**Community Wellbeing profile – Mole Valley**

**Background**

Mole Valley sits in the heart of Surrey midway between London and the Sussex Coast.

It is predominantly rural in nature with 90% of the district consisting of countryside, large amounts of which are designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty including many nationally known areas such as Box Hill, Ranmore Common and Leith Hill.

Most of its residents live around two historic market towns, Dorking and Leatherhead, as well as the larger villages of Ashtead, Fetcham and Bookham. Leatherhead is the main commercial centre with a number of business parks hosting multi-national employers such as Unilever and Exxonmobil.

The area is a firm favourite with cyclists of all abilities and features in the annual Prudential Ride London event.

**Significant Democracy**

The population in 2016 was counted at just over 86,000 almost 20% of which are aged 65 or over. Life expectancy at birth for males is 82.4 and for females 85 (Surrey averages 81.7 and 84.6 respectively).

Mole Valley is generally a very safe district but due to its environment rural crime is a matter of concern. Although it has a relatively low number of incidents there are concerns about the anti-social activities of particularly young people in key locations such as Meadowbank in Dorking.

The key areas of deprivation in the district (IMD 2015) are Leatherhead North and the LINKS area (this is group of housing developments south of Dorking made up of Goodwyns, North Holmwood, Chart Downs and Rough Rews). Some rural communities also experience levels of relative deprivation with regard to crime, living environment and access to services.

Almost 80% of all businesses in the area employ less than 5 people.

**Current Local Issues**

**‘**Transform Leatherhead’is a long term project that aims to completely revitalise the town. Leatherhead is strategically placed in the north of the district with excellent road and train links but does not currently meet the needs of residents and businesses. Further information is available from the District Council on <http://www.transformleatherhead.com/> . Leatherhead station has been selected for accessibility improvements through the ‘Access for All’ funding programme: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/access-for-all-73-stations-set-to-benefit-from-additional-funding> .

‘Future Mole Valley’ is the name of the new local plan being developed by the district council. Public consultation is expected to take place October 2019. Further information is available from the District Council on <http://futuremolevalley.org/> .

A jointly funded (SCC/MVDC) transport study was carried out in Dorking town centre to identify measures to reduce congestion and to inform future applications for external funding.

A stakeholder meeting was held in November 2018 to present the conclusions of the Dorking Transport Study. The study concluded that there was no small scale engineering solution to the congestion problems of Dorking that is both deliverable, within available funding limits and environmentally acceptable. Deepdene Station has been identified as a potential future major scheme.

**The Local Political Structure**

MPs representing Mole Valley (June 2017):

* Paul Beresford (Mole Valley plus 5 Guildford borough wards)
* Sir Chris Grayling (Ashtead)

**Surrey County Council**

There are 81 members of Surrey County Council.

The political composition of the county council as at May 2019 is:

* Conservative – 59
* Surrey Opposition Forum - 10
* Residents’ Association & Independent - 11
* Other - 1

More information about the county council is available online: [www.surreycc.gov.uk](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk).

The Leader is Tim Oliver (December 2018).

There are [6 county councillors](https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1) representing Mole Valley. They work both with services and committees on a county level, but are also involved in the Local Committee (Mole

Valley Local Committee) which makes decisions on county functions at a district level. It

also provides residents with the opportunity to engage with their local representatives on a

regular basis.

The six county councillors representing Mole Valley are:

Mr Tim Hall, Leatherhead and Fetcham East (Chairman)

Mr Chris Townsend, Ashtead

Mrs Clare Curran, Bookham and Fetcham West

Mrs Helyn Clack, Dorking Rural

Mr Stephen Cooksey, Dorking and the Holmwoods (Vice-Chairman)

Mrs Hazel Watson, Dorking Hills

For 2019/20, the Local Committee Chairman is County Councillor Mr Tim Hall (Conservative) and the Vice-Chairman is County Councillor Mr Stephen Cooksey (Liberal Democrat).

The composition of the Committee is 3 Conservatives, 2 Liberal Democrats and

1 Independent (Residents Association**).**

Each year, the district council is invited to nominate 6 district councillors to sit on the local committee. These 6 members represent the political proportionality of the wider district council. For 2019/20, the co-opted members are:

Cllr Nancy Goodacre, Bookham South

Cllr Rosemary Dickson, Leatherhead South

Cllr Raj Haque, Fetcham West

Cllr Mary Huggins, Capel, Leigh and Newdigate

Cllr David Hawksworth, Ashtead Common

Cllr Claire Malcomson, Holmwoods

**Mole Valley District Council**

Mole Valley District Council has 41 seats across 21 wards. MVDC operates a Strong Leader and Executive model of governance.

Following the district council elections in May 2019, the Liberal Democrats have taken control of the council. Mr Stephen Cooksey is the Leader of the council.

Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) has 41 councillors, representing 21 wards in the district. The political balance at MVDC is 22 Liberal Democrat, 11 Conservative, seven Informal Independent and a Bookham Independent Member, which means that the Liberal Democrat party has overall control.

The district council has a corporate strategy for 2019-2024. For 2019/20, it has set out its priorities in an Annual Plan. This is available on the council’s website: <https://www.molevalley.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=17040>

**Parish Councils**

There are 13 parish councils across the district, located largely in rural areas outside of the main towns of Dorking and Leatherhead.

**Local Services**

* Social housing stock was transferred to Circle Housing in 2007; this and a number of other smaller housing associations provide rented accommodation across the district.
* There are 32 schools of which 4 are academies - 25 primary, 4 secondary, 3 special
* There are services for young people around Dorking, Leatherhead and Ashtead, with details available on the county council website. <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/family-information-service/support-and-advice-for-parents-and-carers/young-people-information-for-families/youth-centres-and-projects/mole-valley>
* The Family Support Programme is delivered in partnership with Surrey County Council through the South East Surrey Family Support Team.
* There are two foodbanks in the district; one in Leatherhead and one in Dorking.
* The Fairfield Centre, Leatherhead and the Dorking Christian Centre provide activities and services for older residents.

**Children and young people**

In January 2019, the county council agreed to change its approach to children’s centres. Instead of being open to all families with young children aged 0-5, the council will focus its resources on those families most in need, with children aged 0-11, with a focus on targeting those families and working with them in their homes. A core element will be supporting families at a much earlier point, in their homes and communities, preventing problems escalating into a crisis that might require a child being taken into care.

For Mole Valley, this means that Dorking Nursery School Sure Start Children's Centre (North Holmwood Goodwyns Road site) will be a family centre under this new approach, but the current children’s centre at Leatherhead will cease to provide county council services.

**Libraries**

There are libraries in Dorking, Leatherhead, Ashtead and Bookham.

**Fire**

There are two fire stations; one in Dorking and one in Leatherhead. No changes to the crewing arrangements at these stations were proposed in the consultation that closed in May 2019. The full proposals are available online, and will be considered by the council’s Cabinet in due course. <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/people-and-community/fire-and-rescue/about/our-vision-mission-and-aims/priorities-plans-and-governance/plans-strategies-and-legislation/public-safety>