



## CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

### Denise Turner Stewart, Cabinet Member for Communities

#### Purpose of report:

To share details of the Cabinet Member's priority areas of work including strategy and policy developments and provide an overview of the budget position and performance of services within his/her portfolio.

#### Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS)

1. While at the forefront of the county's response to COVID, the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) has completed the implementation of the first phase of its *Making Surrey Safer* plan. The plan was based on a review of 999 calls over the past five years, using predictive data which shows where risk is and looked at emergency statistics. This showed that SFRS had more fire engine availability at night than was needed and not enough investment in cover during the daytime. It also showed that SFRS were undertaking very little prevention and protection activities during the day, which are vital to keep people and businesses safe. The plan means that the service can provide better fire cover for 999 calls during the day when it is busier and can also focus on preventing incidents from happening in the first place.
2. The second phase, to be delivered in the coming months, is dependent on the completion of an assurance exercise by Brunel University. This will consider the impacts of COVID-19, the outcomes of Grenfell Inquiry and changes to legislation made since the plan was introduced.

#### Coroners' Service

3. The Surrey Coroners' Service continues to make strong progress in implementing its service improvement plan. During the last three months, the service has taken major steps to reduce waiting times for post-mortems, while additionally working to strengthen its relationship with key stakeholders; leading to a sizeable reduction of complaints and an increase in compliments. This is a great endorsement of the excellent work the service has been doing and the Cabinet Member commends the service for their efforts. Although these improvements are welcomed, the service has been tasked with further action at pace, in order to support its transformation journey. This will include establishing a long term, strategic business plan to maintain the service's effectiveness and ensuring that appropriate systems are adopted to support a proper documentation process.

## Trading Standards

4. Over the last three months, Trading Standards have increased their engagement with the local community; helping all to be more vigilant through a series of initiatives around scam prevention in relation to COVID-19. In particular, the service engaged with the most vulnerable in the county and did invaluable work. Moving forward, work will shortly resume on preventing the underage sale of illicit goods, with online test purchase work to commence in October 2020.

## Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector (VCFS)

5. During this time, VCFS has played a crucial role in working with the County Council in supporting some of the most vulnerable communities in Surrey. The Volunteer Centres alone recruited over 10,000 volunteers in March-April and over 270 Covid Mutual Aid groups were set up across the county. It has been a challenging time for the VCFS with the demand placed upon them increasing; having to quickly change their ways of working, while dealing with affected fundraising avenues. Through interventions provided by the County Council, central government and other partners - the VCFS remains in a stable position.
6. Over the last few months, the County Council has worked closely with the Community Foundation for Surrey and transferred two payments of £100,000 and £200,000 to support their Coronavirus Response Fund. The second payment of £200,000 was fully matched by public donations taking the amount available for the VCFS to £400,000. In total, the CFS generated over £2m for the Coronavirus Response Fund and distributed over 260 grants supporting 120,000 beneficiaries, through critical services such as foodbanks, mental health providers and homelessness charities.

## Recommendations:

1. The Committee reviews the information contained in this update and offers feedback to the Cabinet Member.
2. The Select Committee considers where it may add value to the Cabinet Member's work through scrutiny and scopes topics as required.

## Next steps:

The Cabinet Member to return with a further update at the next formal meeting of the Committee.

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