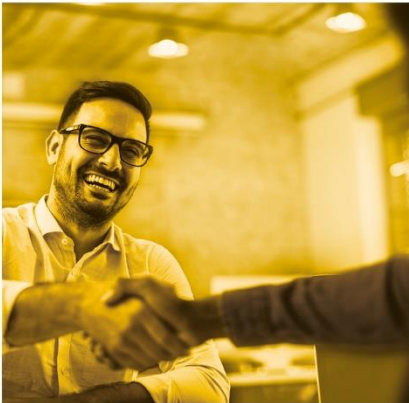


# Surrey Heath Borough Council

## Five Year Strategy

### Consultation 2021



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## Introduction and background

Surrey Heath Borough Council needed a new Five Year Strategy to set the direction and priorities of the Council and the borough. The former strategy had been agreed in 2016. Since then the borough, its communities and the Council itself have experienced significant changes – not least the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. This includes an increasing emphasis on climate change, supporting poverty and a focus on villages and rural communities alongside the ambitious Camberley town centre regeneration programme.

What was also made quite clear by Surrey Heath Borough Councillors at the outset of this work was the need to ensure that the Council consulted well with residents, businesses and partners when developing the strategy. A comprehensive consultation exercise was planned with local residents, business and organisations to understand and listen to what is important in making Surrey Heath an even better place to live and work.

## Methodology

### Preparatory work

It was agreed that it was important that a new Strategy should be grounded in data, so an evidence base showcasing key facts about Surrey Heath, its unique story, strengths and challenges was gathered and was a key driver of the emerging strategy.

In May 2021, the Council set up a 'Task & Finish Group' of seven Councillors from different political parties and representing different wards across the borough. The role of the group was to review the arrangements for the public consultation, analyse feedback received during the consultation and steer the development of the new strategy. The group met, with Council officers, on 23 June 2021, 19 July 2021, 2 August 2021, 16 August 2021, 25 August 2021 and 29 September 2021.

This evidence base was also used at two workshops with Councillors and two workshops with key partners that took place in June 2021 to discuss important issues and needs in Surrey Heath. These workshops informed topics to be included in the public, business and partner consultation. 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.



At an early stage, and throughout the process, the Council has followed best practice guidance and training from [The Consultation Institute](#) in designing, analysing and reporting the consultation.



## Consultation approach

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.

The aim of the survey was 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. Both quantitative and qualitative data was gathered in variety of methods. The decision was taken to follow this broader approach to consultation rather than publishing a draft strategy and asking for feedback, so that views expressed could shape the emerging strategy as it was being prepared. Also, the Council was happy to receive feedback by a variety of forms, including social media comments, to make it easier for people to give their views.

The Council wanted to hear residents' views about the issues and services that were important to them in the borough including things that needed improving. This includes service areas and activities that are not within a borough Council's direct control, for example roads and highways, rail and bus services, health provision and national housing targets. The Council is therefore committed to work collaboratively with partners and other agencies to represent the concerns and aspirations of local residents and in playing a full part in helping achieve better outcomes for the borough and its residents. The Five Year Strategy therefore includes specific targets for the Council where it will represent the interests of local residents, including lobbying and advocating on their behalf, on the issues that matter most to them.

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.

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

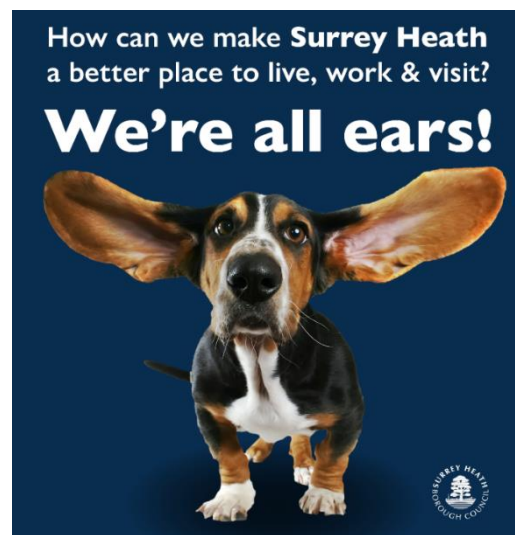
A significant promotion campaign of the consultation took place across many different channels using the 'We're all ears' strapline emphasising that the Council is listening to residents and will act on the responses. This consultation and promotion has been the most significant and wide reaching in recent years.





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 'Celebrate Camberley' the Camberley Car Show, Windlesham Fete and a Business Improvement District 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.

## Results and analysis

The campaign reached thousands of people, and over 700 completed surveys were received. In addition feedback was gathered via other means including social media and through more detailed conversations at public focus groups and local events.

Through out the consultation there was a positive level of engagement from residents and a high number of people took the time to share their views. The number of responses compares positively with similar exercises and gives a high level of confidence in the results of the survey.

The majority of data collected through the consultation was quantitative – written answers to questions such as *'What do you love about Surrey Heath?'*, *'What needs improving in Surrey Heath?'* Respondents took the time to give detailed and full answers to these questions, and so the Council invested significant resource in making sure every answer was reviewed and categorised under a 'coding framework' (a method recommended by The Consultation Institute) to allow recurring themes and points to be easily identified and reported.

## Who responded?

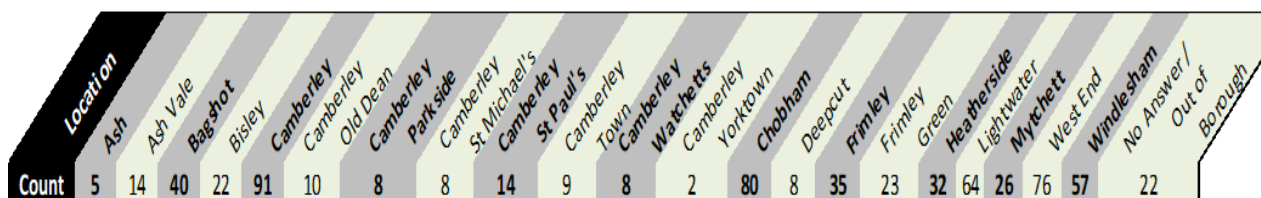


Figure 1- location of respondents to resident survey





People gave feedback from all areas of the borough – the survey was open to anyone who wanted to respond. The table above shows the number responding from different locations across the borough to the resident surveys. Partners and businesses from across the borough also responded.

70% of residents who filled in the public surveys were happy to share demographic information about themselves, and this is in Annexe B.



## Consultation Findings

### Top-ranked important issues

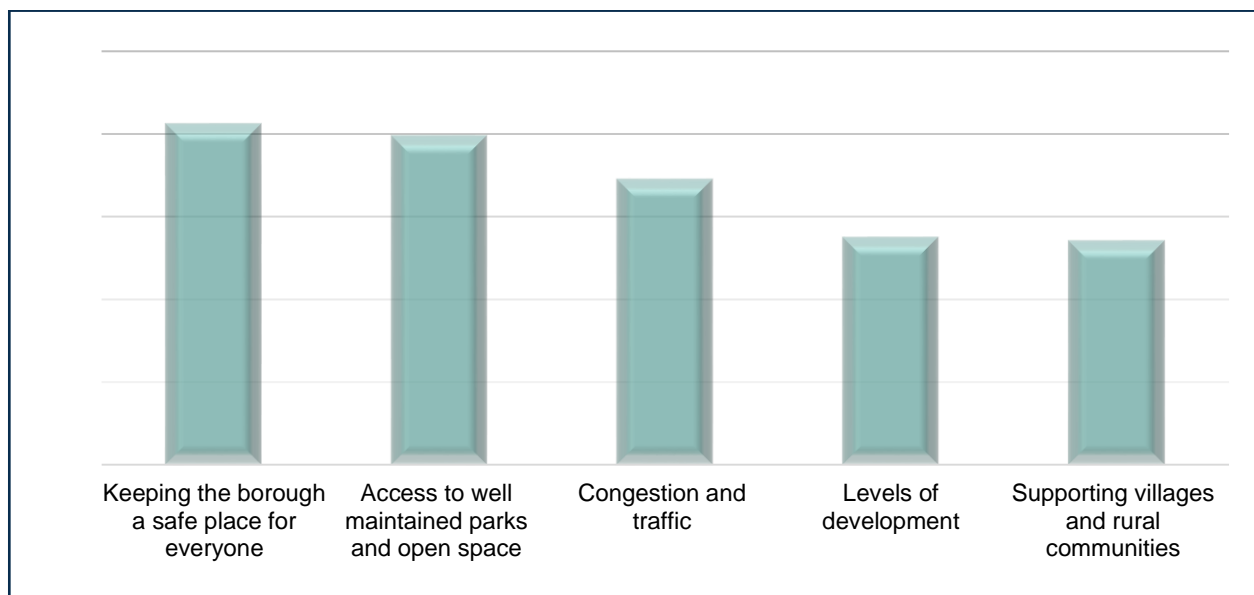


Figure 2 - Top 5 issues by % of respondents rating them as 'very important' – source: long public survey responses

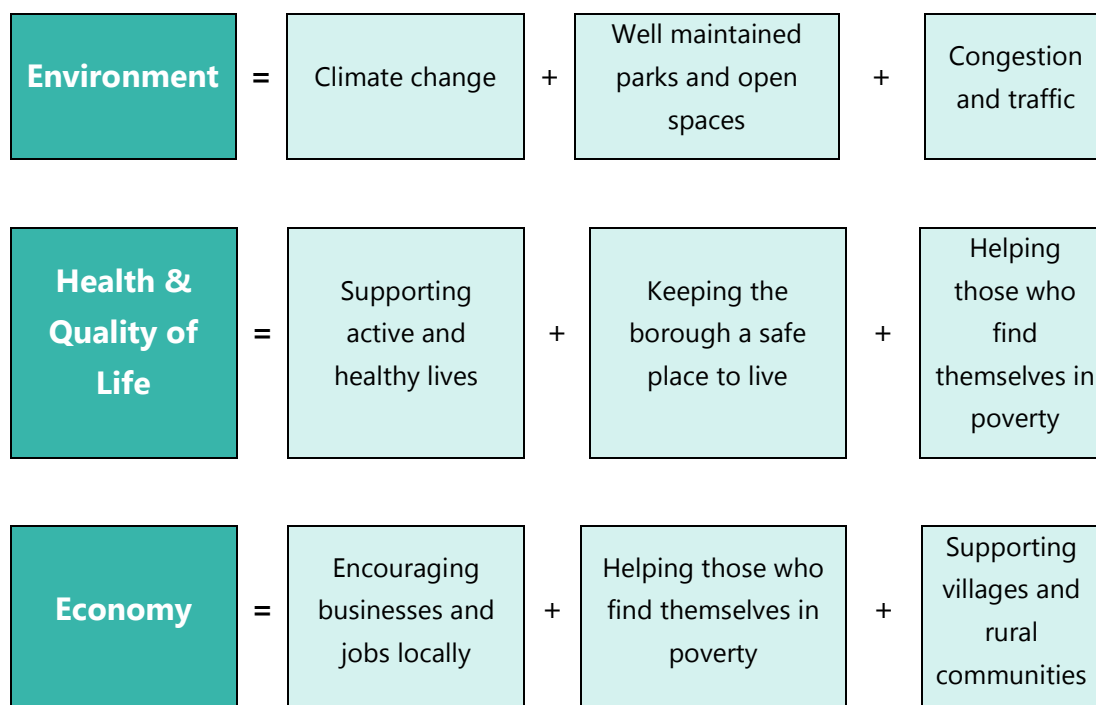


Figure 3 – top ranked issues by importance under different themes (Environment, Health & Quality of Life, Economy) – source long public survey responses

## Green/open spaces /countryside

When asked 'What do you love about Surrey Heath?' – over half of the respondents to the public surveys mentioned some aspect of green space or open spaces or access to countryside or the rural feel of the area – more mentions than any other aspect of Surrey Heath.

98.5% of those who answered this question in the public survey said it was it was 'somewhat important' or 'very important' to have 'access to well maintained parks and open spaces'. This was the issue with the highest proportion agreeing it was important to some extent.



Figure 3

Source "What do you love about Surrey Heath?" - public survey responses

We live in a beautiful place. Our woodlands, heaths and waterways are amazing. Help to keep them healthy for all to enjoy.

A large number of people mentioned walking in green and open spaces, and the ease of accessing these. Lots of people talked about the rural/semi-rural or village settings, valuing wildlife, nature and habitats, trees and the 'leafy' feel of the

borough, the green belt and green areas in between

urban areas and the peace and quiet in the open spaces. Respondents mentioned different types of open/green spaces they loved including commons, open fields and meadows, woodlands and forests, parks, heathland and the canal. Some residents mentioned cycling or family walks in the countryside and the positive impact on mental health.

The fact that I can walk out of my door and you can walk to so many beautiful locations for exercise.

Survey Respondent: Mutchett



*Green, beautiful countryside, some amazing landscapes which make you feel you could be 100s of miles from London rather than 20 miles. Chobham Common is a phenomenal asset. Some stunning old villages and buildings. Easy to commute to London via Woking Surrey Heath*

'Access to well-maintained parks and open spaces' was ranked as the second most important issue overall under the Environment theme in the public survey behind 'congestion and traffic'.

When asked if there were any other issues not listed in the ranking questions that were important to them, a large number of respondents (approx 90) specifically mentioned the green belt; – preserving, maintaining and protecting it. 80% of those raising the green belt under this question were from Windlesham & Chobham or Bisley & West End.



*Friendly people.*

**Survey Respondent,  
Chobham**

## Community

Many people mentioned their communities and people in Surrey Heath as something they loved about the

borough. Respondents value friendly, nice people in their areas, and living close to friends and families. People wrote about a sense of community – and a strong community spirit.

*Also the community feel it has about the area, especially during Lockdown there was so much good community spirit that happened.*

**Survey Respondent. Mvtchett**

## Safe nature of the borough

'Keeping the borough a safe place to live' was the issue with the highest proportion of respondents saying it was 'very important' (81%). It was also the highest ranked issue by respondents under 'Health & Quality of Life'.

*Its surroundings, relative low rates of crime and antisocial behaviour, good schools.*

Safety and the feeling of being safe was mentioned by some people as something they loved about Surrey Heath. A few people cited the low crime rate. Some people also raised policing and anti-social behaviour as an area for improvement, including police presence, enforcement, instances of anti-social behaviour and crime rates.

## Location / Transport links

Surrey Heath's location and transport links were written about both positively and negatively. Many people commented

*Public transport not sufficient or frequent enough making residents reliant on cars for commuting.*

*If you were able to get a more frequent train service direct from Frimley/ Camberley etc into London. That would be a massive benefit. It's a pain swapping trains at either Aldershot or Ascot. The times don't match*

positively on the rural/green location, that was still close to major road networks to connect to work or the rest of the country, proximity to London, airports and other facilities/towns. Some commented that Surrey Heath had the best mix of urban and rural.

Public transport was mentioned by many respondents when asked 'What needs improving in Surrey Heath?'. People wrote about public transport both across and out of the borough.



A number of people mentioned the rail link into London – and that either a direct link, faster service or better connections would improve it. Bus routes across the borough and to other transport hubs (e.g. Woking/Farnborough) were raised and also the need for more cycle routes. A few people specifically mentioned bus links to schools or colleges and Frimley Park Hospital.





## Roads / Traffic / Congestion

37% of respondents mentioned roads / traffic or congestion in their response to "What needs improving in Surrey Heath", with many responses including reference to the roads themselves needing improvement, and many responses referring to problems with traffic and congestion. These topics were the ones mentioned with the highest frequency in responses as needing improving in Surrey Heath.

Condition of roads, including rough surfaces and potholes. Road congestion.



Figure 3- Source

## "What needs improving in Surrey Heath?" -public survey responses

'Congestion and traffic' was the top ranked issue under the Environment theme in the public survey and third issue by number respondents to the public survey saying it was 'very important'.

Many respondents wrote about the poor condition and maintenance of the roads, with some mentioning potholes. Some raised concern over the safety of certain routes, and the

safety of those walking or cycling. A number of responses mentioned speeding traffic.

Cycle routes were mentioned by a number of residents as an area to improve and increase across the borough.

*Pedestrian and cycling provisions. Stop encouraging car use.*

Survey Respondent,  
Cambridge



Many

responses talked about the amount of traffic and congestion, with some referring to particular locations - quote in their local areas or on their commutes. Other issues raised were concerns over rural routes being used by traffic displaced from or avoiding major routes.

Pollution and air quality were also mentioned in a number of responses. Some people linked traffic levels and the state of repair of the roads to the amount of development in the area.

Introduce a 20mph speed limit through village and surrounding roads that are used as a cut through by people from outside the village  
**Comment from resident**



## Local Services, facilities and amenities

Many people made reference to different local amenities and services as something they loved about Surrey Heath, often specifically referring to

*Leafy, safe, clean, canal, walks, theatre, library, town centre, shops, cinema, train and bus services, golf courses, Places, restaurants and coffee shops, bank, post office, dentist, opticians, excellent*

how easy these were to access. Town centre, and village and community shops, pubs and restaurants and

recreational/sporting amenities were the most frequently mentioned as things people valued, some mentioning the newly opened Leisure Centre. Local schools, the hospital and parks were also mentioned.

*I like the combination of urban living and services in the main centre of Camberley & Frimley combined with the rural or semi-rural villages to the north west of the Borough - each with its own special character and the generally*

A larger number of people spoke about local amenities and services as something that needed improving in Surrey Heath. Most frequently mentioned was access to health services – mostly access to GPs where people spoke of difficulties getting appointments. Schools – particularly availability of places was mentioned by some, together with facilities for young people and children. Some people mentioned local play areas that needed improving.

## Shops / town and village centres

A large number of people wrote specifically about Camberley town centre and village/smaller centres needed improving. Issues that were raised as important were the look and feel of areas – particularly those that were described as ‘run down’, attracting better, quality retailers – with some mentioning independent businesses – and a better and more interesting selection of bars and restaurants. Participants at a focus group discussed ways the town and village centres could be made more engaging and appealing to a wide range of people.

*Let's not be a carbon copy of everywhere else in the country. Independent businesses across the Borough are the ones we need to support or it's pretty dull otherwise – you might as well be anywhere!*

## Parking



A number of respondents raised issues around parking – this included how others parked unhelpfully blocking pavements and roads, and also a few mentioned parking around schools at pick up and drop off. Some mentioned parking provision in the borough – both public and residential, with a few suggesting there should be more free parking.



## Development / Planning / Infrastructure

'Levels of development' was the 4<sup>th</sup> issue by the number of respondents saying it was 'very important', although it did not feature in the top three issues under Environment when ranked against other issues. Many people made reference to development in their responses to 'What needs improving in Surrey Heath?' by mentioning the local planning policies, that there was too much development – particularly on green spaces, and infrastructure was needed to support development.

Too many new homes, doctors surgery is inaccessible. Unless you live within 500m of schools it's not definite you will get a space. Roads often flooded as reduced undeveloped land for surface water.

Some people said that there should be no more development at all, and a larger number said that there should be no more development specifically on green spaces or the green belt. A number of respondents also mentioned protecting the villages from development or said that the villages could not cope with any more development. A number of people raised concerns about the lack of infrastructure to cope with more development – with

roads and doctors surgeries being specifically mentioned by some.

## Housing

A number of residents mentioned the affordability of housing and cost of living in the area as a challenge. Particular scenarios raised including those renting, first time buyers, younger people and older people.

Discussions at the partner workshops in July emphasised the importance of a safe, warm, quality home on people's other life chances including health, employment and education.

Affordable housing for young people. There are a lot of retirement places but nowhere for young people to live to stay near their families. Affordable housing is not a 2 bed house worth half a million on help to buy.

## Other Environmental issues

Other environmental issues raised in survey responses included:

- Protection of nature, habitats and wildlife
- Maintenance and protection of verges
- Climate change and sustainability



- Air Quality
- Flytipping and litter
- Waste collection
- Maintenance of footpaths and pavements where these are overgrown

## The Council

A few suggested levels of Council Tax were too high. A number of respondents described what they wanted to see from Surrey Heath Borough Council, which included listening and responding to feedback, good communication, transparency, accountability, good use of funds and an ability to run things well and be efficient. Some questioned whether the Council would do anything as a result of the feedback received during the consultation.

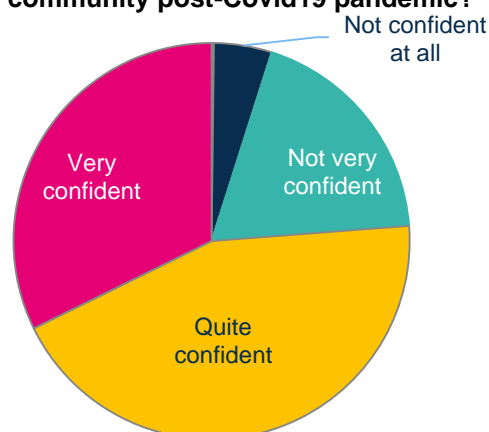
*Question is, will they actually listen to these comments or are they just ticking a box?*  
**Comment on Facebook**

## Impact of Covid - How confident people feel.

The survey also asked people how confident they felt about restarting their normal activities in their communities post Covid-19 pandemic. The majority of people said they felt either very or quite confident.

When asked what would help improve people's confidence, many people mentioned mask-wearing and clarity over guidelines.

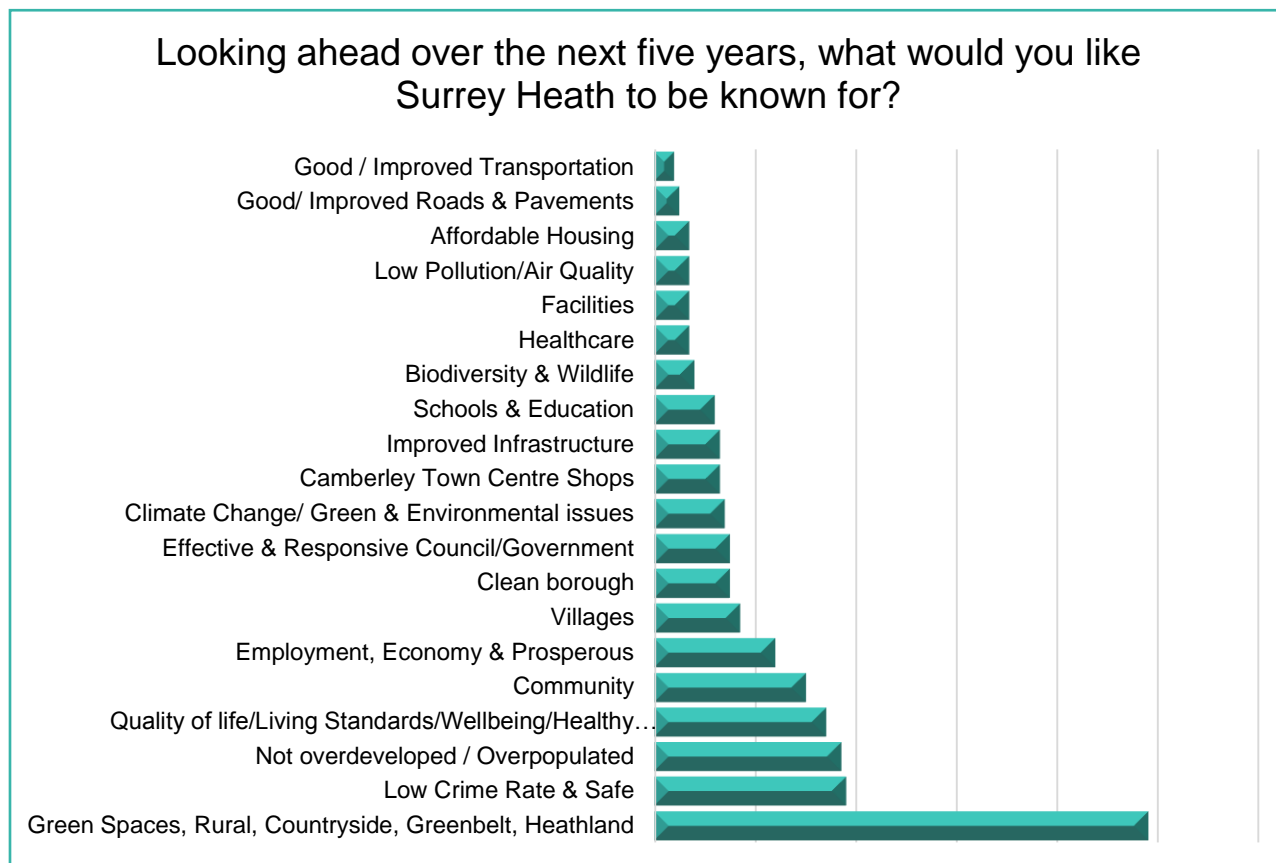
**How confident do you feel about restarting all your normal activities in your community post-Covid19 pandemic?**





## Aspirations for the future

The final main question in both the long and short public surveys asked respondents what they would like Surrey Heath to be known for.



## Closing Remarks

This consultation represents one of the largest and most wide ranging ever undertaken in the borough of Surrey Heath. It has been successful in utilising a range of different engagement and consultation methods including both face to face and through various digital channels and as a result, has accessed a broad spectrum of valuable views and aspirations from people across the borough.

The feedback has demonstrated strong recurring themes around some key priority issues for the borough which have been drawn out within this report. At the same time, there are also some areas where inevitably views were less aligned. For example the need for more affordable housing and investment in facilities and infrastructure across the borough, while at the same time recognising the concerns about overdevelopment



and ensuring that Surrey Heath continues to be a “green” borough. The importance of supporting increased employment and economic prosperity, while also actively pursuing ambitious climate change targets. These represent real world challenges where many of the issues that are important to local people are connected in some way and need to be balanced.

The Council has a key role in setting a future strategy for the borough that reflects the full spectrum of views expressed and that, within financial and legal constraints, optimises the delivery of all the outcomes that residents want to see achieved.



## Appendix A – Copy of Public Survey



SURREY HEATH BOROUGH COUNCIL

### Our plans for the future

We are working on our 'Five Year Strategy' which will shape what we do over the coming years, and we want to hear from you.

We're having conversations with local people, businesses and organisations to help to understand how we can make Surrey Heath an even better place to live and work.

We need your help to decide where we focus our energies and limited resources over the next five years. You can help by telling us what you love about your local area, what you would like to see improved and what issues and services matter the most to you.

We will use your feedback to make our plans for the future, and also share your views with other local public sector and community organisations so we can work better together to serve Surrey Heath, its residents and businesses. **Thank you for your contribution.**

Please complete this survey by Friday, 27 August 2021.



**Please return to:**

Five Year Strategy Consultation, Surrey Heath House  
Knoll Road, Camberley GU15 3HD  
[fiveyearstrategy@surreyheath.gov.uk](mailto:fiveyearstrategy@surreyheath.gov.uk)



1. Which of the following best describes you? (Please tick all that apply)

- ☐ I live in Surrey Heath
- ☐ I work in Surrey Heath
- ☐ I study in Surrey Heath
- ☐ I shop in Surrey Heath
- ☐ I visit Surrey Heath for other reasons (please specify below)

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2. If you live in Surrey Heath, which area do you live in?

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3. What do you love about Surrey Heath?

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4. What needs improving in Surrey Heath?

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## 5. How important are these issues to you personally?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important at all	Don't know
Climate change					
Helping those who find themselves in poverty					
Supporting villages and rural communities					
Investing in a thriving Camberley town centre					
More affordable housing that meets the needs of local people					
Supporting residents into employment					
Encouraging businesses and jobs locally					
Supporting active and healthy lives					
Keeping the borough a safe place for everyone					
Access to parks and well-maintained open spaces					
Addressing loneliness and isolation					
Supporting families to give young people the best start in life					
Congestion and traffic					
Levels of development					
Support for older and vulnerable people					



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	Very important	Somewhat important	Not very important	Not important at all	Don't know
Improving access for all to online services and the risk of cyber crime					
Supporting community organisations and encouraging volunteers					
Ensuring everyone in our community can access all opportunities available					
Helping residents and communities with the impact of Covid-19					

6. Are there any other issues that are important to you that aren't listed?

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## Page 5 of 10

7. Please rank the following issues related to **Health & Quality of Life** in order of importance from 1 to 10 (1 being the most important and 10 being the least important)

Issue	Ranking
Helping those who find themselves in poverty	
Supporting active and healthy lives	
Keeping the borough a safe place for everyone	
Addressing loneliness and isolation	
More affordable housing that meets the needs of local people	
Supporting families to give young people the best start in life	
Support for older and vulnerable people	
Improving access to all online services and the risk of cybercrime	
Supporting the community organisations and encouraging volunteers	
Ensuring everyone in our community can access all opportunities available	



8. Please rank the following issues related to the **Economy** in order of importance from 1 to 6 (1 being the most important and 6 being the least important)

Issue	Ranking
Helping those who find themselves in poverty	
Supporting villages and rural communities	
Investing in a thriving Camberley town centre	
Supporting residents into employment	
Encouraging business and jobs locally	
Helping residents, communities and business with the impact of Covid-19	

9. Please rank the following issues related to the **Environment** in order of importance from 1 to 6 (1 being the most important and 6 being the least important)

Issue	Ranking
Climate change	
Well maintained parks and open spaces	
Congestion and traffic	
Levels of development	
Keeping streets clean	
Taking action to deal with anti-social behaviour such as litter, fly-tipping and graffiti	



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10. How confident do you feel about restarting all your normal activities in your community post Covid-19?

- ☐ Very confident
- ☐ Quite confident
- ☐ Not very confident
- ☐ Not confident at all

11. If anything, what would help you restart all your normal activities in your community?

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12. Looking ahead over the next five years, what would you like Surrey Heath to be known for?

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13. Do you want to make any other comments?

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# Equality & Diversity Information (Optional)

We ask these questions to ensure all of Surrey Heath's communities' views are taken into account. Your response to this part of the survey is optional and any responses will remain anonymous.

1. What is your gender?

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Gender neutral/non-binary/non-conforming

☐ Prefer not to say

☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

2. How old are you?

☐ Under 16

☐ 16-24

☐ 25-44

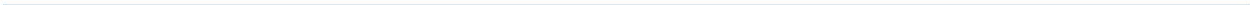
☐ 45-64

☐ 65-84

☐ 85+

☐ Prefer not to say





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3. Please add the first part of your postcode e.g. GU15 3

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4. What is your ethnic group? Choose one option that best describes your ethnic group or background

- ☐ White – English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British
- ☐ White – Irish
- ☐ White – Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- ☐ Any other White background
- ☐ Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black Caribbean
- ☐ Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Black African
- ☐ Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups - White and Asian
- ☐ Any other Mixed/Multiple ethnic background
- ☐ Asian/Asian British - Indian
- ☐ Asian/Asian British - Pakistani
- ☐ Asian/Asian British - Bangladeshi
- ☐ Asian/Asian British - Chinese
- ☐ Any other Asian background
- ☐ Black/ African/Caribbean/Black British - African
- ☐ Black/ African/Caribbean/Black British - Caribbean
- ☐ Any other Black/African/Caribbean background
- ☐ Other ethnic group - Arab
- ☐ Any other ethnic group
- ☐ Prefer not to say







5. Do you believe you have a disability according to the Equality Act?

*The Equality Act 2010 states that "a person has a disability for the purposes of the act if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

6. What is your religion?

- ☐ No religion
- ☐ Christian (including Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian denominations)
- ☐ Buddhist
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Jewish
- ☐ Muslim
- ☐ Sikh
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

7. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

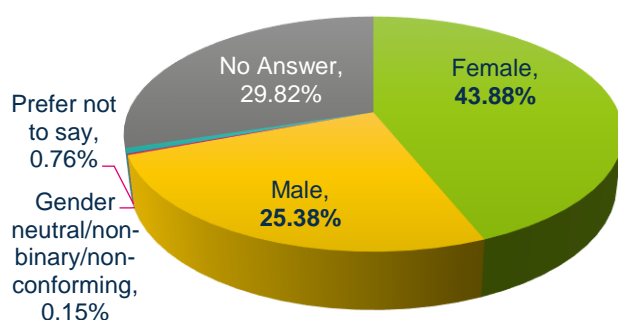
- ☐ Straight/Heterosexual
- ☐ Gay or Lesbian
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Prefer not to say
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_



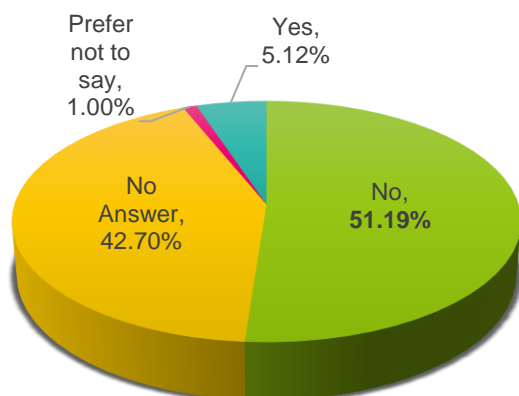
## Annexe B – Demographic information

Optional demographic questions were included at the end of both the long and short public surveys. In total 70% of respondents agreed to provide this information, which is set out below.

### What is your gender?



### Do you believe you have a disability according to the Equality Act?

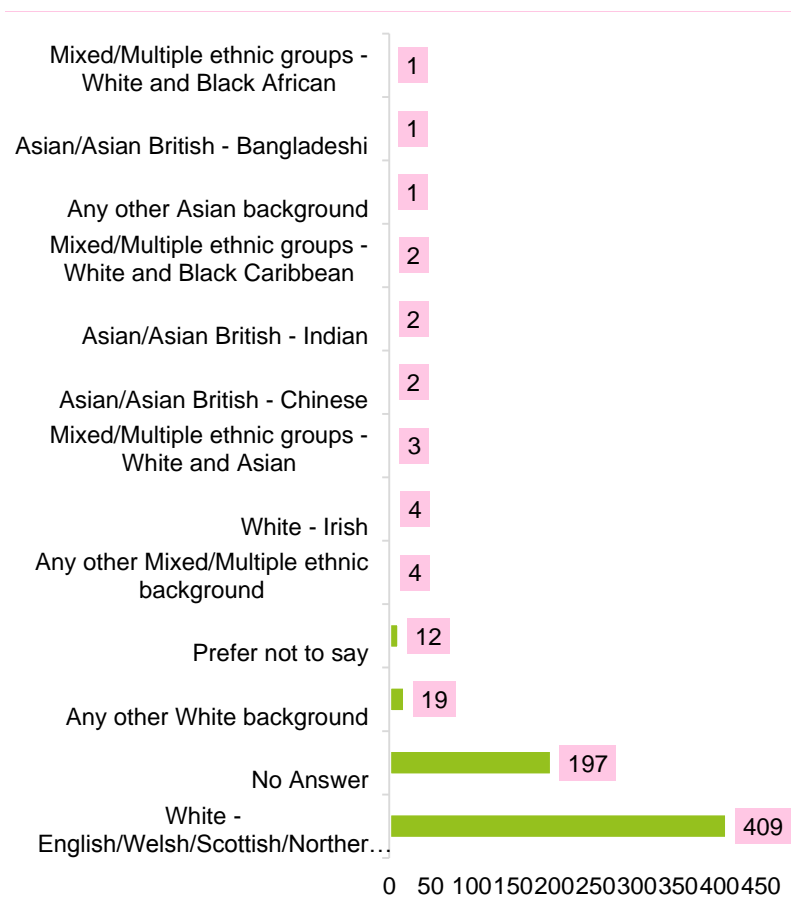


### How old are you?

Under 16	2
6-24	11
25-44	107
45-64	206
65-84	121
85+	3
Prefer not to say	10
No Answer	194

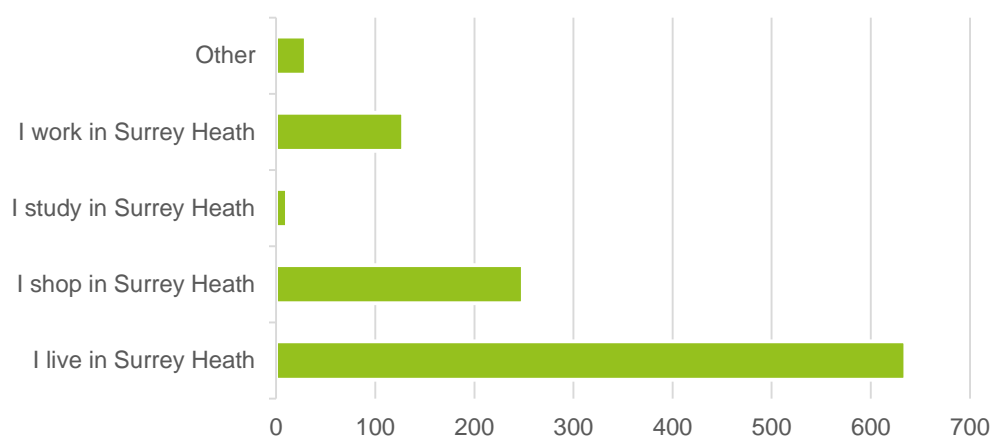


## What is your Ethnicity?



## Which of the following best describes you? (select all that apply)





### Where did you hear about this survey?

ANSWER	COUNT	%
Borough boards	6	0.92%
Call to SHBC Contact Centre	8	1.23%
Camberley Eye	10	1.53%
Council website	15	2.30%
Friend/Neighbour/Family	10	1.53%
Heathscene magazine	25	3.83%
Messenger message	1	0.15%
Neighbourhood Watch	5	0.77%
No Answer	211	32.36%
SHBC Councillor	24	3.68%
Social Media - Next Door website	2	0.31%
Social Media	313	48.01%
Stand at a local event	6	0.92%
Whatsapp message	2	0.31%





Other	14	2.15%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>652</b>	<b>100.00%</b>



## Appendix C – public committee reports

Links to Surrey Heath Borough Council Committee reports on Five Year Strategy:

- [Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee, 17 March 2021](#)
- [Executive, 25 May 2021](#)
- [Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee, 7 July 2021](#)
- [Performance & Finance Scrutiny Committee, 7 September 2021](#)

