# Ahmadiyya Youth Clean the Streets of Epsom to Welcome the New Year

### By Luqman Ahmed

Leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association Epsom

As the first light of the new year stretched across the horizon, a group of volunteers from the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association (AMYA) in Epsom began their day armed not with party hats or confetti, but with gloves, litter picking sticks, and determination. While others were still nestled in beds, dreaming of resolutions, this remarkable group was out in the cold, rainy and windy morning, embodying their motto: *Love for All, Hatred for None*.

The volunteers worked in harmony to breathe new life into their community. With every littered bottle picked up and every forgotten candy wrapper swept away, the streets seemed to exhale a sigh of relief. It was as if the city, shedding its New Year's Eve revelry, was donning a fresh, clean cloak to greet 2025.

The act itself was simple but profound. "We do this every year," said 30-year-old volunteer Ahmad Iqbal Ch, a doctor by profession. "It's our way of giving back and starting the year with positivity."

For the Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Organisation, the clean-up event is more than just an exercise in tidiness; it finds its roots in the teachings of Islam, where the Holy Prophet (pbuh) told his followers that half of their faith is cleanliness and that removing even a stone out of someone's way is considered charity.

Members of the public, on their way to work in the wet and windy weather, stopped to thank the volunteers and wished them all a happy new year.

Three core principles guided the AMYA team that morning: humility, selflessness, and service. The humility to pick up after others, the selflessness to sacrifice a warm morning at home, and the service to a community they loved deeply. Their efforts painted a vivid picture of the human spirit at its best—undaunted by chill or challenge.

As the volunteers finished, one could almost hear the streets murmuring in gratitude, the trees nodding in approval, and the winds carrying their story to distant corners. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association had done more than clean up—they had planted seeds of hope, showing that even small acts of service can sweep away the remnants of the past and make way for a brighter, better future.

Indeed, as the Borough slept through its hangover, a group of quiet heroes ensured that its awakening would be one of cleanliness, care, and community—a new year, truly renewed.

## 26th December 2024

Council Finances

# Epsom & Ewell Faces Tight Constraints in 25/26 Government settlement

Surrey Borough	Core Spending Power (£M)	Dwellings As At September 2024	Core Spending Power per dwelling £	Settlement Funding Assessment (£M)	SFA per dwelling
Noking	16.8	44,495	378	2.5	56.08
Runnymede	10.7	39,372	271	2.2	55.30
Guildford	17.6	62,447	281	3.4	54.46
Spelthorne	13.4	44,594	300	2.3	50.50
Epsom And Ewell	10.2	33,272	307	1.6	49.06
Surrey Heath	13.3	38,624	343	1.8	47.17
Imbridge	22.0	59,940	367	2.7	45.57
andridge	12.9	38,137	338	1.7	44.97
Reigate And Banstead	22.2	64,821	342	2.8	43.34
Vaverley	17.2	57,335	300	2.3	40.83
4ole Valley	11.4	39,566	289	1.6	39.23

### 26 December 2024

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has received its provisional financial settlement for 2025/26, and while the figures align with expectations, they highlight ongoing financial pressures on local services. The settlement ... Read More

Arts Culture

## **Epsom Choral Society carols for cardiac charity**



### 24 December 2024

Epsom Choral Society presented its ever-popular annual Christmas Concert on Saturday 21st December at St Martin's Church in Epsom. Always a highlight of the festive season, this year's concert was ... Read More

**Business News** 

## **Epsom business contact with the King warranted**



23 December 2024

Epsom based since 2013 Cirrus, the leading provider of contact centre software, is proud to announce it has been granted a Royal Warrant of Appointment by His Majesty King Charles ... Read More

**Rugby Sports** 

## After 12 wins in a run Sutton & Epsom fall at the thirteenth



23 December 2024

Old Reigatian 21 Sutton & Epsom RFC 15. Saturday 21st December. Midweek illnesses, at one stage, threatened to derail Sutton selection for the last league game in 2024. Ultimately the ... Read More

Crime News

## **Surrey prison failed IPP prisoner**



23 December 2024

Staff at a Surrey prison failed to get medical attention for a prisoner who was reportedly found "naked on all fours, and barking like a dog" before he took his own ... Read More

Council Planning

## River Mole to attract visitors to Leatherhead?



#### 23 December 2024

Mole Valley District Council's dream of "improving" and "enhancing" Leatherhead has taken a step forward after plans to regenerate Claire House and James House were submitted. The site is part ... Read More

Council Council constitution

## Tiers to be shed if Epsom and Ewell loses its Borough Council?



23 December 2024

Surrey could be split in two as part of sweeping changes to how services are run. Downing Street is looking to reshape local government and has set out a white ... Read More

**Education Health News** 

## Surrey Uni Doing the maths on virus transmission



23 December 2024

How prepared are we for another pandemic? Mathematical insights pinpoint lessons on airborne viral transmission Half a decade on from the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, a study by the ... Read More

Arts Community Culture

## **Epsom celebrates a new Ukrainian Christmas Day**



#### 20 December 2024

The vibrant Ukrainian community in Epsom and Ewell and surrounding areas will celebrate Christmas Day for the second year on 25th December. This change was formalized when President Volodymyr Zelenskyy ... Read More

**News Transport** 

## Going South from Epsom for Xmas? Check your trains



20 December 2024

Epsom residents are being urged to check before travelling as South Western Railway (SWR) services to Guildford face significant disruption due to emergency engineering works. The works will take place ... Read More

## **Epsom Choral Society carols for cardiac charity**

**Epsom Choral Society** presented its ever-popular annual Christmas Concert on Saturday 21st December at St Martin's Church in Epsom. Always a highlight of the festive season, this year's concert was a joyful celebration filled with music, readings, and plenty of audience participation. The concert was attended by the Worshipful, the Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, and the Lady Mayoress, Steve and Carol Bridger.

The choir welcomed back **Connaught Brass**, one of the UK's leading brass ensembles, known for their vibrant performances across the UK and Europe. They brought the true spirit of Christmas through their entertaining instrumental pieces and in their accompaniments to the traditional favourites.

This year's programme featured a variety of carols and Christmas songs performed by the choir, accompanied by Marion Lea on the piano and Ben Lewis-Smith on the organ as well as seasonal brass arrangements and uplifting Christmas readings. As always, the audience had the opportunity to join in singing much-loved traditional carols, and filled the church with the warmth and joy of the season.

In keeping with the Christmas spirit of giving, there was an exit collection in aid of the charity Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY) where over £650 was raised. CRY works to reduce the frequency of young sudden cardiac deaths through vital awareness, screening, and research, making this a particularly meaningful way to support those in need during the holiday season.

## **Epsom business contact with the King warranted**

Epsom based since 2013 **Cirrus**, the leading provider of contact centre software, is proud to announce it has been granted a Royal Warrant of Appointment by His Majesty **King Charles III**. The grants were made to 386 companies previously holding a Royal Warrant of Appointment from Queen Elizabeth II, as well as 7 companies with an established and ongoing trading relationship with HM Queen Camilla.

This prestigious recognition marks a reappointment for Cirrus, building on the acknowledgement previously granted by Her late Majesty The Queen for its outstanding service to the Royal Household.

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Cirrus has built a strong reputation for providing innovative, cloud-based contact centre solutions that help organisations improve customer engagement and service delivery. This Royal Warrant recognises the company's continued excellence in supporting the Royal Collection Trust.

**Jason Roos**, Founder and CEO of Cirrus, shared: "It's an immense honour for Cirrus to receive this recognition with a Royal Warrant. This achievement reflects the hard work and dedication of our team. We've always focused on delivering solutions that make a real impact, and this recognition from His Majesty's Household validates that effort in the most meaningful way."

The Royal Warrant of Appointment is awarded to businesses that have supplied goods or services to the Royal Household for at least five years. This announcement also highlights Cirrus' ongoing commitment to supporting local communities, while maintaining the highest environmental standards. Cirrus joins the ranks of household names such as BT and Samsung.

"Looking back, it's incredible to see how far we've come. And looking ahead, we're more motivated than ever to keep pushing the boundaries of what we can achieve. This Royal Warrant is a recognition of our daily efforts, and we're excited to continue collaborating with fantastic partners and clients," Roos added.

In the past year, Cirrus has continued to thrive, securing new clients across sectors such as public services, healthcare, and retail. The company's solutions are trusted by organisations including Nisbets, Premium Credit, and Northern Ireland Water.

## **Epsom Choral Society's Christmas Concert**

Epsom Choral Society again presents its ever-popular annual Christmas Concert on Saturday 21st December at 7:30pm at St Martin's Church in Epsom.

Always a highlight of the festive season, this year's concert promises to be a joyful celebration filled with music, readings, and plenty of audience participation.

The choir is delighted to welcome back **Connaught Brass**, one of the UK's leading brass ensembles, known for their vibrant performances across the UK and Europe. Together, they will bring the true spirit of Christmas alive through stirring instrumental pieces and traditional favourites.

This year's programme features a variety of **carols and Christmas songs** performed by the choir, accompanied by **Marion Lea** on the piano and **Ben Lewis-Smith** on the organ, as well as seasonal brass arrangements and uplifting Christmas readings. As always, the audience will also have the opportunity to join in singing much-loved traditional carols, filling the church with the warmth and joy of the season.

In keeping with the Christmas spirit of giving, there will be an **exit collection in aid of the charity Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY)**. CRY works to reduce the frequency of young sudden cardiac deaths through vital awareness, screening, and research, making this a particularly meaningful way to support those in need during the holiday season.

#### Tickets:

- £20 per person
- Half price (£10) for under-25s

Tickets, which include a **free glass of wine** and a **free programme** with the words of the carols, can be bought online at: https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/epsom-choral-society/t-ojrzldn or at the **door**.

## 19th December 2024

**Business Community** 

## An Epsom and Ewell education in water shortage



18 December 2024

The residents of Epsom, Ewell, Stoneleigh, and surrounding areas have been grappling with a significant water supply crisis over the past 48 hours, following a major failure in the infrastructure ... Read More

Council Housing Planning

## Epsom and Ewell's new housing targets in Surrey perspective



18 December 2024

Housing targets in Surrey are set to skyrocket, with some areas expected to deliver double the number of homes under new Government plans. On December 12, the long-awaited update to ... Read More

Football Sports

## **Epsom and Ewell FC get marching orders from Sandhurst**





18 December 2024

Epsom and Ewell FC 1-2 Sandhurst Town. Combined Counties League - Premier Division South. Tuesday 17th December 2024. Following our defeat at Chipstead in November I advised that we regularly ... Read More

Arts Culture Education

## Watching out for tomorrow's film talent in Epsom and Ewell



17 December 2024

Creative Media students from North East Surrey College of Technology (Nescot) were joined by their tutors, family and friends for the premiere of their short film, 'The Watching' which was ... Read More

**Rugby Sports** 

## Sutton & Epsom topple league leaders



17 December 2024

Sutton & Epsom RFC 20 Beckenham 19. Saturday 14th December. For the final league match at Rugby Lane in 2024 the crowd were treated to the visit of the league ... Read More

Council Housing Planning

## The Local Plan plot thickens after revised NPPF



16 December 2024

The Government's revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published on 12 December, has set ambitious new housing targets, requiring local councils to accelerate their housebuilding efforts. This move coincides with ... Read More Arts Culture

## **Epsom Chamber Choir Christmas concert benefits hospital**



16 December 2024

Epsom Chamber Choir was delighted to welcome The Worshipful The Mayor of Epsom and Ewell, Councillor Steve Bridger, and the Mayoress, Mrs. Carol Bridger, to their annual Christmas concert at ... Read More

**Education Health News** 

## Plant-based meat alternatives might be depressing



16 December 2024

There is mounting evidence suggesting that ultra-processed foods (UPF) are bad for our health, but if you stick to a vegetarian diet, is that still the case? Plant-based meat alternatives (PBMA) are ... Read More

Council Environment

## Epsom and Ewell's solar powered spaceship



16 December 2024

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has recently installed solar panels on the roof of Bourne Hall, and secured funding from the Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund to develop a ... Read More

Council Housing Letters

## Can the green light to Epsom's Green Belt housing turn red?



13 December 2024

Letters to the Editor From Tim Murphy of the Surrey Campaign to Protect Rural England A Dark Day for Epsom and Ewell Dear Editor, I write with deep disappointment and ... Read More

Crime News

### Epsom led crime gang banged up



13 December 2024

An organised crime group who carried out multiple burglaries, a vicious assault, and stole more than £215,000 worth of high-value cars have been jailed for a total of twenty seven ... Read More

News Westminster

# Epsom and Ewell's MP leads debate on support for Explosive Ordnance Disposers



12 December 2024

Helen Maguire, Epsom and Ewell's MP and former British Army Military Police Officer, led a Westminster Hall debate 11th

December on government support for the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) community. ... Read More Crime News

## Woking child murder lessons for Surrey's agencies



12 December 2024

Authorities must face serious questions about years of missed chances to prevent Sara Sharif's death. Sara was murdered aged 10 years old by her father Urfan Sharif and stepmother Beinash ... Read More

# **Epsom Chamber Choir Christmas concert benefits hospital**

**Epsom Chamber Choir** was delighted to welcome The Worshipful The Mayor of Epsom and Ewell, Councillor **Steve Bridger**, and the Mayoress, Mrs. Carol Bridger, to their annual Christmas concert at St Martin's Church on Saturday, 14th December.

Starting at a family-friendly 6 pm and lasting just an hour, the choir's programme, devised by conductor **Jack Apperley**, packed in all the elements expected at this time of the year. Inevitably, there was some Rutter – his arrangement of the Sans Day Carol – and audience carols including *O come*, *all ye faithful* with the Willcocks descant. The choir also sang newer music chosen to feature women composers, including Kerensa Briggs' increasingly well-known *A tender shoot*.

Ralph Vaughan Williams, a composer closely associated with our local area, was represented by his popular *Fantasia on Christmas Carols*, based on folk tunes, with soloists from the choir.

The concert closed with a group of lighter items, including a long-time choir favourite, Peter Gritton's close-harmony version of *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas* and a jazzy arrangement of *Rudolph*, the Red-Nosed Reindeer.

The Epsom and St Helier Hospitals Charity supports patients, their families, and staff at our local hospitals. We were pleased to offer them the opportunity to take a retiring collection after the concert which raised £413.94

### Roger Miller

Image: Jack Apperley with Molly Simpson from the hospital charity with the Mayor and Mayoress of Epsom and Ewell

# Can the green light to Epsom's Green Belt housing turn red?

#### Letters to the Editor

From Tim Murphy of the Surrey Campaign to Protect Rural England

ISSN 2753-2771

### A Dark Day for Epsom and Ewell

Dear Editor,

I write with deep disappointment and dismay at the decision by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) to approve a draft Local Plan that sacrifices Green Belt land in our borough for housing development. This decision marks a dark day for Epsom & Ewell and represents a significant betrayal of the community's trust and values.

On December 10, EEBC councillors voted by 16 to 8, with 7 abstentions, to approve the latest draft Local Plan, which proposes releasing large areas of our much-valued Green Belt. Planning officers claim councillors had no choice due to Government housing targets. However, this argument does not excuse the council's willingness to surrender cherished green spaces. The community clearly recognizes the value of protecting our countryside, even if the council does not.

Public opposition to the loss of Green Belt land has been overwhelming. During last year's consultation, more than 1,500 residents responded, with 87% opposing any Green Belt development. A petition against the loss of Green Belt land attracted an astonishing 11,000 signatures, and a subsequent petition was so strongly supported that councillors were forced to debate it at the December meeting. The message from residents is clear: we do not want our Green Belt sacrificed for development.

It is worth emphasizing that the council's own Green Belt study concluded that the vast majority of the borough's Green Belt is performing its intended function. This includes Horton Farm and Hook Road Arena—two areas now designated for housing—which were identified as "highly performing" under the Government's own criteria. Why, then, is the council choosing to give up such valuable land?

Protecting our Green Belt is about more than preserving open spaces. It is essential for public health, biodiversity, climate change mitigation, and preventing urban sprawl. Epsom & Ewell has largely resisted London's sprawl, maintaining its identity as Surrey's smallest district. Its open spaces are limited to either municipal parks or the Green Belt, yet these are now at risk. Over the past 25 years, the borough has already absorbed significant population growth through large housing developments on former hospital sites.

The council's reliance on private developers to address local housing needs is deeply flawed. Private housebuilders often fail to deliver affordable homes, using "viability assessments" to argue that profits would be insufficient if they included the required number of affordable units. For example, a recently approved development on Green Belt land in this borough includes no affordable housing at all.

If EEBC were serious about tackling local housing needs, it would prioritise socially rented housing by working with central government and housing associations to develop urban brownfield sites and town-centre locations. Instead, the council appears intimidated by unrealistic housing targets set by Whitehall and has chosen to offer up our Green Belt as an easy sacrifice. This raises serious questions about local democracy and accountability.

The council's decision disregards the wishes of the community it is supposed to serve. It is vital that we continue to challenge this plan and advocate for a future where Epsom & Ewell's Green Belt is valued and protected for generations to come.

Yours faithfully,

Tim Murphy, Trustee Surrey Campaign to Protect Rural England

From Katherine Alexander of The Epsom Green Belt Group

Dear Editor,

## The ink is barely dry on Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's signing off on the draft Local Plan when it has been rendered obsolete.

The Epsom Green Belt Group warned the council that failing to accelerate the Local Plan process would result in disaster for the borough, and that disaster has now arrived.

The Local Plan will now be caught by the revised National Planning Policy Framework issued today by the government.

Prior to today, the council had the option not to review Green Belt boundaries and not to argue for exceptional circumstances to build on the Green Belt. It chose not to do either, but instead to revise Green Belt boundaries to permit development. Seven and a half years of delays have led us to this point.

The government has focussed its headlines on building on the 'greybelt' to make their plans sound palatable. However, the 'greybelt' definition is a smokescreen for much broader development that they want to portray. This is for two reasons:

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### 1. All Green Belt qualifies as 'greybelt' except:

- Strips of land at the edge of a borough that separate it from built-up sections of neighbouring boroughs.
- Land that 'strongly contributes' to 'checking the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.'

In Epsom & Ewell, 22 of the 53 parcels of Green Belt land in the council's analysis fail to meet either of these criteria and would therefore be classed as greybelt under the new definition. No disused petrol stations to be seen anywhere.

One of the parcels that would remain Green Belt, not greybelt, under this definition is Horton Farm. However, the council has voluntarily included it in the plan.

## 2. The NPPF states that where there is insufficient greybelt land to meet the new housing target, councils must find enough Green Belt land to make up the difference (para 148).

The only hint of protection is if that Green Belt land need not be released if it 'would fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt when considered across the area of the plan.' There is no guidance available as to what that means in practice, but as Epsom Common and Horton Country Park will remain, this exception is unlikely to help either.

### What then is the new housing target for Epsom?

889 dwellings per year. That is almost five times the historical house building rate in the borough (c.189 per year) and more than three times the rate in the proposed Local Plan (c.273 per year).

Every scrap of available land will need to be included in the plan, and even then it won't be enough to get close to the target.

The council only has itself to blame. It has failed to protect the borough, and the government has made it so the price for that failure is astronomically high.

After over 7.5 years of delays, the council's task now is to work quickly—hitherto anathema to them—to review the NPPF in detail and work out whether any of the Green Belt can be saved under the new rules. This may mean taking out land that it had already included, because there is an argument to protect it (such as Horton Farm) in order to mitigate and minimize the disastrous impacts for the borough.

The previous excuse for progressing with an unpopular plan was to protect the borough from speculative development. Because of their delays, there will be no land left for speculative development. Perhaps they've got their wish.

Yours faithfully,

Katherine Alexander

From Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

### Epsom & Ewell Proposed Submission Local Plan (Regulation 19) Consultation to go ahead as soon as possible

10th December Councillors voted to approve the Epsom & Ewell Proposed Submission Local Plan (2022-2040) and that the Regulation 19 Consultation should take place at the earliest opportunity. The Regulation 19 Consultation is the final opportunity for residents to feedback on the plan before it is submitted for independent examination next summer.

At the meeting of Full Council, Councillors heard from a petitioner who requested that all green belt land should be removed from the Proposed Submission Local Plan except for previously developed land. This was debated by Councillors during the meeting, before the vote.

Commenting after the meeting, Councillor Peter O'Donovan, Chair of the Licensing and Planning Policy, said "The Proposed Submission Local Plan provides a vision for our borough that strikes a balance between providing much needed homes including affordable housing, infrastructure, and support for local businesses whilst ensuring enhanced protection for biodiversity and our borough's green spaces, and protecting the valuable local heritage and character of our borough's towns and villages.

"It is challenging to find a path that meets the many different needs of all our communities, and not everyone may agree with every aspect of this plan. However, having listened to all the feedback, and examined the comprehensive evidence base, we feel strongly that this plan ensures that everyone in our borough, both now and in the future, is given the chance to thrive in Epsom & Ewell.

The Regulation 19 Consultation will take place at the earliest opportunity. We will announce the dates on our website and on social media as soon as they are confirmed."



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An up-to-date Local Plan protects the borough from ad hoc and inappropriate development and ensures responsibility for future planning decisions remains with the borough and its communities. It provides a framework for where in the borough new development should go and where should be protected.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council consulted on the Draft Local Plan in February and March 2023. The comments received on the Draft Local Plan, along with the local evidence base, informed the Proposed Submission Local Plan. The Regulation 18 consultation feedback summary report, which shows how the council has taken account of the feedback received, can be found here: Consultation response statement

During the Regulation 19 Consultation residents, visitors and local businesses can comment on whether the plan is legally compliant and sound, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. Guidance on how to respond will be published on the council's website.

Responses collected as part of the consultation will be sent to the Planning Inspectorate with the Proposed Submission Local Plan and the evidence base documents.

#### Dear Editor

As someone involved in the Save Epsom Green Belt campaign I just cannot contain my disbelief and anger at the local Council.

Last week the majority of them went ahead with a policy to build on our wonderful and well used recreational green spaces doubtless under some 'exceptional circumstances' clause.

Obviously, as already said many times and with recent letters to you, it is nevertheless worth reminding all your readers of the true devastating significance of this decision.

It is a Residents' Association Majority Council. They are supposed to represent the local residents: the clue is in the name! They have not and should be ashamed at letting us down despite the many efforts to stop this. I understand that Epsom is the smallest Surrey Borough yet the most populated for its size. As many of us know, the present infrastructure is overloaded: schools, the hospital, GP surgeries, roads viz. Ruxley Lane in rush hours!

This building programme will further exacerbate the problem and severely restrict the country wide environment and its diverse wildlife. No doubt developers are already rubbing their hands with due opportunism as, thanks to the Residents' Association Group, the local Green Belt vanishes FOR EVER! YES, WITH NO COMING BACK.

Yours Faithfully,

Dr Ted Bailey

West Ewell

From Epsom and Ewell MP Helen Maguire

#### Dear Editor.

### Housing in Epsom and Ewell: A Call for Community-Led Solutions

I write to express my deep concern over the Government's recently announced planning framework, which enables developers to bypass locally elected councillors and pressures councils to review precious green belt land for development. For communities like ours in Epsom and Ewell, this approach represents yet another example of Whitehall ignoring the voices of local people who are best placed to decide what their area needs.

Housing is a pressing issue, but the solutions must be community-led. The homes we build here must be genuinely affordable and accompanied by the services that people rely on—GP surgeries, schools, and reliable public transport. It is equally important that we protect the green spaces that define our borough.

Vulnerable families in Epsom and Ewell need safe and warm homes, but this cannot be achieved by sidelining the community. When residents are engaged and empowered, we can deliver the homes required to support those living in temporary accommodation, help older residents access housing solutions tailored to their needs, and ensure the next generation has somewhere to call home.

Unfortunately, the Government's announcement fails to address the root causes of Britain's housing crisis. The biggest issue is a

desperate lack of social housing. Too often, developers use legal loopholes to shirk their obligations to build affordable homes. Meanwhile, the very term "affordable" has become meaningless to many local families who are priced out of the market. We need clearer definitions and upfront solutions to ensure that affordability is not just a slogan but a reality.

The recent decision by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council to move forward with the Local Plan, including controversial Green Belt sites, highlights the challenge we face. While I welcome the council's efforts to prepare a plan, I share the concerns of many local residents and Liberal Democrat councillors who feel that housing targets and the development of virgin Green Belt land, such as Horton Farm, are not the right path forward.

The ruling Residents Association has been slow to update the borough's planning policies, leaving us vulnerable to inappropriate and opportunistic applications. It is time for all parties to work together to prioritise robust, community-supported plans that deliver for Epsom and Ewell.

Epsom and Ewell deserve housing solutions that respect our unique character, address the needs of vulnerable residents, and safeguard our green spaces for future generations. I will continue to stand with our community in advocating for planning policies that reflect these priorities.

Yours faithfully,

### **Helen Maguire MP**

Member of Parliament for Epsom and Ewell

## 12th December 2024

Council Housing Planning

### Council minority vote Local Plan to next stage with Green Belt in



11 December 2024

On 10th December 2024, the Full Council of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council convened to debate the proposed Local Plan, a pivotal document that will shape the borough's future planning, ... Read More

**Arts Business Education** 

## Surrey first in image AI



11 December 2024

Surrey announces world's first AI model for near-instant image creation on consumer-grade hardware. A groundbreaking AI model that creates images as the user types, using only modest and affordable hardware, has been announced by the Surrey ... Read More

**Council Education Transport** 

## Surrey: Free school buses withdrawn



11 December 2024

Free school buses are being axed after a cross-country route was judged safe by Surrey County Council. Parents say the letter outlining the new walkable route explicitly states that the ... Read More

Arts Community Culture

# Epsom Symphony Orchestra: A Cornerstone of Local Musical Excellence



11 December 2024

The Epsom Symphony Orchestra, a cherished fixture in the town's cultural landscape, has been delighting audiences since its founding in 1951. Over its decades-long history, the orchestra has shared the ... Read More

**Rugby Sports** 

## Rugby result reads well for Sutton & Epsom



11 December 2024

Sutton & Epsom RFC 17 - Reeds Weybridge 11. Saturday 7th December 2024. The arrival of Reeds Weybridge at Rugby Lane signalled the culmination of the first half of the ... Read More

News

## A dog's dinner of a licensing scheme?



8 December 2024

Professional dog walkers have rallied against a new dog licensing scheme in Surrey, claiming the managers have overstepped their mark. Dog walkers may have to pay £360 a year to ... Read More

Council Finances

## **Ideas for empty Council premises in Reigate and Redhill**



8 December 2024

Calls to make use of empty town centre units could see charities and pop-up shops take over in Surrey towns as councillors ask for short-term leases to be made available ... Read More

Council Finances

## Examination of a Surrey Borough's 2nd highest UK debt



8 December 2024

The review into Spelthorne Borough Council's £1 billion debt and whether it is upholding its duty to provide best value to residents has been extended. In May, the government wrote ... Read More

**Business News** 

## Small Business is my business says Epsom's MP



5 December 2024

Helen Maguire, MP for Epsom and Ewell, has announced a new survey for local businesses and will spend time working alongside staff at three local establishments in the lead-up to ... Read More

**Business Health** 

## Surrey pharmacies need a better financial prescription



5 December 2024

Pharmacy owners in Surrey say "enough is enough" as they complain working 12-hour days and barely breaking even. One pharmacist said it has to dispense just over 6,000 prescriptions a ... Read More

Community Finances

## **Epsom and Ewell low-income crisis support**



5 December 2024

The Household Support Fund, provided by the Department for Work and Pensions, offers short-term financial support to households struggling to afford essentials. Distributed by CAEE on behalf of Epsom & ... Read More

## **Epsom and Ewell low-income crisis support**

The **Household Support Fund**, provided by the Department for Work and Pensions, offers short-term financial support to households struggling to afford essentials. Distributed by CAEE on behalf of **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council**, this fund is available until **31st March 2025**.

### Who Can Apply?

You may be eligible if you:

- Are on benefits
- Live in a low-income household
- Require crisis support that could otherwise lead to financial hardship

### Who Can CAEE Help?

CAEE provides support to:

- Families
- Pensioners
- Disabled people
- Those in financial crisis

### What Can the Funds Cover?

The Household Support Fund can help with:

- Utilities
- Food
- Essential goods

• Crisis support to avoid financial hardship

### **How to Access the Fund**

• Online: Complete an application via our website: www.caee.org.uk/household-support-fund/

■ **Phone**: Call us on **01372 300777** 

■ **In Person**: Attend a drop-in session:

■ Monday & Tuesday: 10 am - 1 pm

■ **Thursday**: 10 am - 3 pm

### Message from Lisa Davis, CEO of CAEE

"We have been given more Household Support funds to distribute to those who are tipping into financial crisis. From June to September, we assisted 161 clients, including families, older people, and those with disabilities or long-term conditions. We provided essential help such as energy or supermarket vouchers and direct utility payments.

We saw first-hand the significant positive impact this support had on our community, alleviating financial pressure and anxiety.

Examples of crises we can help with include:

- Repairing an essential family car to get to work
- Providing support equipment to prevent a disabled person from falling into hardship
- Covering costs for new school uniforms
- Assisting with utility bills

Get in touch with us as soon as possible - we can help.

Unhappy couple. Photo by Timur Weber: https://www.pexels.com/photo/discord-between-man-and-woman-8560374/