

People

Portfolio Updates

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Housing & Support update

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Homeless statistics end of Q4 (21/22 estimated Q4)

	<u>21/22</u>	<u>20/21</u>	<u>19/20</u>
• Homeless Approaches:	1151	1098	1111
• Owed a 'Prevention duty':	239	295	376
• Owed a 'Relief duty':	184	236	173
• Positive Outcomes:	294	345	340
• Main duty Acceptances:	50	47	73
• Average number in B&B:	34	32	19

Housing Register - (21/22 estimated Q4)

	<u>21/22</u>	<u>20/21</u>	<u>19/20</u>
• Nominations to social tenancies:	223	253	292
• No. of households on list at 31/12:	1221	1130	875
• New Home Choice system went live in June 21, much improved customer experience, now mobile compatible, includes integrated forms and customers can upload their own documents.			
• 8 more social rented homes delivered on Westvale as well as shared ownership			
• 7 submarket private rented homes delivered in Marketfield Court Redhill – vacancies taken by households on the list			

Challenges *(no particular order)*

- The waiting list for social rented housing has been increasing by around 100 households each year for three consecutive years, whilst vacancies have been dropping
- Shortage of rented homes that are affordable (social and private sectors)
- Lack of supported housing for homeless single people with complex needs

Highlights

- Staff preventing homelessness for almost 300 households
- Amount of grant secured as highlighted at December 21 O&S
- Accepted on the Government's Help to Buy Scheme

Projects

- Increase the amount of RBBC owned emergency accommodation
- Increase the amount of RBBC owned temporary accommodation
- Purchase new rent accounting software to aid the management of RBBC properties and B&B accounts

Housing Delivery Strategy

- All 25 homes in Pitwood Park Tadworth development sold/under offer. 14 units for market sale (of which 6 sold using Help to Buy Scheme) and 11 houses to Raven for shared ownership.
- On site building 32 flats on Cromwell Rd. Many to be let at sub market rents (Local Housing Allowance level) and the remainder at market rent via a RBBC wholly owned company.
- On site building 4 one bed units in Horley to be offered to homeless low paid / close to work singles. Properties to be retained by RBBC and let under Homeless powers. Secured £190k capital grant from Homes England towards build.
- Viability work continues on the High Street car park site Horley
- Other Council owned sites being considered
- Other partnership work ongoing with Raven and Transform Housing to deliver further affordable housing

Asylum Seekers – Home Office accommodation

- Skylane Hotel, Horley: Initial Accommodation accommodating for about 100 males
- Four Points Hotel, Horley: Initial Accommodation for about 136 people (mostly males and a couple of families)
- Bridge House Hotel, Reigate: Initial Accommodation for about 40 families
- Quadrant House, Redhill: Overflow Dispersal Accommodation for about 65 women, most have one child
- Largest impact on local services sits with Health colleagues including maternity / new mother services and GP services. Also impacts on local voluntary and community sector partners, especially food banks and those focussed on supporting children.
- The number of homeless applications from QH is also being monitored

Revenue, Benefits & Fraud update

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Revenues, Benefits & Fraud

Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support

- From Q1 to Q3 in 2021/22, we dealt with 1,326 new applications for Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support, compared with 2,385 over the same period in 2020/21
- From Q1 to Q3 in 2021/22, we dealt with 29,758 changes in circumstances for benefit claims, compared with 42,699 over the same period in 2020/21
- Whilst Housing Benefit claims have reduced since the introduction of Universal Credit (housing costs), from March 2020 we saw an increase of 6% in households claiming Council Tax Support, primarily due to the negative economic impact of the COVID-pandemic and lockdown
- The Housing Benefit expenditure is forecast at £26.5m for 2021/22, with government subsidy covering around 99% of this cost. An increase in non-subsidised elements of the scheme, such as high rental supported accommodation, continue to have a negative impact on the subsidy level we receive

Revenues, Benefits & Fraud (con't)

COVID-19 Pandemic Pressures and Support

- The Council is responsible for administering Test & Trace Payments to residents who have been told to self-isolate. The scheme started in September 2020
- From September 2020 to December 2021, 568 payments of £500 were made to people who lost out on earnings due to self-isolating, and meet the criteria. Total number of applications to 31/12/21 was 1,665
- The scheme is currently set to end on 31/03/22, but is likely to be extended

Discretionary Housing Payments

- Discretionary Housing Payments – funding for 2021/22 was reduced to £257,948 compared to £340,034 in 2020/21. The payments are to assist with rental costs and prevent homelessness. As at 31/12/20 we had paid out 78% of the government funding
- Any overspend must be met by the Council, whereas any unspent funds are returned to the Department for Work and Pensions

Intervention update:

Family Support Programme, Refugee
Resettlement, Money Support Team

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Intervention: Family Support Programme

- 117 referrals this year – up slightly on last year
 - Wait times are dramatically reduced from last year to around 4 weeks
- COVID restrictions have continued to affect delivery
 - Virtual contact continues to be used, but only when face to face contact is not required
- Family complexity continues to increase, with workers needing to spend more time supporting families.

Intervention: Refugee Resettlement (Syrian Scheme)

- No new arrivals this year
 - Arrivals suspended by Home Office for some of this period
- Continuing to support 8 households across RBBC
 - 5 due to leave the scheme in 2022
 - 3 due to leave the scheme in 2024
- All adults and children are positively engaging in support to ensure their independence
- Syrian Feast event hosted in October
 - Over 150 people attended
 - Recipe book published and over 200 copies sold
 - Funds raised used to directly support families

Intervention: Refugee Resettlement (Afghanistan Scheme)

- New commitment to resettle 3 households as part of the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy
- RBBC running the scheme for South East Surrey councils (as with the Syrian Scheme)
- Difficulty in identifying appropriate and affordable housing
 - Despite lots of effort, no houses have yet been found

Intervention: Money Support Team

- Referrals are starting to return to pre-pandemic norms
 - 2021 – 135 referrals
 - 2020 – 215 referrals
 - 2019 – 121 referrals
- Length of intervention returned to around 6 weeks (15 weeks in 2020).
 - Additional frontline staff to support due to increases in referrals and complexities due to pandemic
 - Impact of Universal Credit, Furlough and Redundancies are the biggest three impacts support this year.
- In 2021:
 - Over £33,000 in debts cleared, including £3,000 in Council Tax
 - over £20,000 of underpayments recovered for clients

Leisure & Culture update

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Leisure: GLL

- Challenging operating environment for GLL
 - All centres re-opened fully in September 2021
 - Improving financial situation,
 - contract is in deficit
 - Improving customer confidence in the sector
 - Membership numbers are rising
- Continuing to work closely with GLL to support their operational delivery
 - Staff redeployed to Community Support Centre and Welfare response

Leisure: Leisure Development

- School holiday programme ran from Summer 2021
 - Mixture of online and in person activities
 - Numbers lower than in previous years
- Introduction of 'Play Ranger' activities in Summer
 - dedicated staff and volunteers supporting children to play out in their own streets and parks
 - 5 locations – Merstham Recreation Ground, Horley Recreation Ground, Reigate Priory Park, Banstead Lady Neville Park, Redhill Memorial Park
- Weekly sports coaching in Summer across the Borough
 - 7 sports

Leisure: Harlequin Theatre

- Very difficult year for theatres & cinemas
 - Changing COVID regulations
 - Customer confidence is slow to return
 - Film releases delayed to ensure success
- Busy year of shows, in part due to postponements from 2020.
 - Over 110 live shows & events (between May and November)
 - Screened over 80 films
- First 'large scale' outdoor event hosted in Summer
 - 250 people attended 'Comedy at the Castle' (in the Castle Grounds)
- Pantomime was successful, both financially and reputationally
 - The whole run – 43 shows – went un-interrupted
- Successful bid for £107000 from the Cultural Recovery Fund (National funding)
 - Money used to support COVID losses

Leisure: Future focus

- Leisure & Culture Strategy
 - to build on and explain further our Corporate Plan objective
- Continuation of recovery from pandemic
 - Harlequin visitor numbers to increase
 - High street visibility for Harlequin
 - Re-emergence of School Holiday activities
 - Re-introduction of large-scale activities, such as
 - Outdoor activity plan
- Future Leisure Centre contract decision

Community Partnerships update

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Covid Welfare Calls & Support

Throughout 2021 we have continued our Covid welfare response service, adapting our response in relation to levels of need and Government guidance.

	2021	Notes
Responding to inbound requests for help (e.g. through website, customer contact)	355	Ongoing
Proactive calls to clinically extremely vulnerable (CEV) residents	545	CEV ceased Apr 21
Calls to residents identified via NHS test and trace as potentially needing support	55	Commenced Apr 21
Wider welfare and befriending calls	500	Calls to residents with wider support needs (by staff and volunteer befrienders)
Total calls	1455	
Volunteers making befriending calls	c27	Service ended Jun 21

Covid Welfare: Food & Fuel Support

Community Partnerships continue to lead our Covid emergency food response.

- We work closely with the **food banks**, providing strategic and practical support including enabling them to access government Covid / welfare support funding to assist them in managing the ever growing need for their services.
- Working with community partners our Community Development Team has established **food clubs** in Woodhatch, Horley, Redhill, Merstham and Preston. Food clubs provide weekly access to affordable food, incl fresh food, for people who are struggling financially. For some food club members this is a step away from food bank dependency, for others it avoids the need for food bank support, and helps residents self-esteem. Food club members can access pop up financial support, including from Sutton and East Surrey Water and the Council's Money Support Team, whilst visiting food club.
- We have coordinated the work of partners to provide **school holiday meals** to families eligible for free school meals.
- Where no alternatives are available, we arrange **emergency food packs**.

Many residents are also experiencing fuel poverty, with some having to chose between heating and eating. We are working with 7 partners to provide fuel poverty top ups payments to residents on pre-payment meters who are in particular financial hardship.

Number of emergency food packs distributed in 2021	45
Referrals to food bank partners (due to food poverty/ need to isolate) (2021)	165
Individuals supported with utility top ups (Winter 20/21)	352

Community (Covid) Champions

At the start of 2021, SCC Public Health asked for our help with setting up a network of “Covid Champions” to help ensure accurate and up to date messages about Covid and vaccinations to reach all sections of our communities. In response, our Community Development Workers identified volunteers from within their communities to take on this role. We continue to provide regular updates to 33 Community (Covid) Champions to share through their networks.

Strategic partnership work

2021 has seen a step change to our strategic partnership working with health partners (including Surrey Heartlands and the Primary Care Networks (PCNs)) and with Surrey County Council. One example of this is the focus on Horley driven by both SCC and Horley PCN, which also includes closer collaboration between the Community Partnerships and Place Delivery teams around Westvale. This presents real opportunities to improve outcomes for residents and reduce need for our services (e.g. by preventing homelessness), and to improve mutual understanding between RBBC and the breadth of health partners.

Community Development

At the start of 2021, the CD Team were continuing to lead Covid locality meetings which effectively covered the whole borough across 5 localities. During 2021, the CD Team have moved from Covid locality meetings back to their regular network meetings, allowing them to bring focus back to their priority areas.

Covid continues to impact on the team's business as usual work (e.g. limited access to community bases and reduced community events) but all areas have seen an increase in the level of project work the Community Development Workers (CDWs) have been involved in supporting, for example:

- Community Budgeting (Horley)
- Work with health partners (particularly in Horley, Preston and Redhill)
- Community Events in Woodhatch & Whitebushes, Redhill and Preston
- Mapping of Christmas food provision across the borough and support to Renewed Hope to offer a Christmas Day meal
- Fundraising and project support for Pump Track (Woodhatch), Bereavement Support Service (Redhill), Community Fridge (Woodhatch), Recreation Ground redevelopment (Merstham) and extensive partnership work with voluntary, statutory, faith and private sector organisations

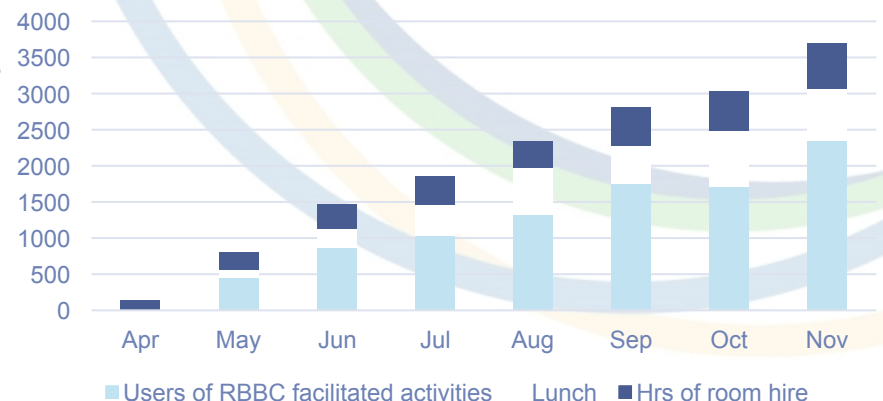
Community Centres (Banstead, Woodhatch, Horley)

2021 saw a 2nd year of disruption to our community centres due to Covid, with the team finding innovative ways to enable isolated centre users to continue to access services during lockdown. In parallel, work progressed to inform the centres' service transformation:

- A survey of over 1,200 people, both existing centre users and wider residents, in early 2021 demonstrated the value and potential of the centres
- We secured Executive agreement in July 2021 to the vision of three vibrant multi-use community centres reaching residents of all ages
- A wide range of new activities are underway at the centres
 - U5s activities, including grandparents stay and play
 - Food Clubs, in partnership with community development
 - New exercise classes for all abilities
 - Partnerships with local organisations, including food banks, health centres
 - Events that reach the whole community

- Positive feedback has been received from both existing and new users about the centres. Usage numbers have increased month on month as we emerged from lockdown in April 2021.

Community Centres - 2021



Partnerships with the Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS)

Community Partnerships works with over 100 local partners including:

1. Financial support
 - Overseeing RBBC's financial support to the sector (small grants, medium grants, commissioned services, Rental Grant Subsidy) and in kind support (access to discounted printing services)
 - Enabling VCS partners to access central government Covid response funding and the DWP's Household Support Fund
2. Non-financial support and partnership working
 - Providing advice to support service development, funding applications, etc
 - Establishing an Older Peoples Services Steering Group that facilitates sector-led work on identified gaps and needs in support and activities for older people.
 - Leading a Universal Credit forum for practitioners that has helped increase knowledge and skills in relation to key areas that impact on benefits such as domestic abuse, housing and those with no recourse to public funds.
 - Establishing a Money Advice Services working group to look more closely at issues that keep people in poverty and specifically in need of support from Foodbanks.

Community Safety Overview

Please note that community safety will be presented in more detail at the February O&S meeting.

The Reigate & Banstead Community Safety Partnership has developed a shared action plan and identified the following community safety priorities:

1. Empowering communities to feel safe
2. Protect the most vulnerable from harm
3. Responding to domestic abuse
4. Tackling anti-social behaviour

The CCTV project has started work to deliver the reduction in public realm cameras and the modernisation of CCTV in key locations (3 borough parks and 2 multi-storey car parks). This has already led to budget savings for 2021/22 & 2022/23

There has been a significant increase in Domestic Homicides and this has led to 3 further Domestic Homicide Reviews being initiated and led by the CSP

Multi-agency meetings have continued to problem solve and respond to local concerns around community safety and ASB. These are the Joint Action Group (JAG) (focused on locations of concern) and the Community Harm and Risk Management Meeting (CHaRMM) (focused on individuals of concern)

Awareness-raising activity increased in a COVID safe way. This included community fun days, fraud awareness sessions with vulnerable groups, East Surrey College Freshers week, Member briefing, Bite-sized briefing for staff and Prevent sessions for partners (Prevent forms part of the government's counter terrorism strategy.)

Looking ahead to 2022

Opportunities

Continued strengthening of partnership working with:

- statutory partners especially SCC and Surrey Heartlands ICS
- local partners (e.g. VCS) to respond to local needs

Continue to roll out community centres transformation:

- providing thriving venues for the breadth of local communities

Challenges

Uncertainties of Covid:

- Need for continued Covid welfare support for residents
- Ability to deliver face to face provision (community centres, community development, events, etc.)

Budgetary pressures:

- Both RBBC's budgets and availability of external funding for projects and partners

Finding clear and engaging ways to demonstrate the portfolio's value and impact