

Recent Council achievements: February 2014

Flooding

Since the Cabinet update in January, the majority of departments have been working on flood response work and these are some of the key actions and achievements:-

- We set up a Borough Emergency Centre to co-ordinate the Council's response to the flooding
- We worked with our partner agencies including the Environment Agency, Surrey Police, Surrey Fire and Rescue, Surrey County Council, neighbouring local authorities, Public Health England and Thames Water to ensure a consistent approach
- We distributed thousands of sandbags to help residents protect their properties
- We worked with Surrey County Council to support vulnerable residents
- We opened rest centres to provide short-term emergency accommodation for people who had to be evacuated from their homes
- We coordinated the many offers of help which came from the public
- We lifted parking restrictions in our car parks so residents whose streets were flooded could leave their cars safely
- We provided continuous updates for residents via the website, Twitter and Facebook and advice leaflets
- We worked with the media to communicate key messages to residents and arranged television and radio interviews with Council staff
- We extended the opening hours of our customer service phone lines
- We used the knowledge of colleagues in Planning to give technical advice on flooding
- We opened four Flood Relief Centres to provide a focal point for advice and support for residents trying to recover from flooding

Other recent achievements include the following:-

Environment

A new cashless parking system has been introduced. 'Phone and Pay' provides a quick, easy and safe way for motorists to pay for parking, whilst offering additional features such as text confirmation that parking has been booked and a reminder text when a session is due to expire.

The Council's website had been updated with Q&As which give residents information about the decision to introduce grazing cattle to Sunbury Park.

Planning/Legal Services

David Green from the Isle of Wight has been prosecuted for mooring his boat in excess of the 24 hours permitted in a 48 period on 5 specific dates between May and October 2013. He was fined £50 for each of the five charges and ordered to pay another £250 in legal costs to the Council. He was also required to pay a £20 victim surcharge.

A Planning Inspector has supported the Council's stance on protecting the Green Belt. A site in Stanwell Moor known as Lower Mill Farm was last used for agriculture in 2012 but since then a number of substantial buildings and two mobile homes have been placed on the site without planning permission. The Council successfully argued its case and the Inspector has given the owners a maximum of six months to remove four of the buildings.

Communications

The spring edition of the Bulletin is currently being printed and will be delivered to residents from 8 March.

Communications and Planning have been working together to help Heathrow Airport Limited publicise their consultation regarding airport expansion. Heathrow is aiming to ask around 140,000 residents for their views about the northwest runway option and possible variations to it. The

consultation runs for six weeks from 3 February to 16 March. A link to the consultation has been added to the homepage of our website and hard copies have been placed in reception and in councillor's pigeon holes.