



REPORT OF:	HEAD OF CORPORATE POLICY, PERFORMANCE AND LEGAL
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TO:	EXECUTIVE
DATE:	21 June 2018
EXECUTIVE MEMBER:	COUNCILLOR T. SCHOFIELD

KEY DECISION REQUIRED:	NO
WARD (S) AFFECTED:	ALL

SUBJECT:	FIVE YEAR PLAN PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017-18
RECOMMENDATION: That the positive progress against the Council's Five Year Plan (2015-2020) priorities, as set out in the report, be noted.	
REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS: To receive and note the Five Year Plan progress for 2017-18.	
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: On 4 December 2014 Executive approved the Council's Five Year Plan, which commenced in 2015-16. As a high performing organisation, the Council developed the Five Year Plan in order to identify its vision and objectives over the medium term period. The plan seeks to ensure the Council continues to meet the needs and aspirations of our residents and Members, whilst overcoming the challenges (particularly financial) facing the organisation, and the wider local government sector, over the plan period. This report provides an update and summary of the progress made against the Five Year Plan priorities for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.	

Executive has authority to approve the above recommendations

STATUTORY POWERS

1. There is no statutory requirement for the council to produce a 5 year plan or Corporate plan.
2. The Council has adopted a Corporate Plan to set out the vision and priorities that guide all our service and financial plans. This is the approach taken by the best performing organisations, in both the public and private sector.

BACKGROUND

3. Reigate and Banstead's Five Year Plan was developed from considerable research and consultation with residents, Members and partner organisations, and articulates our vision for how we will deliver great services to those living and working in our borough.
4. Reigate and Banstead's vision is to be a leading council as recognised by our residents, peers and partners. The plan seeks to ensure that we continue to meet the needs and expectations of our residents whilst simultaneously overcoming the challenges we face.
5. In so doing, the plan is organised around three key themes:
 - People, supporting residents to enjoy healthy and happy lifestyles;
 - Place, a great place to live and work; and
 - Organisation, a great council.
6. Within each of these themes are a series of ambitious priorities that we have set ourselves in order to deliver our wider vision. Each priority has, in turn, an associated set of objectives and outcomes. These are set out in full within the 5 year plan document.
7. Whilst there are major projects within the 5 Year Plan delivery, it is also important to recognise that majority of actions take place within existing service areas. All Council services develop annual plans setting out how they can support the 5 Year Plan priorities within their areas, adjusting and refocusing their activities to meet our priorities.
8. This report provides an update of the progress made against the Five Year Plan's priorities for the period of 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018, and evidences the considerable progress made during the period.

FIVE YEAR PLAN PERFORMANCE: PEOPLE

9. The following sections provide a summary of performance against each priority within the people theme of the Five Year Plan. Additional information is also set out in Annex 1.

We will support residents into employment – particularly those in vulnerable families and young people.

10. Since we started the Worker Scheme in 2011 over 230 people have benefited from a 6-month paid work placement, providing skills, experience and confidence that enables participants to increase their employment prospects.
11. 2017/18 saw the introduction of the apprenticeship levy, where the Council contributes 0.5% of our annual salary bill. This contribution is claimed back to support training costs for apprenticeships. The Council has increased the number of apprenticeships within the Council, with 10 members of staff benefiting from this vocational training. Further apprenticeship placements are in development.

12. We are supporting East Surrey Pathway to Employment, in partnership with Raven Housing Trust, YMCA East Surrey, East Surrey Domestic Abuse Service (ESDAS) and the Surrey Chamber of Commerce. This scheme supports people into employment that are experiencing conditions of housing insecurity.
13. The Family Support team provides support to families in a number of important areas, including employability as well as money and debt. The team has supported 445 families in the borough since 2013, with 92% showing an improvement in their circumstances.
14. In 2017 / 18, the Council expanded our Community Development team to provide support in a larger number of communities. The team is mapping employment support across these areas to signpost resident to services, and identifying gaps in provision.
15. The Council provides mentoring and interview skills training for students, particularly targeting those that may not be planning on further education.
16. The latest data shows that only 0.8% of the borough's working age population are in receipt of Job Seeker's Allowance, significantly lower than the national average.

We will work with and support our partners to provide great services for older people to help them stay independent.

17. Living and Ageing Well Week was once again very popular this year, encouraging older residents that are not currently physically active to try a wide variety of activities. The range of activities has expanded this year as a result of increased partnership working with local community groups, organisations and other neighbouring councils.
18. Our community centres offer excellent support for older residents. Since 2015, the use of Banstead, Horley and Woodhatch community centres has increased by 6.5%, 11.6% and 4.8% respectively. Memberships have increased across all centres, whilst a focus on volunteer development has enabled the provision of numerous new activities.
19. The council provides support to a number of key dementia support services. Following the withdrawal of Alzheimer's Society funding from all its Surrey services in 2017, we supported local Dementia Alliances and an East Surrey Dementia Working Group which identify gaps in service provision and bring forward projects. For example, a monthly Dementia Café takes place at the Banstead Community Centre. Run by volunteers. This is promoted by Staywell and through local partners. The café provides support and advice for those affected by dementia.
20. The Harlequin Theatre and Cinema has recently launched a programme of dementia friendly cinema screenings, with 10 screenings to date (part funded by the British Film Institute).
21. 300 people benefited from the council's taxi voucher service, offering flexible transport for older and vulnerable people. This is a vital means of maintaining their independence, often used to get to/from hospital and GP visits, shopping trips, and our community centres.
22. During 2017/18 the council awarded over £380k in grant funding through core funding, capital grants and councillors' community awards programmes for local community groups and charities, including new awards to the Lucy Rayner

Foundation and Community Debt Advice, which address issues of mental health in young people and concerns around debt respectively. A further £54k was awarded through the Neighbourhood Improvement Fund.

We will encourage healthy lifestyles, particularly through the use of our leisure centres, parks and open spaces.

23. The leisure centre contract performance continues to be on target, as demonstrated by monthly performance reports from GLL, covering areas such as customer satisfaction, health and safety and usage figures. During 2017 there were over 1.2 million visits to the council's three centres. As of April 2018 there are 13,962 members of our leisure centres, of which 10.9% (1521) are aged over 65.
24. R&Be active is the council's health and wellbeing offer for young people and includes our holiday activities, Surrey Youth Games, Star for a Night and more. Council run school holiday activities were very successful this year, with over 650 attendees across all activities, as well as a further 170 attendees at free activities that ranged from park days, den building and pond dipping.
25. In addition, the 2017 Surrey Youth Games also took place during the reporting period. 435 children benefitted from training in 15 sports over the 8 week period leading up to the games, where 247 then went on to represent the borough at the final event, the highest ever number of participants from Reigate and Banstead.
26. During the year a nature trail based on C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* was launched in Banstead Woods. The trail features several characters from the classic children's story and is thought to be the first of its kind in the country. Its installation marked the designation of Banstead Woods and Chipstead Downs as a Local Nature Reserve – the first such designation in the borough for 15 years. The trail has proven to be very popular and has encouraged many people to visit the area and find out about the site's natural environment.
27. We also worked with a number of external organisations to deliver events in our parks and open spaces. The Luna Cinema came to Priory Park in June and October, with just under 4,000 people attending the screenings in total. Greenspaces and the Harlequin Theatre organised an outdoor production of *Dogs Don't do Ballet*, an acclaimed children's theatre show. Both events are returning in 2018 due to their success.
28. The Wellbeing Prescription Service offers free health and wellbeing support to residents, joining primary care with local, non-clinical services. East Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group has extended funding and the scheme is now one of the largest signposting services in the country. 14 Wellbeing Advisors will see over 4,000 people a year. The service has demonstrated significant success:
 - 88% made a positive change to their lifestyle
 - 78% have visited their GP less
 - 93% found contact useful or very useful

We will improve safety through joint working with Surrey Police and other partners.

29. The council continues to be an active participant on the East Surrey Community Safety Partnership (ESCSP) which covers Reigate and Banstead, Tandridge, Mole Valley and Epsom and Ewell.
30. The partnership's key priorities for 2017-18 were anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and rural crime. The ESCSP also has oversight of local action taken to address emerging threats associated with the national Prevent (counter terrorism) agenda and serious organised crime (SOC), including child sexual exploitation (CSE).
31. During the year there were 27 referrals were made to the Community Harm and Risk Management Meeting, where individuals and groups whose anti-social behaviour is having a detrimental impact upon the community. This resulted in a range of successful interventions taking place, including anti-social behaviour contracts, engagement with local support services and the use of statutory powers such as Criminal Behaviour Orders. At year end there were just three individuals being managed by the CHaRMM.
32. The Council successfully introduced a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for Redhill in October 2017. This enables police and council officers to deal with low-level anti-social behaviour early before it has the chance to escalate.
33. The council's Joint Enforcement Team (JET) investigated almost 4,000 cases including graffiti, fly-tipping and abandoned vehicles, and other instances of anti-social behaviour.
34. The council is also active in a number of initiatives that seek to raise awareness and combat domestic abuse and help survivors. We fund the Identification and Referral to Improve Safety (IRIS) project which provides support and training to GPs to enable them to identify victims of domestic abuse at an early stage and signpost victims to support services. The project has now been operating for three years and 18 GPs are now signed up.

FIVE YEAR PLAN PERFORMANCE: PLACE

35. The following sections provide a summary of performance against each priority within the place theme of the Five Year Plan. Further details are set out in Annex 1.

Encourage existing businesses to thrive and grow within Reigate and Banstead and attract new businesses to the borough.

36. The fifth Entrepreneurs Academy was held in 2017/18. This is a six-month project run in conjunction with East Surrey college, where budding local entrepreneurs are provided with the opportunity to gain and develop the essential business skills to turn an idea into reality, including business planning, finance, marketing and online business promotion. At the programme's conclusion participants pitch their business idea to a panel of local business leaders for the chance to win £4,000 to help establish their business.
37. The 200th Business Support Grant was awarded. These grants, of up to £1,000, are awarded to small businesses with fewer than four employees that demonstrate real

scope for future growth. The grants can be used for many purposes, including purchasing new equipment and staff training.

38. Our learning lunches have continued to go from strength to strength during the last year, with 10 events held with over 300 attendees. The lunches encourage local businesses to network and develop their business skills and acumen through a series of informative business presentations on a variety of topics, including social media, customer service and change management.
39. The second annual Big Bang Careers fair took place at the Harlequin Theatre, the aim of which was to help inspire local students to enter a career in the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) sector. Over 550 students and 23 exhibitors attended, including Canon, Black and Veatch, Fidelity and the NHS. Very positive feedback was received from teachers, students and exhibitors.
40. The readership of our monthly email newsletter for local businesses continues to steadily increase – the latest edition sent out in March 2018 achieved an encouraging readership rate of 34%. Over 1,600 businesses have now signed up to 'It's Local Reigate and Banstead', a free to use local database that allows local businesses to connect with local people.

To ensure our towns and public spaces are clean and attractive to residents, businesses and visitors.

41. Each year we clear approximately 1,400 tonnes of litter from over 1,400 streets.
42. The borough has an active community of volunteers that regularly litter pick in their local area, supported by the council's Cleansing team who provide all necessary materials and disposal of the collected waste. As of March 2018 there are 20 such groups across the borough.
43. The council's Cleansing team continue to work successfully with Kent, Surrey and Sussex Community Rehabilitation team to deliver the Community Payback scheme in the borough. The scheme sees low-level offenders that are given an unpaid work order as part of their sentence tackle cleanliness issues that affect the local community, including removing graffiti and clearing litter.
44. Nine of the borough's parks and open spaces received awards in the annual Britain in Bloom competition.

Establish a Development Management Plan (DMP) to deliver affordable and other types of housing, employment space and infrastructure, whilst protecting the borough's pleasant environment.

45. The DMP has recently been submitted to the Secretary of State for examination by the Planning Inspectorate.
46. Delivering affordable housing within the borough is challenging. Despite this, during the year the council achieved 94% of its affordable homes target.
47. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is in place and collections have continued throughout the year. A strategic infrastructure programme has been developed that sets the council's priorities for CIL spending. The first CIL annual monitoring report was published in December 2017 and is available to view on the council's website.

FIVE YEAR PLAN PERFORMANCE: ORGANISATION

48. The following sections provide a summary of performance against each priority within the organisation theme of the Five Year Plan.

We will be financially self-sufficient by 2020, without impacting on residents' priorities.

49. In 2017/18 the Council delivered a balanced budget, without reducing services to residents and businesses. This was achieved without any revenue support grant from central government. A key element of this has been to identify and develop new income streams.
50. Our Revenues and Benefits service generated over £100k delivering benefits, council tax, debt recovery and fraud investigation work for other organisations. Plans have been developed to establish a trading company to deliver these services which would allow access to larger contracts and provide a higher financial return.
51. A number of services seek to sell specialist services to other local authorities. For example, the Property and Legal teams have provided development and asset management consultancy services to other public sector organisations.
52. The implementation of a new Housing team structure, council owned emergency accommodation and a focus on homelessness prevention has significantly reduced expenditure on temporary emergency accommodation, with savings of approximately £170k, and has likewise resulted in an increase in positive housing options outcomes
53. As set out earlier in the report, additional income has been generated from a wider range of events in our parks, such as Oktoberfest in Redhill Memorial Park.

Communicate and engage with our residents and businesses, to help inform service delivery.

54. The council communications and engagement strategy, adopted in June 2016, focuses on delivering a number of key behaviour change and marketing campaigns, including: council reputation, economic prosperity, financial wellbeing, health and wellbeing, channel shift, safe neighbourhoods and support for commercial services.
55. The council's channel shift campaign continues to be very successful, with 83% of transactions taking place online.
56. Our cashless parking campaign won a platinum award at the LGA's prestigious annual public sector communications excellence awards. Over six months the campaign achieved a 47% increase in cashless parking sessions.
57. The *Borough News* readership survey results were very positive, with 79% of respondents rating it as good or excellent, and 76% reporting that it's a good way for them to find out how the council spends their money.
58. The impact of our communications and engagement activities is monitored through our biannual residents' survey. The last survey was undertaken in March 2017, with 64% of respondents reporting that they feel informed. This contrasts favourably with the Local Government Association (LGA) national average which, at the same period, stood at 60%. Our performance has improved markedly from March 2016 in which 45% of respondents reported feeling informed.

We will increase the value of, and income derived from, the Council's property and assets.

59. During the year we acquired three new office building investments, each of which generates significant rental income for the council.
60. The partial redevelopment of Warwick Quadrant, Redhill is now complete and producing a healthy rental income. Following the council's investment the asset has also significantly increased in value.
61. Following the redevelopment of the Council's Iron Horse site in Merstham, the regeneration project has continued with completion of the Triangle site development. This comprises a Community Hub providing a new library, community facility and café, plus four new shops which have been transferred to the council and provide an income through rent. Redevelopment of Raven Housing Trust's Portland Drive site, which was linked to completion of the Hub, is also underway.
62. The development of new housing in the Preston ward is now in its final phase and will result in further overage payments to the council in 2018/19. Construction of housing on the former De Burgh school site has also begun – sales overage is expected in due course.

We will maximise the potential of our staff

63. The council's 5D Talent Development Programme launched in January 2017. The programme provided a mixture of training and development opportunities, and was aimed at staff with the ability to take on wider, challenging, diverse and complex roles while developing their professional abilities.
64. During the last year a number of council staff from a range of service areas have undertaken commercial awareness training. Our efforts at imbuing a commercial culture in the organisation were recognised at the 2018 Municipal Journal Achievement Awards, where Reigate and Banstead was commended within the Workforce Transformation category.
65. Since their introduction in 2015, the council's values and behaviours have been fully embedded and are now integral to the staff appraisal and performance management system. The behaviours now also form a key part of the council's recruitment process.
66. The council's HR team continue to support service managers in identifying career development opportunities for staff, including formal training opportunities, as well as opportunities for secondments and shadowing. During the year there were 36 internal promotions.

NEXT STEPS FOR 2018-19

67. As set out earlier, every service in the Council is required to outline within their service plans how they are contributing to the 5 Year Plan priorities. The annual service & financial planning process provides review and challenge for this work, with budget changes captured within the provisional budget.

68. A review of the Council's Five Year Plan is currently underway to ensure that the council's priorities continue to reflect the needs of our residents and businesses. This will take place alongside the development of the council's investment strategy and wider governance review, which will ensure transparent decision making and explain how we will need to fund our services in the future. It is intended to develop a revised plan alongside the provisional 2019/20 budget, to ensure any activities and programmes are captured and appropriate budget provision allocated.

OPTIONS

69. Members are asked to note the report. No decision is required.

LEGAL & FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

70. The Five Year Plan includes priorities around the council's financial sustainability. As set out in the report we have delivered significant savings over the last year and the council adopted a balanced budget that included no reductions in service. Rather, a range of growth proposals were approved to support service improvements that will benefit our residents and businesses.
71. There are no legal implications to this report.

EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

72. There are no equalities implications to this report.

RISK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

73. In support of the Five Year Plan and service delivery, the council has a robust risk management system in place with regular reports to Executive, Overview and Scrutiny and Management Team.

CONSULTATION

74. The material for this Five Year Plan performance report has come from the activities identified in service business plans for the reporting period noted above.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

75. The Five Year Plan forms part of the council's policy framework.

Background Papers:

Five Year Plan: http://www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/610/our_5_year_plan_2015-20

ANNEX 1: Further Information

PEOPLE THEME

We will support residents into employment – particularly those in vulnerable families and young people.

East Surrey Pathway to Employment

This is a partnership project with Raven Housing Trust, YMCA East Surrey, East Surrey Domestic Abuse Service (ESDAS) and the Surrey Chamber of Commerce.

This scheme supports people into employment that are experiencing conditions of housing insecurity.

The council's Housing team refer participants to the programme, where a range of targeted support measures are offered that include: one to one sessions with an employment advisor, group workshops, job search and application skill training as well as significant in work support. The provision of work experience and voluntary working opportunities also forms a key part of the programme.

Support for Students

The council continues to work closely with SATRO, a local educational charity and social enterprise that delivers a successful mentoring programme in local schools.

Under the programme council officers mentor local school children and provide guidance and support in a number of areas, particularly around future employment and further educational options.

To date 42 members of staff have taken part in the programme and many continue their mentoring relationships with their student after the programme formally concludes.

The council's HR team also facilitates more informal work experience opportunities, including two week placements for students from local schools and colleges.

We will work with and support our partners to provide great services for older people to help them stay independent.

Council officers have worked with MHA Live at Home to support the establishment of a new scheme in Tadworth. The scheme provides valuable support to older people that wish to continue to live at home without becoming socially isolated.

The council – alongside East Surrey CCG and Surrey County Council – fund Voluntary Action Reigate and Banstead (VARB), a local charity that matches volunteers with not-for-profit organisations. VARB has delivered a funding a resource fair, five networking events; regular volunteering surgeries as well as governance advice. These efforts are crucial to maintaining and developing the voluntary sector in the borough.

We will encourage healthy lifestyles, particularly through the use of our leisure centres, parks and open spaces.

Sport & leisure

All three of the borough's leisure centres are QUEST accredited, with the centre in Horley recently securing 'outstanding' status – one of very few leisure facilities in the country to

achieve such designation. QUEST is the UK's leading continuous improvement tool for leisure facilities and sports development teams; to achieve this prestigious industry award the centre was required to demonstrate evidence of exemplary performance in running the centre, as well as in the services provided to the local community and customers.

Officers continue to work with a host of different partners including sports clubs and leisure providers to offer free taster activities, competitions, health education and signposting to clubs and activities spread throughout the year.

Activities for young people

Officers responded to demand for activities for young people in Preston and Tadworth, working with Streetgames and the Community Development Team as well as other partners on a "Tadworth leisure centre Youth project". The scheme started in February 2018 and over the course of 7 weeks we have seen numbers increase from 8 to over 20 young people regularly accessing the initiative.

In November a Junior Park Run was launched by volunteers with the support of councillors' award in Reigate. Numbers have grown steadily from the first junior park run that attracted 46 children, and the 19th Junior Park Run on the 22nd April saw a record 100 children take part.

Parks & Open Spaces

A new bird box trail was recently introduced at Earlswood Lakes. The area is a Local Nature Reserve as well as a Site of Nature Conservation Interest. The council's Greenspaces team worked alongside Men in Sheds at Merstham, Surrey Wildlife trust and several local artists to design and build 23 new bird boxes that have been installed around the lakes. In addition to providing a nesting place for birds, the installation of the boxes has created a well visited local attraction.

A wide range of activities and events take place in parks across the borough. Some particularly well attended events include weekend park and woodland runs, military fitness classes, tennis coaching and football, rugby and cricket matches.

The Greenspaces team continues to proactively identify local parks which are under used and could benefit from additional funding. One such example in the last year is Ifold Road in Redhill which, following an application lodged by the council, received £50k from the SUEZ Communities Trust for the installation of a multi-use games area.

Health & Wellbeing

Wellbeing advisors are based in GP surgeries and help residents by identifying their health and wellbeing issues, providing advice and signposting them to local services and activities. The advisors help people with issues such as weight management, fitness, smoking cessation, social isolation and support with depression, anxiety and more. The service is jointly run by Tandridge District Council, Reigate & Banstead Borough Council, Surrey County Council and East Surrey CCG.

The council continues to be an active participant on the local Health Partnership Delivery Group, comprised of key local health stakeholders, including Public Health, Adult and Children's Social Care, CCGs, Raven Housing Trust, GLL and Staywell. An action plan was developed last year that focused on three key health priorities: mental health, obesity and ageing well/dementia services. Our position on this group further enhances our ability to positively influence our residents' health outcomes. During the last year considerable progress has been made against the action plan's key delivery objectives.

The council's newly formed Community Development team has been active in helping develop and deliver various community initiatives in our priority community development communities. For instance, a community allotment, funded by the People's Health Trust was recently established in Merstham. The team have also secured £350k of funding from the People's Health Trust for a number of projects in Merstham that aim to increase local social connection and encourage local people to exercise leadership in their area.

We will improve safety through joint working with Surrey Police and other partners.

Anti-social behaviour

The Joint Action Group (JAG) continues to meet when a particular issue arises in a given area and works towards a successful resolution through coordinating a multi-agency response. The JAG manages issues that are large in their scope and affect wider areas. During the last year there have been three JAGs convened, with all including issues of anti-social behaviour associated with suspected 'county lines' drug dealing.

Following a range of joint interventions with partners, Redhill town centre has improved markedly and the JAG has been closed. However partners continue to monitor the situation and will intervene early if there is any sign of a reoccurrence of issues. Some of the successful work carried out in Redhill is now being replicated in other areas of the borough.

The ESCSP has continued to make significant progress against its identified priorities. In tackling anti-social behaviour, for instance, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey has commissioned a new countywide service to support repeat and/or vulnerable victims of anti-social behaviour. The Alliance Support Coaching service launched in July 2017 – the latest data available shows that during the year there were 12 referrals to the service in the borough.

CCTV

The council's CCTV cameras continue to be operated in partnership with Surrey Police and provide effective monitoring and deterrence for our town centres and car parks.

Domestic Abuse

The council supports the White Ribbon Campaign, a national campaign which encourages men to challenge negative and abusive behaviour towards women. The council has worked extensively with partners in the Surrey Against Domestic Abuse (SADA) partnership. Surrey has become only the second county to be accredited as a White Ribbon county.

We continue to contribute funding towards East Surrey Domestic Abuse Services and the local Women's Refuge through the Core Funding process. Moreover, we are also supporting Change That Lasts, a five year Women's Aid project aimed at affecting societal change in relation to domestic abuse, including via community based 'Ask Me' ambassadors. Surrey is one of only three areas nationally to pilot this work and East Surrey has been chosen to spearhead the initiative.

Counter terrorism / Serious & Organised Crime

The Council contributes to the local Channel process, a multi-agency approach which supports individuals identified as being at risk of radicalisation. We also run campaigns and host events aimed at raising awareness amongst our staff and partners, local businesses, retailers and the wider community.

In tackling serious and organised crime we have established robust processes for sharing local intelligence with Surrey Police and carried out awareness raising activities with staff and partners.

During the year a new countywide licensing policy was approved which will be implemented from April and will include mandatory child sexual exploitation awareness training.

PLACE THEME

Encourage existing businesses to thrive and grow within Reigate and Banstead and attract new businesses to the borough.

Business Events

In recognition of the academy and grants milestones, a celebratory event was held at the Town Hall in February, with all scheme beneficiaries and partner organisations invited to attend. Emma Jones MBE, founder of Enterprise Nation and an influential national figure in the SME sector, was the guest speaker at the event. Following the event the council has entered into a partnership with Enterprise Nation that will benefit Entrepreneurs Academy and grant applications in the creation and development of their businesses.

Business networks

The council provided continued support to the establishment of the Redhill Business Guild. Since its inception membership has grown to over 25 local businesses. The Guild has delivered a number of business networking events during the year and is well recognised as enabling positive change locally. For instance, over the Christmas period the Guild and the Belfry shopping centre installed a 40 foot artificial Christmas tree in Redhill town centre. The tree noticeably improved the look and feel of the town over the festive period.

The Business Leaders group has continued to meet on a regular basis during the last year. The forum serves as an effective means through which the council is able to work and liaise with private sector organisations on key issues such as local schools engagement, the skills agenda, corporate social responsibility, and traffic/transportation issues. Members of the group include representatives from Canon, Pfizer, Osborne, Jellyfish, Esure and SES Water, amongst others.

Skills

During 2016/17 the council undertook significant work in partnership with East Surrey College with local businesses to help them prepare for the introduction of the Apprenticeship Levy. An outcome of this work during this year was the establishment of a Care Academy at the college. The academy brings together major local health care organisations, as well as higher and further education partners and students to help meet the needs of the sector. This initiative was noted as being good practice in Ofsted's inspection report of East Surrey College in October 2017.

Economic Indicators

The latest data available indicates that 10.1% of the borough's commercial space and 7.6% of its industrial space is vacant (March 2017). There are 7885 VAT registered businesses in the borough, whilst the five year business survival rate is currently 47.3% (ONS, 2016).