2016/17 was a year of great change nationally, internationally, and indeed locally. In Elmbridge we had the results of a boundary review, the ‘all out’ Borough elections and the largest ever reduction in Government funding, all of which have an impact on the working of the Council but none of which change our fundamental approach, to provide quality public services as cost effectively as possible.

Our most recent Residents’ Panel survey seems to reiterate that we are doing a good job, with 86% of our Residents’ Panel surveyed saying that they are satisfied with the services we provide, but we know we can always do better.

In 2016/17 we delivered some important initiatives for Elmbridge including a joint waste and recycling project aimed at providing an enhanced service with significant savings, 24 businesses benefitted from the Civic Improvement fund and our Centres for the Community continued to provide life enhancing services to older and vulnerable residents.

In light of continued central Government budget cuts, we have taken steps to ensure we become grant free before 2020. Being financially robust and continuing to deliver quality services as cost effectively as possible is key to our success as a Local Authority. To achieve this we are reducing our expenditure wherever possible but not at the expense of our service quality. We are also working to create opportunities for revenue generation, for example, we continue to offer the popular pre-application planning service and we have made further investments in property assets. Most recently, we acquired warehouse units on Vickers Drive on the Brooklands Industrial Estate in Weybridge, a move that is representative of the Council’s continued focus on economic development and its commitment to investing in a vibrant Elmbridge economy. We believe our steady, selective, low-borrowing, low-risk but high quality approach is the right one.

As an organisation at the centre of the Elmbridge community, we are committed to delivering our vision of a confident, cohesive and thriving Elmbridge. This report is a record of the work being carried out by the Council to ensure that we improve the lives of residents in the Borough, in partnership with them.

Robert Moran
Chief Executive
Elmbridge Borough Council is an organisation of 400 staff, 48 Councillors and hundreds of volunteers. With a gross annual expenditure of £100M we try to deliver quality public services, cost effectively, for all the residents of Elmbridge.

As a Borough Council, Elmbridge is responsible for services such as waste and recycling, housing, planning, community support services, parks, playgrounds and green spaces. Underpinning all that we do in Elmbridge is the ‘Council Plan’ - our strategic planning document.

Within these priorities, we set out flagship activities each year. In 2016/17 these included a more efficient waste collection contract with three partner authorities, supporting at least 50 businesses with funding and delivering Leisure Live to encourage physical activity and economic growth.

Our priorities for Elmbridge continue to be –

- A safe, caring and healthy Elmbridge
- A vibrant and thriving Elmbridge
- A green and attractive Elmbridge

A progressive council

Elmbridge is a progressive Council, one that is working hard to harness technology so that our residents can access those services in their own time. We created England’s first building control staff mutual, we are currently building a Sports Hub of regional significance, we have engaged in a multi-Borough waste collection contract to bring greater efficiency and resilience, while maintaining our focus on services for older people, moderating development pressure through good planning, leisure and sports development, and supporting local businesses. We will always put the needs of the Borough and its residents first.
Our vision and priorities

Who we are
Elmbridge Borough Council is a progressive organisation...

Our focus
...that always puts the needs of its residents and business owners first...

Our goal
...by providing excellent services and working hard to improve accessibility of service through technology, allowing access when it suits our residents...

Our strategy
...via a viable ‘Council Plan’ that can be used to check and monitor our performance.

How do we know we’re doing a good job?

Feedback from our Residents’ Panel tells us that:

- 94% of respondents agree Elmbridge is ‘a good place to live’
- 86% are satisfied with the way in which we run our services
- 73% believe Elmbridge Council provides value for money
Snapshot of 2016/17

48,000 meals delivered by our Meals Service

Began the consultation for a new Local Plan

We signed the Time to Think pledge

We achieved 86% satisfaction for our waste, recycling and food collection from the Residents’ Panel

Leisure Live and Play Day events were enjoyed by hundreds of families in the Borough

Introduced payment via contactless in key Borough car parks

500 installations of community alarm

Opened Pirate Cove playpark in Weybridge

29% reduction in level of ASB incidents vs 2015/16

Launched a new Council website

The construction of the Xcel Sports Hub began

Over 1400 Christmas lunches were served at our Centres for the Community across Elmbridge during the festive season.

Helped 18 new businesses to set up with over £15,000 in start-up grants

Installed 4 new outdoor gyms in the Borough

We have offered around 4000 specialist support group places at our Centres.

25 self-service points for community services installed around the Borough, GPs, hospitals, sheltered accommodation and community centres.
A safe, caring and healthy Elmbridge

Elmbridge young person’s lodgings scheme

This pilot project is designed to improve housing options for local young people aged 16 to 21 who have either had to leave home due to family problems, or who have been in care or find themselves struggling to cope alone.

The young people are placed in a safe and caring home environment provided by local hosts, making it possible for young people from Elmbridge to remain here, close to support, college or work, with the aim of preparing them for independent living.

The programme is run by Step by Step, a young people’s charity, in partnership with Elmbridge Council, Surrey County Council and Walton Charity and launched in summer 2016 and as at March 2017, so far three hosts are accommodating three young people.

For more information, visit elmbridge.gov.uk/housing/eypls/ or call Step by Step on 07860 953936.

Support for those impacted by the benefit cap

The Government introduced the Benefit Cap in 2013, limiting the amount of benefit that most working-age households can receive. Its aim is to encourage people into work and reduce dependency on benefits. In November 2016, the cap was reduced and outside of London, it is now £20,000 a year for families and £13,400 for single people.

The cap’s reduction increased the number of local households affected from 30 to 150, as well as the potential hardship, including homelessness, that could result. With joint funding from Government, the Council has employed two Benefit Cap coaches with the aim of supporting households to get off the cap. This includes employment and training support, as finding work (or more work) is the simplest way of being freed from the cap. The coaches are delivering results, and by March 2017, 40 households were either off or due to come off the cap (29 through employment and 11 having been awarded a disability-related benefit that exempts them from the cap).

1400 children go to ‘safety school’

In June 2016, over 1,400 year 6 children, from 23 different schools across the Borough, attended the Elmbridge Junior Citizen event to learn vital safety lessons such as first aid, fire safety, internet safety, railway safety, water safety and stranger danger.
**Shedders at work**

The Men in Sheds project for retired men at the Thames Ditton Centre has been busy taking commissions for their woodworking skills. The ‘shedders’ are now in their second year and meet every Monday and Thursday at their woodworking shed in the Centre grounds. This social inclusion project re-engages those with skills and time, in useful projects.

**Prevent training**

Elmbridge officers attended Prevent training in early 2017 which aims to reduce the number of people becoming or supporting violent extremists, and is part of the UK’s counter-terrorism strategy. Attendees gained an understanding of the Prevent agenda, the ability to recognise potentially vulnerable individuals, along with knowledge of when, how, and where to refer concerns about vulnerable individuals.

**Happy 5th birthday!**

The Cobham Link is a group for adults with learning disabilities based at the Cobham Centre for the Community. In 2016 Cobham Link celebrated their 5th birthday and were also awarded 2nd place in the Inclusive Sports Award at the Elmbridge Sports Personality of the Year Awards.

**Roll-out of Universal Credit**

Spring 2016 marked the arrival of Universal Credit (UC) in Elmbridge and over 200 local jobseekers are now receiving it. UC is the Government’s flagship welfare reform for working-age households who are either out of work or in low paid employment. It combines a number of benefits into a one single payment and is designed to make work pay. UC is being rolled out gradually with most claims being made and managed online and monthly payments replacing weekly ones.

The Council has worked with Citizens Advice, Job Centre Plus, Surrey County Council and Paragon Community Housing to make the transition to UC as smooth as possible for local claimants, to minimise financial hardship and prevent any resultant housing problems. A network of UC champions has been trained to offer help to local residents who may need help with getting online, opening a bank account or managing their money etc. and a website created to offer help and advice - getsetnow.co.uk.
A vibrant and thriving Elmbridge

Leisure Live

Around 3000 residents enjoyed Leisure Live at Hersham Green in July 2016. With over 50 stands showcasing their sports and leisure services, as well as a live entertainment stage. Leisure Live has become a flagship event in Elmbridge’s summer activity schedule.

Celebrating national play day

In August 2016 we celebrated the seventh annual Elmbridge Play Day which took place at Hurst Park, East Molesey. Hundreds of families from across the Borough turned up to take part in the national celebration of children’s right to play in the beautiful surroundings by the River Thames.

All activities were free and there were endless opportunities to play, create, run, listen and build. With so much to do, the most difficult part was deciding what to try.

More user-friendly website launched

In July 2016 we launched a fresher, cleaner and most importantly more user-friendly Council website. The site allows residents to access Council services at a time that works for them. Report a missed bin collection, renew your parking permit, report fly-tipping or apply for a more card – all of these services and many many more can be accessed through our website, elmbridge.gov.uk.

Supporting school expansions

Elmbridge has seen huge amounts of work in recent years to provide more school places to meet growing demand. A number of these projects were completed during 2016/17, including the expansion of Manby Lodge Infant School in Weybridge which was officially opened by MP Philip Hammond in December 2016.

Elmbridge Borough Council has assisted Surrey County Council with the cost of projects such as these by allocating funds raised through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to school expansions. Almost £3million CIL has been provided to the Borough wide school expansion programme to date.
In 2016, Elmbridge Museum carried on with its ambitious plan to bring history into the community through a series of 10 differently themed temporary displays at the Civic Centre, Cobham, Thames Ditton and Walton libraries. This included the Wrens Display at Cobham Library curated by Year 2 children of Royal Kent Primary School working in partnership with Elmbridge Museum.

The Xcel Sports Hub

Last year work began to clean up land on Waterside Drive in Walton-on-Thames, the site of a former landfill, and to build a new sports hub for Elmbridge.

The plan for this hub, situated beside the Xcel Leisure Complex, was to bring together local football and athletics clubs to create state-of-the-facilities not just for these clubs but for the whole community.

Comprising of an eight lane running track, a synthetic turf football pitch and training pitches, the Hub is due to open in September 2017 and we hope all the residents of Elmbridge will enjoy this new facility.

Elmbridge School Choirs festival

March 2017 saw the first performance of Elmbridge School Choirs Festival at ACS Cobham International School. This is a new initiative supported by the R.C. Sherriff Trust and Elmbridge Borough Council, bringing together 6 local schools: Bell Farm, Burhill and Cardinal Newman (Hersham), St. Charles Borromeo and St. James (Weybridge) and Cobham Free School to create a choir of over 200 voices.

More outdoor gyms

Following a positive response from residents to a survey regarding the installation of outdoor gym equipment in either Molesley Hurst Recreation Ground (next to Hurst Pool), Cobham Recreation Ground and Hersham Coronation Recreation Ground, the budget was used to put the equipment in the three locations.
A green and attractive Elmbridge

Green spaces to be proud of

The Council has renewed its relationship with Burleys with a contract to look after its green spaces. The five-year grounds maintenance contract started in March 2017 and offers an option of a two-year extension.

The contract will see a 30 strong Burleys team provide a full green spaces maintenance service, including providing annual bedding displays, pitch maintenance, playground inspections, paddling pools and maintaining parks and open spaces. It will also involve looking after the Borough verges under a separate contract.

All aboard for some pirate family fun

Children and their parents and carers helped us to launch the newly developed pirate themed play area in Churchfields Recreation Ground in Weybridge in July 2016.

This new addition to Churchfields Recreation Ground was eagerly-awaited and feedback on the park’s facilities has been very positive. We hope it will be well used for many years to come.

Third runway at Heathrow

In December 2016, Elmbridge Councillors voted against the expansion of Heathrow airport. While we wait on the outcome of the Government’s national consultation, we will work in partnership with Heathrow and local community groups to address both the positive economic benefits, as well as the concerns around air and noise pollution.
Shaping Elmbridge through a new local plan

All Local Authorities are required to plan for more homes across the country. Councils have been required to reassess their planning policies and to show a plan for building more homes and in Elmbridge this means more than 9,000 additional homes in the next 20 years.

At the end of 2016 and early 2017, we provided three options for a new Local Plan setting out how we might meet our housing target.

This was and is a very emotive subject for residents and we want to work closely with our residents to find the best way forward.

When we have collated and analysed the phase one consultation responses, we will bring the revised proposal back to our residents before submission to the Secretary of State.

Enforcement task and finish group

The Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee established an Enforcement Task and Finish Group to review the enforcement service provided by the Council. The Task and Finish Group primarily explored the new Planning Enforcement Plan, ensuring that the new document was resident-friendly, clearly set out the tools utilised by the Council in terms of planning enforcement, as well as outlining what residents can expect from the service. A copy of the report is available on the Council’s website.
Engaging with the Elmbridge community

Elmbridge Borough Council is a local authority that prides itself on putting its residents first. This ethos is at the heart of everything we do as an organisation and an essential part of that is consultation and engagement with our residents.

We do not consider consultation to be a ‘tick-box’ exercise; it is a vital part of our work and throughout the year we take part in and offer many opportunities to speak to our residents and business owners.

As an organisation at the centre of the Elmbridge community, we are committed to delivering our vision of a confident, cohesive and thriving Elmbridge. From the Prospects and Priorities event in January, the My Elmbridge series of events throughout the year (formerly Let’s Talk Elmbridge), through to our Residents’ Panel survey, social media engagement and specific consultations around the proposed new Local Plan, the design of the new play parks at Churchfields Recreation Ground, Brooklands Community Park and the Xcel Sports Hub and the expansion of Heathrow airport for example, your opinion matters.

In 2016/17 you told us that

- Maintaining the green spaces in the Borough was important to you and in March 2017 we renewed our relationship with Burleys to look after our green spaces.
- Extending the Local Plan consultation – in January 2017, due to the huge interest and response among residents to our phase 1 consultation for a new Local Plan, we extended the consultation period by a further 2-weeks.
- More outdoor gyms – following a consultation with residents and due to high demand we were able to install an outdoor gym in three locations rather than just one.

If you would like to take part in our Residents’ Panel please visit elmbridge.gov.uk and search ‘residents panel’.
Supporting the local economy

The Council is committed to supporting our local economy, businesses and town centres through the Enterprise Elmbridge programme and the Elmbridge Civic Improvement Fund (ECIF).

The Enterprise Elmbridge Action Plan and ECIF support for businesses help to ensure that Elmbridge remains an attractive place to invest, work and do business.

In 2016/17 we supported local businesses across the Borough in numerous ways including:

- Attracted over £110,000 in external investment to support our town centres and independent retailers
- Developed a Great British High Street awards entry in partnership with the Claygate Traders that was runner up in the Best Local Parade in Great Britain category
- Launched ‘Enjoy Elmbridge’ Day with six town centres working together on a day of activities to drive footfall and promote independent retail month
- Developed proposals with the Weybridge Town Business Group to deliver streetscape improvements to support events and markets in the town
- Supported over 120 businesses with private sector led business masterclasses in leadership, start-up marketing, exporting, video marketing, selling and business continuity
- Launched Start-up Elmbridge with the Elmbridge Business Network and Surrey Chambers of Commerce to deliver 36 free 1-2-1 advice sessions for new businesses
- Supported our town and village centres and retailers with free parking for each Saturday leading up to Christmas
- Supported independent retailers and businesses with over £260,000 in business grants supporting 66 projects leveraging over £26,000 of private sector investment in our town centres
- Helped 18 new businesses to set up with over £15,000 in start-up grants
- Supported over 100 businesses directly with advice and signposting
Let’s talk money

Elmbridge Borough Council collects all the Council Tax for the Borough. In 2016/17, based on a Band D property, £1,488.47 (88%) was collected on behalf of the County Council and Surrey Police and £207.00 (12%) was for the services provided by Elmbridge Borough Council, from having household waste collected to street cleansing, housing services and maintaining the parks and play areas.

The table below compares the £18.1 million net cost of running the services provided by Elmbridge Borough Council in 2016/17 with the £17.8 million in 2015/16. The budget underspend in 2016/17 was used to part fund an investment property which generated rental income which in turn helps to keep the Council Tax levels low. This net expenditure is funded by central government grants (23%), investment income (6%) and Council Tax (71%).

A full copy of the Council’s Statement of Accounts can be found on our website here.

What our services cost 15/16 to 16/17

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Description</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
<th>2016/17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waste collection, street cleaning and food safety</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£6m</td>
<td>£5.4m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leisure facilities, play areas and open spaces</td>
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<td>5 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£4.2m</td>
<td>£4.5m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community support services</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£2.2m</td>
<td>£2.2m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council tax collection and other central services</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£-0.4m</td>
<td>£0.4m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democracy, elections and governance arrangements</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£2.6m</td>
<td>£2.7m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning policy, development and building control</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£1.8m</td>
<td>£1.8m</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCTV and community Safety</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£0.4m</td>
<td>£0.4m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taxi and alcohol licensing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£0.2m</td>
<td>£0.2m</td>
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<tr>
<td>Car parking</td>
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<td>- 2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£-1m</td>
<td>£-1.5m</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Council is always looking for new ways to improve our services while still remaining efficient and financially resilient.

Below are just a few examples of what we will be doing in the next year:

- Facilitate the delivery of at least 100 affordable and social rented homes.
- Increase the use of our Centres for the Community through enhanced activities, services and facilities and in addition to support the Elmbridge Voluntary Sector.
- Generate at least £100,000 in external funding and investments into the local economy and support business start-ups.
- Deliver our Car Park Strategy to support local communities.
- Work with the new operator and sports clubs to launch the new Sports Hub and maximise community use.
- Launch the new joint waste collection and street cleaning service.
- Work with our contractor to deliver high quality verges, green spaces and cemeteries.