

LEATHERHEAD

Tomorrow



A Future for Leatherhead Town Centre

Do you feel passionately about the future of Leatherhead?

Do you want it to be successful, vibrant and attractive?

If the answer is 'yes', you will be interested in a new report 'LEATHERHEAD TOMORROW – A Report on the Healthcheck 2005' that was published in January 2006. This report indicates what you think the town should be doing in the future to make itself more successful. This leaflet is an introduction to the report and explains how you can obtain a copy and how you might be able to assist in making its conclusions a reality.

In recent years there have been a mix of views about the present and future of Leatherhead town centre. Those of us who live and work in the town feel strongly about ensuring that it is a successful place to do business, spend leisure time, feel safe and enjoy a quality environment. But how do we do this? **LEATHERHEAD TOMORROW** thinks that the people that can best answer this question are local people.

Why LEATHERHEAD TOMORROW?

The **LEATHERHEAD TOMORROW** project is an opportunity to meet the challenges of the town head-on. It provides local people with an opportunity directly to influence Leatherhead's future and to work with a variety of agencies to create a shared vision for the town and to develop specific actions and initiatives that have community support.

The report of **LEATHERHEAD TOMORROW** is therefore your report. It reflects local thoughts, opinions, ideas and inspiration. A small number of these ideas are set out in this leaflet. These are only a small sample of over 100 ideas taken from the main report.



How the LEATHERHEAD TOMORROW report was produced

A Steering Committee of local people has been responsible for completing the Leatherhead Tomorrow report with support from the Leatherhead Town Centre Forum and encouragement from Mole Valley District Council and Surrey County Council. The Committee included representatives from surrounding villages so that the concerns of those nearby who use the town could be heard.

'Leatherhead Tomorrow allows people to influence the future direction of Leatherhead rather than simply react to the plans and policies of others'

Colin Langley,

Chairman, Leatherhead Tomorrow

The Steering Committee used a methodology called a 'Healthcheck'. This is designed to help communities examine the strengths and weakness of their towns and develop ideas for future success.

Getting Your Views

Community consultation is at the heart of **LEATHERHEAD TOMORROW**. A great deal of effort went into ensuring that anyone who wanted to contribute had the opportunity to do so and that many different walks of life were canvassed. Questionnaires, face to face interviews, newspaper articles, the internet, public meetings and focus groups were some of the methods used to obtain opinions. Some groups were targeted, such as young people, the villages and the disabled. No other study of Leatherhead has so extensively canvassed the views of the community.

The Villages

LEATHERHEAD TOMORROW has not neglected the villages nearby. Account has been taken of consultations in the surrounding communities and of their views on the role of Leatherhead and what it can offer them.



'Strengthening the links between Leatherhead and the villages will benefit the town and make it more responsive to the needs of the community'

John Howarth,

Director, Leatherhead Chamber of Commerce

Leatherhead Tomorrow's Vision

Leatherhead will be a vibrant, attractive, self assured and welcoming town that provides access to the amenities of both town and countryside.

It will satisfy the needs of all sectors of the community and those who visit for business or pleasure.

Leatherhead will be a focal point of an area in which people are proud to live and work.



Here are some of the ideas you suggested for the future of our town

Economy

'A vibrant and economically successful town must lie at the heart of Leatherhead's regeneration'.

John Howarth,

Leatherhead Tomorrow Steering Committee.

The Leatherhead area exports 10,000 commuters each day but provides employment for 21,000 people in over 2,600 businesses. Most of these are small and service orientated. Unemployment is low. Concerns include the mix and competitiveness of shops, pockets of unemployment and the lack of facilities for businesses wishing to start up. Ideas suggested to tackle these issues include:

- Developing facilities to encourage young people to start their own business
- Encouraging specialist retailers to come into the town
- Setting up an 'Invest in Leatherhead' programme

Social and Community

'The Leatherhead community has demonstrated its ability to be creative in devising projects to care for its citizens and the environment'

David Mitchell-Baker,

Leatherhead Tomorrow Steering Committee.

Leatherhead is the centre for services in the north of Mole Valley related to health, policing, Citizens Advice Bureau, culture and leisure. Initiatives related to the Theatre, Seeability, Pitstop and Wildlife Aid are evidence of a creative and warm-hearted community. Ideas suggested for developing community spirit and involvement include:

- Encouraging a residents' association representing all sectors of the Leatherhead community
- Publishing a monthly magazine with information on forthcoming activities distributed free
- Developing Good Neighbour schemes for Leatherhead and Fetcham
- Negotiating a 'considerate community code'



Transport and Accessibility

'Issues of transport and accessibility are close to the hearts of Leatherhead people whether it be car parking or improved bus and train services'

Di Stirling,

Leatherhead Tomorrow Steering Committee.

Leatherhead lies close to the centre of Surrey at the confluence of north-south and east-west transport routes, on a railway line, close to the M25 and within easy reach of two international airports. But significant problems were identified: the perceived lack of well-located car parks, problems of on-street parking in residential streets, the frustration of the one-way system, the lack and speed of certain train services, shortcomings in the bus service and system of cycle paths and the condition of some walking routes.



Ideas to tackle these issues include:

- Improve car parking provision within the town
- Work with South West Trains to inaugurate a Sunday service to Guildford
- Improve the paths and conditions for walkers and cyclists
- Improve the service provided by various bus companies within the area.

Environment

'For many people the distinctive environment of Leatherhead is its main attraction. It is the mix of historic town centre, river landscape and surrounding countryside that gives the town its special appeal'.

Heather Ward,

Leatherhead Tomorrow Steering Committee
and Chair of the Town Centre Forum.



Leatherhead is a characterful town with a unique character formed of many attractive features and high quality countryside around it. Issues to be addressed include: the environmental quality of the River Mole, footpath access to the countryside, the walking routes into and out of the town in the north, the quality of street furniture and townscape, the

facilities for disabled people and information on recycling.

Ideas to tackle these issues include:

- A review of the High Street and competing use by pedestrians and vehicles to ensure a safe, convenient and elegant solution within the pedestrianised area.
- Improve routes from the town centre to the river, signpost them, provide information about what can be seen on and around the river.
- Enhance the setting of the Theatre in Church Street with a high quality piece of urban design.



Where can I see the report?

The report contains the main objectives and over 100 project ideas as well as detail of how the Healthcheck was completed. It is available in local libraries, the Leatherhead Help Shop in the High Street and the Council Offices in Pippbrook. The report can also be viewed online at www.leatherheadtomorrow.co.uk.

Any questions relating to the project should be directed to Colin Langley (telephone 01372 374275, email consols@tecrec.net) or John Howarth (telephone 01372 371009, email info@leatherheadchamber.co.uk).

LEATHERHEAD TOMORROW is just the beginning. The actions will need to be developed and prioritised and will require volunteers or other bodies willing to take them forward. This is the next stage. Arrangements are being made to look at ways in which progress on **LEATHERHEAD TOMORROW** can be monitored and co-ordinated. The report is also being used by other organisations such as Mole Valley District Council and Surrey County Council.

We will be keeping a close eye on progress but if you want to be involved in any particular action contact details are included above.

