

Borough Council

improves performance

Surrey Heath Borough Council is committed to maintaining the Borough as a pleasant place to live, work, do business and enjoy leisure. To ensure it continues to improve the quality of life for residents it monitors its performance to check services are to a high standard and sets targets for improvement. Here are some of the highlights over the past year.



Environment

The total tonnage of household waste recycled was 1,561 tonnes for October to December compared with 1,472 tonnes for the same period in 2005. 768 tonnes of household waste was composted for this period compared to 242 tonnes for the same period last year. This increase is due partly to the introduction of the Green Waste Club. A target of recycling 30 per cent of all household waste was set by the Government for 2006/2007 and this was achieved by Surrey Heath.

Planning

No major planning applications were determined between January and March 2006, however this has risen to 70 per cent during the same period in 2007. Difficulties in the planning application process were encountered during the reorganisation of the Built Environment Service at the end of 2005 which resulted in a backlog of applications. However the Council set to overcome the problems by assigning more case officers to planning applications work and as a result the backlog has now been cleared. The percentage of minor planning applications determined within eight weeks has also risen from 8 per cent to 73 per cent.

Communication

The number of hits on the Council's website per quarter increased from 61,304 between January and March 2006 to 142,548 between January and March 2007. As well as information, a range of services are now available at www.surreyheath.gov.uk. These include paying Council Tax and Business Rates online, the planning portal which offers information on planning applications and tickets for The Camberley Theatre can also be booked through the website.

Many of the Council's services are now dealt with in the Customer Contact Centre which opened in May 2006. Figures for January to March 2007 show there were 29,131 calls handled through the centre, of these calls 75 per cent were answered within 20 seconds.



Housing

The average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation, which includes dependents, children or pregnant women and which are unintentionally homeless, was reduced from an average of 1.5 weeks in 2005/2006 to an average of 0.5 weeks in 2006/2007.

The Council's Housing Needs Team works hard to prevent homelessness. They carry out detailed case work to assist customers with housing problems and where they can, offer assistance with finding private lettings through Surrey Heath Rent Choice, which lends people the advance rent or deposit to secure a home. The team is also able to offer families, who may have experienced domestic violence, extra security. They will have the opportunity to have works carried out to their home to make them feel safe and prevent them from being placed in temporary accommodation. The new Cordwalles development in Camberley has also helped with the reduction of stays in bed and breakfasts.



Arts and Leisure

Between April and March 2007 there were 50,888 visits to Surrey Heath Museum. This includes visits to schools, travelling presentations to specific audiences and research enquiries by phone, email or website.

Camberley Theatre received 80,620 visitors between 2006/2007 and 87.4% of cricket pitches were used during the 2005/2006 season.

For full details of our performance visit our website www.surreyheath.gov.uk and select "P" for "Performance and Indicators" on the A to Z.