how others parked inconsiderately, blocking pavements and roads.
- ‘Levels of development’ was the 4th biggest issue raised by respondents saying it was ‘very important’.
- A number of residents mentioned the affordability of housing and cost of living in the area as a challenge and the need for more affordable and affordable rented housing in the borough.

4.6 Some of the issues raised by residents are not something that the Borough Council can deliver on its own, but these issues are still included in the strategy as areas that the Council will lobby and influence partners on behalf of its residents.

4.7 Below is a breakdown of respondents to the residents survey by location:

Location	Count
Ash	5
Ash Vale	14
Bagshot	40
Bisley	22
Camberley	91
Camberley	10
Old Dean	8
Camberley	8
Parkside	8
Camberley	14
St. Michael's	9
Camberley	9
St. Paul's	8
Camberley	8
Town	2
Camberley	80
Waterhearts	8
Camberley	8
Yorktown	35
Chobham	23
Deepcut	32
Frimley	64
Frimley	26
Green	76
Heatherside	57
Lightwater	22
Mythenett	
West End	
Windsorham	
No Answer / Out of Borough	

5. The Five Year Strategy 2022 - 2027

- 5.1 The Five Year Strategy themes, aims and objectives is attached at Annex B.
- 5.2 The strategy has been guided and developed by the Five Year Strategy Task & Finish Group and reflects feedback from the all 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 and Finance Scrutiny Committee received the draft strategy on 8th September where valuable feedback was received and this was fed into the final strategy through the task and finish group.
- 5.5 The final published Five Year strategy will also include a section on the financial position of the council, the forward, data about the Borough, how the strategy will be monitored & progressed and contact details.
- 5.6 After the Executive have considered the strategy and made any final amendments it will be presented to 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. Options

- 7.1 The options for the Executive to consider are:-
 - (i) To AGREE the Five Year Strategy 2022-2027 as set out in Annex B of this report be recommended to Council for adoption.

(ii) To AGREE the Five Year Strategy 2022-2027 as set out in Annex B of this report be recommended to Council for adoption with any additional comments which the Executive may wish to make.

(iii) To NOT AGREE the Five Year Strategy 2022-2027 as set out in Annex B of this report be recommended to Council for adoption

8. Proposals

8.1 It is proposed that the Five Year Strategy 2022 -2027 be sent to Council for adoption on 27th October 2021.

9. Supporting Information

9.1 None

10. Corporate Objectives And Key Priorities

10.1 The Five Year Strategy will set out the Council's corporate objectives and key priorities for the next 5 years.

11. Policy Framework

11.1 The Five Year Strategy will set the overarching policy for the Council

12. Legal Issues

12.1 None

13. Governance

13.1 The required governance considerations have been taken into account.

14. Risk Management

14.1 The strategy itself has no risk attached to it but all individual projects will be appropriately risk assessed and will be reported through the council's performance monitoring process at Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee, the Executive and Council.

15. Equalities Impact

15.1 An equalities impact assessment has been completed on the consultation undertaken to engage the borough's residents, partners and businesses.

15.2 All individual projects/actions included in the Five Year Strategy will complete an equalities impact assessment as part of the reporting process.

16. Human Rights

- 16.1 Nothing specifically identified but this will be considered when the actions / project within the strategy are undertaken.

17. Environmental Impact

- 17.1 The Five year strategy very clearly sets out the Council's ambition regards climate change and associated work of the Climate Change Action Plan.

18. Consultation

- 18.1 A full consultation process was undertaken to inform the Council of the content of the Five Year Strategy – A report is attached setting out the full detail at Annex A Five Year Strategy Consultation Report.

19. PR And Marketing

- 19.1 The promotion and marketing of the Five Year Strategy consultation is set out in the attached report see Annex A Five Year Strategy Consultation Report.
- 19.2 The completed Five Year Strategy will be promoted through all the sources used for the consultation and the strategy itself will detail how you can monitor the progress of the strategy.

20. Officer Comments

- 20.1 This has been very much a team effort with input from teams all across the Council. A lot has been learnt from the public consultation which has already been shared with services across the Council. We will continue to look at how to further improve our engagement but feel that from the guidance of the Councillor Task & Finish Group a Five Year Strategy has been developed where resident, partner & business issues are at the heart of it.

Annexes	Annex A – Five Year Strategy Consultation Report Annex B – Five Year Strategy 2022 -2027
Background Papers	
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