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26th November 2026

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23 February 2023



COUNCIL PLANNING

Ashley Centre and Global House plan

22 February 2023

This is the fourth of eight reports on the BIG PLANS for Epsom and Ewell proposed in the DRAFT LOCAL PLAN that is out for public consultation till 17th March. We do … READ MORE



COUNCIL EDUCATION

Surrey emotional and mental health crisis children's home receives 'Good' Ofsted grading

21 February 2023

Extended Hope, a respite home for children in Surrey who are having an emotional and mental health crisis has been graded as 'Good' in all areas by Ofsted following an … READ MORE



COUNCIL NEWS

Interview with Epsom and Ewell BC's new CEO

21 February 2023

The post of Chief Executive Officer of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, previously known as "Town Clerk", has been occupied by Douglas Grimes for 11 years (1973 – 1984), David … READ MORE



COUNCIL

Would you want to live in Woking?

21 February 2023

A Surrey Borough Council steeped in debt: In 2022 the Liberal Democrats seized control of Woking, inheriting a debt mountain after 14 years of Conservative Party control. At the annual … READ MORE

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COUNCIL PLANNING

Depot Road plans

21 February 2023

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COUNCIL

Pays to get your Council’s audit done

20 February 2023

As we reported here: Epsom and Ewell Council raises tax 2.99% Epsom and Ewell Borough Council was proud of the fact its auditors passed its last set of accounts without … READ MORE

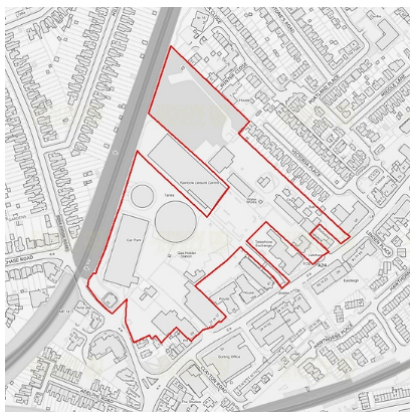


COUNCIL PLANNING

The Epsom and Ewell Town Hall plan

20 February 2023

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COUNCIL PLANNING

The BIG plans for Epsom and Ewell

19 February 2023

Starting today and the next EIGHT days The Epsom and Ewell Times will publish details of each of the NINE BIG plans for Epsom and Ewell. These plans are proposed … READ MORE

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RUGBY SPORTS

Knights give Sutton & Epsom a hard day

19 February 2023

Havant RFC 50 – Sutton & Epsom 5. Saturday 18th February. The traditional close encounters of the rugby kind between Sutton & Epsom and Havant had a Rugby Lane resurrection … READ MORE



COUNCIL NEWS TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

Will Me’lud halt ULEZ expansion to Epsom borders?

16 February 2023

A coalition of five councils has today (Thursday 16 February) launched a Judicial Review to challenge Transport for London (TfL) and the Mayor of London’s decision to expand the Ultra … READ MORE



COUNCIL EDUCATION

Surrey County failed SEND boy

16 February 2023

Surrey County Council has been ordered to apologise and pay a family £7,400 after failing a young boy with special educational needs. The local government and social care ombudsman published … READ MORE



NEWS TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

Epsom rail crossing fatal accident lessons

16 February 2023

In the afternoon of 21st April 2022, a pedestrian was struck and fatally injured by an out-of-service passenger train at Lady Howard footpath and bridleway crossing on Epsom Common. The … READ MORE

New Citizens Advice Bureau Board Members

23 February 2023

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Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell has appointed three new members to its Board, all voluntary positions, who each bring valuable industry experience and strategic guidance to the charity. Clare Brooks has joined the Board as the Company Secretary. Clare is a qualified chartered secretary and has worked in governance roles for a variety of organisations, including a large pension scheme, city fund manager and, most recently at St George's, University of London.

Simon Culhane has joined as a Trustee and is the Vice-Chair of CAEE Board. His previous roles include Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute for Securities & Investment and during his tenure the Institute grew to be a global body with over 40,000 members and delivered over 40,000 qualifications. He has worked with several blue-chip financial companies including Lloyds Bank, Deutsche Bank, in Central Government where he was deputy director of the Prime Minister's Efficiency Unit, and the NHS.

James Thornton has joined as a Trustee and is a Communications, Media and Marketing expert, specialising in healthcare. Currently Assistant Director of Communications for Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals, he has more than 20 years' experience, 13 in senior NHS and third-sector roles. Prior to joining Epsom and St Helier, James was with Healthy London Partnership, specialising in areas such as Violence Reduction, before being seconded to NHS London at the onset of covid, leading communications for the globally-renowned 'Everyone In' homeless health programme.

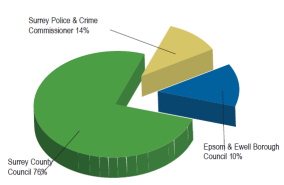
Lisa Davis, CEO of CAEE, said: "These new board members have already made an impact. We recently held a strategy meeting where together we identified and prioritised actions going forward. Top of the list is the need to increase capacity so that we can better serve our clients in these difficult times. This in turn requires more funding, more staff and more volunteers. We are not alone as this is the issue for many charities. However we are all optimistic about the future, we have a dedicated team of committed staff, volunteers and trustees determined to serve our community."

Image: Thornton, Culhane and Brooks

Visit here for a full list of the CAEE Board members www.caee.org.uk/about-us/trustees/

16th February 2023

23 February 2023



COUNCIL NEWS

Epsom and Ewell Council raises tax 2.99%

15 February 2023

Epsom and Ewell's Council tax is to be increased by 2.99% for 2023/2024. At a meeting of the Full Council last night the budget for 2023/2024 was approved. Chair of … READ MORE



COUNCIL NEWS

A new Town Hall for Epsom and Ewell?

15 February 2023

Is the Town Hall Parade over? For some 70 years the residents of Epsom and Ewell have been accustomed to visiting the local council in the Town Hall in The … READ MORE

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COUNCIL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

Local democracy to be energised?

15 February 2023

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council has taken a significant step forward in opening up its committees to public participation. Under a new constitution the public now have the right to … READ MORE



NEWS WESTMINSTER

Surrey’s longest sitting MP to stand-down

14 February 2023

Sir Paul Beresford will not stand again as an MP in Surrey, citing “midnight sittings” in Parliament and “a diary built around the whims of the whips’ office” as reasons … READ MORE



COUNCIL PLANNING

Can Epsom and Ewell get more dense?

14 February 2023

Exclusive to the Epsom and Ewell Times we report on the housing targets of every Surrey borough council. Epsom and Ewell is the smallest borough in Surrey with the highest … READ MORE

EDITORIAL

Housing need or desire?

14 February 2023

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council has embarked on a public consultation on its Draft Local Plan. The consultation ends on 19th March 2023. As we report today it appears that … READ MORE



RUGBY SPORTS

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Top thrashes bottom

13 February 2023

Sutton & Epsom RFC 5 – Wimbledon RFC 42 – Saturday 11th February. When these two clubs met last season the dominant Dons arrived at Rugby Lane as the unbeaten … READ MORE

FOOTBALL SPORTS

10 man away win a turning point?

12 February 2023

Hailsham Town 2 – 4 Epsom & Ewell FC. Southern Combination League – Division One. Saturday 11th February. Cast your mind back to the 19th of November. It was the … READ MORE



ARTS BUSINESS

Epsom’s creatives urged to push for growth

11 February 2023

Creative Businesses in and around Epsom are being encouraged to sign-up to Surrey’s first Creative Growth and Business Summit. Taking place on March 1 and set-up by the University for the … READ MORE



NEWS POLICING

“On Your Bike” to Surrey’s PCSOs?

11 February 2023

A Surrey County Councillor has criticised the reduction in the number of Police Community Support Officers in recent years. PCSOs are non-warranted but provided with a variety of police powers … READ MORE



COUNCIL PLANNING

Blot on Epsom Downs horizon to grow no more?

11 February 2023

Ever wondered where are those tower-blocks on the west horizon from Epsom Downs? Our LDRS journalist reports on Woking Council’s consideration of the height of its buildings: Plans to limit … READ MORE

Your right to ask questions at Council

23 February 2023

The public may not ask questions at Full Council meetings. Only most committees.

Annex 4.5 – Protocol for Members of the Public Speaking at Committees

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1. Questions and statements from the public
   1.1. At ordinary meetings of the council's committees and sub-committees, up to 30 minutes will be set aside for questions and statements:
   i. On matters within the terms of reference of the body in question.
   ii. From any member of the public who lives, works, attends an educational establishment, or who owns or leases land in the Borough.
   1.2. This protocol is not applicable to advisory panels, regulatory committees, Epsom Walton Downs Conservators and Epsom Walton Downs Consultative Committee.
   1.3. The topic of the question or statement may not relate to:
   i. Specific planning or licensing cases, …….
   ii. The personal affairs of an individual.
   iii. A matter which is exempt from disclosure or confidential under the Local Government Act 1972.
   1.4. Questions and statements which in the view of the Chair are defamatory, offensive, vexatious or frivolous will not be accepted.
   1.5. Each question or statement will be limited to 3 minutes in length.
   1.6. This protocol does not cover questions and statements from the public for meetings of the Planning Committee or licensing sub-committees, which are not permitted……. For the avoidance of doubt, questions and statements from the public relating to planning or licensing committees matters can only be made at those specific committees with the consent of the Chair of that committee.
2. Procedure for Questions
   2.1. The chair of the committee shall indicate the item on the agenda at which questions may be put by individual members of the public. Questions are welcomed from the members of the public and must satisfy the conditions below.
   2.2. All questions must consist of one question only they cannot consist of multiple parts. This does not preclude a member of the public from asking another question on a separate topic, time permitting.
   2.3. A person who wishes to ask a question must submit their question in writing (either in hard copy or by email) to the Democratic Services Manager at democraticservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk. The written question must arrive by noon on the third working day before the day of the meeting.
   2.4. The member of the public submitting a question must set out:
   i. the wording of the question they wish to ask.
   ii. an address, email address or telephone number at which they can be contacted before and after the meeting.
   iii. The details of where they live, work, attend an educational establishment, own or lease land in the Borough.
   2.5. Following receipt of a written question, the Democratic Services Manager will ensure that the member of the public asking the question is contacted and told whether their request complies with the conditions above. If contact details are not readily identifiable or have not been supplied, the question will not be accepted even if in all other respects it is valid.
   2.6. At the committee meeting, questions must be addressed to the Chair of the relevant committee / sub-committee. The Chair will invite the questioner to put the question at the meeting.
   2.7. The Chair may decline to answer a question, may give an answer orally at the meeting or may provide a written reply. If available, the questioner will be supplied with a written answer before the meeting.
   2.8. Questions regarding items on the agenda for the meeting may not receive an answer, as the matter will not yet have been considered.
   2.9. At the meeting the Chair will ask the questioner if the response answers their concern or if they wish to ask one supplementary question. If a supplementary question is asked, it must arise from the reply given. The Chair may decline to answer a supplementary question or invite other councillors or officers of the relevant body to contribute to a response.
   2.10. If a member of the public wishes to ask more than one question, their second question shall be taken after all other individuals who wish to ask a question have been given the opportunity to do so. As an alternative to submitting a written question, a member of the public may address a meeting of a committee or sub-committee for up to three minutes.
   3.1. A person wishing to make a statement at a meeting must provide written notice (via hard copy or email) including a summary of the subject matter, to the Democratic Services Manager. The written notice must arrive by noon one working day before the day of the meeting.
   3.2. Speakers may not engage in further debate once their statements have been made

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Housing need or desire?

23 February 2023

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council has embarked on a public consultation on its Draft Local Plan. The consultation ends on 19th March 2023. As we report today it appears that already the most densely populated borough in the County, the Council envisages a growth of new housing that also tops the target unit/KM sq density table.

The voluminous documentation supporting the draft Local Plan predicates the target volume of new housing units on “need”.

Epsom and Ewell is a most desirable place to live in. Served by three mainline London railway stations, close but not too close to the M25 and short journeys to the two main airline gateways to the world. We enjoy many publicly accessible open spaces including Epsom Downs, Epsom Common, Horton County Park and The Hogsmill Open Space. No wonder you hear new neighbours say “We came to Epsom for the green space and access to London”.

Controversially, the Local Plan proposes turning Horton Farm over to a minimum 1500 housing development. The question the Draft Local Plan raises is if piece by piece open countryside in Epsom and Ewell is given to housing will the place become less desirable? Should those who live here, born here, moved here ….. not now enjoy the space they live in, were born in or moved to? Should other boroughs with more space not carry a greater burden of meeting need? Should housing targets be a County wide responsibility? The three Councils of Guildford, Woking and Waverley joined forces in establishing housing targets through a West Surrey Housing Needs Assessment.

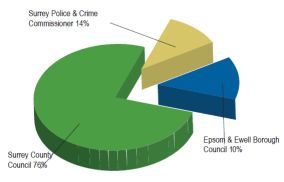
Is the Council catering for those who want to move here or for new generations born here?

The Council is providing the residents of the Borough with every opportunity to ask questions and make their views known.

We suggest you do so.

9th February 2023

23 February 2023

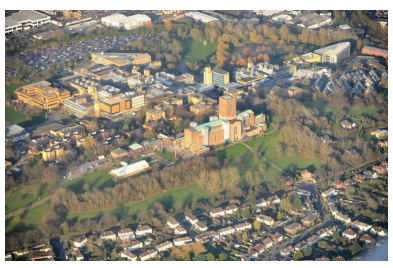


COUNCIL NEWS

2023/2024: average of £50 more to pay Surrey County Council

8 February 2023

Surrey residents will pay nearly £50 a year more to the county council for its share of council tax from April.The 2.99 per cent increase was confirmed at a full … READ MORE



COUNCIL HOUSING PLANNING

Will Cathedral repairs threaten Canadian WW1 memorial?

7 February 2023

Plans to build 124 homes on undeveloped woodland next to Guildford Cathedral will threaten a memorial to Canada’s First World War military sacrifice, a preservation society has warned. Guildford Cathedral … READ MORE

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COUNCIL NEWS TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

Surrey County Council sets 23/24 budget

7 February 2023

A councillor who visited rural India paused his tour to take photos of the roads because they were “in better condition than Surrey’s”. The Labour group leader on Surrey County … READ MORE

CRIME NEWS

Epsom College deaths update

7 February 2023

The incident at an address within Epsom College in the early hours of Sunday, 5 February is now being treated as a homicide investigation. Officers were called to the property … READ MORE

FOOTBALL SPORTS

Poor play spoilt by “Cantonesque” antics

6 February 2023

Epsom & Ewell FC 1-2 Oakwood, Southern Combination League – Division One. Saturday 4th February 2023. Ten weeks to the day since we last had a League contest on a … READ MORE



NEWS

Epsom College Head, husband and child found dead

6 February 2023

In the early hours of Sunday morning 5th February, Surrey Police was contacted by the South East Coast Ambulance Service to a property on the grounds of Epsom College. Officers … READ MORE



COUNCIL NEWS

Local Audit meet: unexpectedly interesting…

5 February 2023

When is a question not a question? This issue was the subject of heated discussion at the 2nd February meeting of the Epsom and Ewell Borough Council’s Audit and Scrutiny Committee. … READ MORE

Epsom news



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RUGBY SPORTS

Camberley Bounce Back Against Spirited Sutton

5 February 2023

Sutton & Epsom RFC 26 – Camberley 50. Saturday 4th February. This fixture was scheduled for December but fell victim to the freezing weather. Camberley arrived smarting from a most … READ MORE



CULTURE LOCAL HISTORY

Surrey celebrates LGBTQ+ month

4 February 2023

Surrey History Centre celebrates the February LGBTQ+ month with, among many others, the story of local born Quentin Crisp, who attended Kingswood School in Epsom. Born in Sutton and named … READ MORE



COUNCIL TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

Don’t blame us for potholes say Surrey’s highway authority.

3 February 2023

The state of Surrey’s roads is “no fault of the county council” its cabinet has heard, as councillors vowed to put more pressure on central government for highways funding. In … READ MORE



LOCAL HISTORY

One more Titanic plus another sinking survivor

3 February 2023

Following Epsom and Ewell Times story on George Pelham, who survived the Titanic disaster and another ship sinking, local writer and historian Martin Knight tells us the story of another … READ MORE



COUNCIL PLANNING

No Crawleys for Surrey’s Downton Abbeys

2 February 2023

A lack of “Downton Abbey” type families to occupy abandoned mansions led to 112 homes at Headley Court (near Epsom) get the green light last night. The Mole Valley green belt … READ MORE



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COUNCIL TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

A sign of no signs to come on ULEZ?

2 February 2023

Surrey councillors say they could stop TfL (Transport for London) putting signs on the county's roads ahead of the planned ULEZ (Ultra Low Emissions Zone) expansion. Surrey County Council's leader … READ MORE

Local Audit meet: unexpectedly interesting…

23 February 2023



When is a question not a question? This issue was the subject of heated discussion at the 2nd February meeting of the **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's** Audit and Scrutiny Committee. Former Stamford Ward councillor **Previn Jagutpal,** who resigned his seat in December, used the council's procedures to ask a question at the start of the meeting: "When an outside agency such as … the Local Government Ombudsman [LGO] makes a determination about the functioning of this council, what is the process for the Chair of Scrutiny … to be informed?"

The chair, Cllr. **Steve Bridger** (RA, Stamford Ward), referred the question to a legal officer attending the meeting. "I believe the process," the officer reported, "is that there's going to be an annual report which will come to the committee which reports on any decisions made by the Ombudsman."

Invited to ask a supplementary question, Mr. Jagutpal, then asked the Chair if he was "satisfied that all communications from outside agencies such as … the LGO in your 4 years as Chairman of this committee have followed that process and you have been informed of all such decisions?"

The Chair was again prompted. "You will receive a written answer in due course," he said.

Mr. Jagutpal then requested to ask a second question. However, the officer ruled that his supplementary question was his second question. Mr Jagutpal argued that, according to the council's constitution, a question followed by a supplementary question is one question, then a second question may be asked. But the officer responded that "You have asked a second question. There are no further questions we can answer tonight."

"Are you going to deny me my constitutional right?" Mr Jagutpal asked. "As far as tonight, that's it in terms of questions," ruled the officer and Mr. Jagutpal left the council chamber.

Cllr. **David Gulland** (Lib Dem, College Ward) wanted to discuss the matter further "Obviously that question and the answers raised further questions in many of our minds," he said and asked if the committee could discuss the matter.

Another pause from the chair was followed by "No, we continue with the agenda."

But Cllr Gulland was not so easily put off. During the course of the evening he asked many other questions relating to the information being provided to the Committee and the Council's internal processes. But he left his most damning speech for the final agenda item.

"Under the constitution," he argued, "the monitoring officer is meant to report to all councillors on any breach of regulation or of data protection or where the ombudsman has reported it to us … I had to go and look for it, [but] I've found the letter of 20th July 2022 from the ombudsman to our interim chief executive, a public document, [which says that] 'during the year your council failed to respond in time to our correspondence during three investigations. On each occasion, we had to escalate the matter internally and were forced to consider issuing a witness summons and a public report for non-compliance. Such delays in our investigation undermine our role and can result in further distress to complainants.'

"There's a big elephant in the room," Cllr. Gulland continued, "that our processes are not working and, more importantly, this committee has not been told about that. I would welcome comments from the chairman or the officer about my comments on the ombudsman and also about data protection issues."

Again, it was the officer who responded. "You are referring to an old letter from the ombudsman," he said, the letter being barely more than six months old. "I'm very happy to look into that. We'll come back to you on issues about data protection."

The July 2022 letter from the LGO acknowledges the challenges faced by local councils coping with pandemic working practices and the impact on services. The LGO seeks to encourage and assist EEBC in improving its procedures.

Meanwhile, members of the public and possibly even members of the committee may remain in the dark about possible breaches of regulations.

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When is a question not a question? You decide. These are the relevant paragraphs from the council's constitution:

1.9 At the Meeting the Chair/Chairman will ask the questioner if the response answers their concern or if they wish to ask one supplementary question. If a supplementary question is asked, it must arise from the reply given.

1.11 If a member of the public asks or wishes to ask more than one question, their second question (written or oral) shall be taken after all other individuals who wish to ask a question have been given the opportunity to do so.

Related Reports:

Man wrongly labelled 'vexatious complainant' by Epsom and Ewell Council

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Surrey celebrates LGBTQ+ month

23 February 2023



Surrey History Centre celebrates the February LGBTQ+ month with, among many others, the story of local born **Quentin Crisp**, who attended **Kingswood School in Epsom**. Born in Sutton and named Denis Charles Pratt in 1908, he changed his name in his twenties, had a colourful and controversial career and died in 1999.

"*I started to wear make-up because it was necessary for me to live out my life getting up, going to work, buying food and going home again, so that someone could be seen to be homosexual and to be part of life*."

This quote, following the screening of his acclaimed work **The Naked Civil Servant**, encompasses Quentin Crisp's attitude to his appearance and homosexuality – it was vital to his individuality, something on which he refused to compromise.

Throughout his life Crisp was a controversial figure; within the gay community he was not liked by everyone. However, his contribution to the gradual acceptance of openly gay men is universally acknowledged.

Early Years

Born Denis Charles Pratt in 1908 in Sutton, then part of Surrey, he was the fourth child of Charles and Frances Pratt, a solicitor and a former governess.

Attending Kingswood Preparatory School in Epsom, Crisp was mercilessly teased for his effeminate behaviour. In 1922, he won a scholarship to Denstone College, near Uttoxeter, and on leaving in 1926, studied journalism at King's College London. Failing to graduate, he then took art classes at the Regent Street Polytechnic.

Leaving home to move to central London at the end of 1930, Crisp adopted his new name and cultivated an effeminate appearance that shocked many and provoked homophobic attacks.

Crisp attempted to join the army at the outbreak of the Second World War but was rejected and declared exempt by the medical board on the grounds that he was 'suffering from sexual perversion'. He left his job as engineer's tracer in 1942 to become a model in life classes in London and the Home Counties. He continued posing for artists into the 1970s. "*It was like being a civil servant,*" he explained in his autobiography, "*except that you were naked.*"

Fame, acceptance and America

Crisp became a gay icon after the publication of his memoir, The Naked Civil Servant (1968), brought his exhibitionism and refusal to remain in the closet to the attention of the general public. In 1975, a film adaptation of The Naked Civil Servant was broadcast on British and American television making both actor John Hurt and Crisp household names. Crisp declared himself one of the great stately homos of England.

Afterwards Crisp developed a one-man speaking show that toured Britain but he still felt like an outsider. In 1981, Crisp moved to New York where, experiencing a fuller sense of social acceptance, he continued his one-man show, An Evening with Quentin Crisp.

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During his extraordinary life Crisp wrote a number of influential, controversial and provocative works, and acted in a variety of television dramas, films and stage plays, the last being the film Orlando with actress Tilda Swinton.

Just short of his 91st birthday, Quentin Crisp died in November 1999, in Manchester on the eve of a nationwide revival of his show. With a minimum of ceremony his body was cremated and his ashes flown back to the US and scattered across his beloved Manhattan……. “

You can read more of this story and others from the Surrey History Centre HERE and use its interactive map to find out about the lives of gay figures who lived or had connections with the County of Surrey.

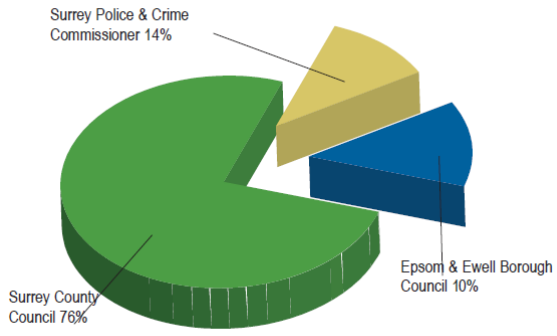
Courtesy Surrey History Centre

Image – painting by Ella Guru of Quentin Crisp – creative common licence

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2nd February 2023

23 February 2023



COUNCIL NEWS

Surrey County Council proposes 2023/24 budget

1 February 2023

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Epsom and Ewell Borough Council’s (EEBC) Licensing and Planning Policy Committee voted unanimously yesterday (30

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Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Draft Local Plan.

23 February 2023

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Draft Local Plan.

Consultation under Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will be consulting on the Draft Local Plan 2022-2040. The Draft Local Plan sets out planning policies and identifies sites for future development within the Borough. When adopted, it will be used to determine planning applications that come forward within the Borough.

The consultation will run for a period of six weeks*, commencing on noon 1 February 2023 and ending midnight on 15 March 2023. You are invited to make comments on the draft Local Plan and associated documents.

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You can view a digital version of the draft Local Plan on the Council's website https://epsom-ewell.gov.uk/local-plan or consultation portal https://epsom-ewell.inconsult.uk/ . Alternatively hard copies of the documents are available for public inspection at the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council offices at the Town Hall, Epsom, between the hours of 9:00am and 5:00pm Monday to Friday or at libraries across the Borough (please check individual library websites for opening times).

Our website also includes background information and technical evidence, which has been used to inform the consultation. These are available under the 'Evidence Base' section on our website.

Representations to the consultation can be made using the following methods:

Through our online portal: https://epsom-ewell.inconsult.uk/

- By email: lplan@epsom-ewell.gov.uk
- By writing to:

Planning Policy, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, Town Hall, The Parade, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5BY

The comments received during this consultation cannot be treated as confidential. Responses will be published on the Council's website, together with the name and/or organisation name of the respondent.

Only those representations that are made in writing and are received by the Council before midnight on Sunday 19th March 2023* will be considered.

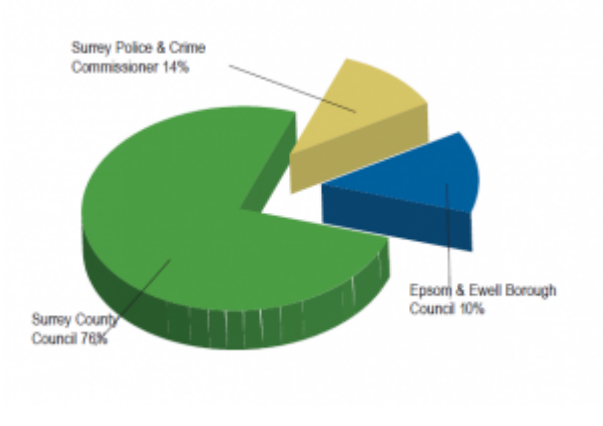
Call for Sites request

The Council will be running a Call for Sites exercise during the same period as this Local Plan consultation. We welcome details of sites which have potential to accommodate future development in the Borough. If you have a site to promote please visit our website https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/call-for-sites and complete the relevant form.

*Revised subsequently by Council to a slightly later date.

Surrey County Council proposes 2023/24 budget

23 February 2023



Surrey County Council is planning to restrict a rise in Council Tax to 2.99% in the current budget plans for 2023/24. The council's Cabinet agreed the draft budget today outlining the planned rise, which is lower than the vast majority of other councils in the UK and far lower than the rate of inflation.

Surrey County Council spends just over £1bn a year on delivering vital services such as Adult Social Care, Children's Services, maintaining roads and pavements, Surrey Fire & Rescue Service, libraries, countryside management and public health.

Image: council tax pie chart: EEBC 2022/2023

The budget also outlines the council's five-year capital investment plan that will deliver more school places and improved school buildings, increased support for children with additional needs, road improvements, big infrastructure projects like in Farnham town centre, the River Thames flood defence scheme, grant funding community projects and increasing recycling capacity across Surrey.

Tim Oliver, Leader of the Council, (Conservative) said: "This budget is about protecting the services that the people of Surrey rely on, while being mindful of the huge pressures household budgets are under at the moment. The rise in the cost of living, inflation and interest rates have all impacted the council as an organisation, as well as our residents. Everything we do has simply become more expensive to deliver. However, we have worked hard over the last five years to ensure our finances are in a solid and stable state.

"We think it is important to only levy the absolute minimum we need to meet increased costs, in order to protect the money in people's pockets as much as possible. "We are making the decision to face this financial challenge in the fairest way possible, balancing our needs and ambitions with the immediate cost of living impact on our residents."

The budget will go before a Full Council meeting on Tuesday 7 February to be ratified.

The full details of the proposed 2023/24 budget can be found here.

Notes:

This list shows the Council's budget plan for next year by each service area, and an indication of how much that is in terms of average Council Tax*.

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Adult Social Care – *Looking after people with disabilities, severe needs, and as they get older.*

£439.7m per year (That is equivalent of £668.66 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

Public Service Reform & Public Health – *Working closely with our NHS partners to help people live healthier lives and keep them safe and well.*

£36.6m per year (That is equivalent of £55.66 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

Children, Families & Lifelong Learning – *Giving young people the best start in life, with additional care for those who need it and supporting education providers.*

£254.8m per year (That is equivalent of £387.48 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

Environment, Transport & Infrastructure – *Improving our roads and public transport, managing our countryside, and tackling the climate emergency.*

£152.8m per year (That is equivalent of £232.37 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

Surrey Fire & Rescue Service – *Keeping residents safe and responding to emergencies*

£38.7m per year (That is equivalent of £58.85 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

Customer and Communities – *Helping local communities thrive, providing libraries, registrations, customer services and funding grants.*

£18.9m per year (That is equivalent of £28.74 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

Prosperity, Partnerships and Growth – *Working with businesses and other partners to help grow Surrey's local economy*

£1.6m per year (That is equivalent of £2.43 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

Communications, Public Affairs & Engagement – *Making sure residents are well informed, can access services, and that Surrey's collective voice is heard.*

£2.2m per year (That is equivalent of £3.35 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

Resources – *Things like Surrey Crisis Fund, school meal provision, administrative support, IT, legal services, and management of council buildings to keep services running smoothly.*

£79.3m per year (That is equivalent of £120.59 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

Central Income and Expenditure – *Putting money into savings to help protect services in future, and repayments on borrowing used for our investment programme*

£76.9m per year (That is equivalent of £116.94 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

**For illustrative purposes, this represents the total budget split by the Band D council tax value. Some areas are funded by specific restricted grants, which are not reflected here. This is the County Council's Band D figures only and does not include amounts raised by District & Borough Councils, Surrey Police or Parish Councils.*

Surrey County Council news service.

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Micro-homes for a macro-problem?

23 February 2023



Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is planning to purchase movable micro homes for families needing temporary accommodation in the borough. In a report to the Strategy & Resource Committee on 26th January, officers stated that

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demand in the borough for temporary accommodation is acute. They plan initially to purchase three family micro homes at a cost of £435,000. The homes, which boast exceptional energy efficiency, will be constructed off site and craned into position. They have a 50 to 60 year life span, come fully furnished and can be moved to another site if required. Several councils, from Cornwall in the west to Southend in the east, have already developed schemes with similar units.

Subject to planning permission, which will be applied for in the next three months, the units will be located on a brownfield site near the Kiln Lane Sainsbury's. The Council has already secured a £75,000 grant from the Brownfield Land Relief Fund to assist with the preparation of the site for development.

The report was greeted with enthusiasm by councillors. "It looks a progressive and radical solution," said Councillor **Alan Williamson** (RA, West Ewell Ward), "and it's to be commended. I would like to see this as the basis for further developments in the borough."

The interest was so great that one officer suggested arranging some tours before the homes are occupied.

Councillor **Kate Chinn** (Labour, Court Ward) was also wholehearted in her support. "Anything that stops families being separated, moving out of the borough, being able to remain with their support networks is fabulous," she said.

After the meeting the Council issued a press release confirming:

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has submitted a planning application to create three new temporary homes to house local families at risk of homelessness.

The proposal is in response to the acute demand for temporary accommodation in the borough, particularly for family-sized homes. It forms an important contribution to the Council's recently launched Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, which includes the objective to increase accommodation options in the borough including temporary accommodation.

The proposal makes use of brownfield land alongside Fairview Road in Epsom and was approved by the Strategy & Resources Committee on Thursday 26 January. The proposal will now go through the due planning process and if approved, work will start in March 2023.

Alongside providing life-changing support to the families who will make use of the homes, investment in the properties will lead to savings for the Council over time, as the cost of the development is offset by rental income and a reduction in the need for expensive nightly paid accommodation. The Council has also been successfully awarded funding of £75,000 from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities' Brownfield Land Relief Fund, to be invested in this project.

The homes are pre-fabricated and built offsite to provide an innovative, attractive and low-cost housing solution. They are at the forefront of energy efficient design and provide safe, welcoming spaces for families.

Cllr **Neil Dallen,** Chair of the Strategy & Resources Committee, said: "I am delighted that this key project has been approved by Committee, and that its importance has been emphasised by the level of funding we have received from central government. The impact of homelessness cannot be underestimated, and increasing temporary accommodation provision for local families will have a positive impact not only on those being housed, but on the borough as a whole.

"This will now progress through the planning process and we will await the outcome with interest."

Surrey Council stretches Epsom & Ewell Council resources

23 February 2023



At Thursday 26th January meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council eagle-eyed financial expert Cllr **David Gulland** (Lib Dem, College Ward) spotted a loss of £250,000 in the borough council's on-street parking income.

A council officer explained that , although highways are Surrey County Council's (SCC) responsibility, they had previously contracted Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) to do the enforcement of on-street parking. EEBC already had their own enforcement officers managing the off-street carparks, so economies of scale could be realised by doing them both together. EEBC used to collect nearly £400K from on-street parking permits and enforcement notices.

But now SCC has unilaterally decided to end that contract and put it back out to a private sector contractor, so EEBC can no longer benefit from the on-street parking income or the economies of scale. Officers are doing all they can to reduce the cost and minimise the loss of income, he insisted.

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Cllr Gulland was unimpressed with SCC's actions. "I think we should note that for possible action at county council election time," he suggested.

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Local Parking (enforcement) Wars opinion piece by Cllr Eber Kington

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Pay rises for Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

23 February 2023



At Epsom and Ewell's Strategy and Resources committee meeting on 26th January, councillors discussed rates of pay in the forthcoming year – for staff, for the Chief Executive and for themselves. Most staff will receive a capped 3% cost of living pay increase. This is a result of the Council's Employee Pay and Reward Procedure 2020-24, a four year pay deal agreed at the beginning of that period. This compares with a Consumer Price Index rise of 10.5% for the 12 months ending in December 2022.

This compares with a proposed increase for the Chief Executive of the borough of at least 15%, a figure which made Cllr **Kate Chinn** (Labour, Court Ward) feel "uncomfortable". The top of the salary range for the Chief Executive will become £143,376 in the 2023/4 year.

A council officer explained that a review of pay for Chief Officers had been undertaken some years ago, but that the Chief Executive's pay had been excluded from that review. Following an external benchmarking exercise, "this is a catch-up exercise," she said. Nevertheless, "for the staff to get 3% because of the agreement that they're in and the chief exec to get 15 to 16%, it does feel quite difficult," Cllr Chinn complained.

Cllr. **Eber Kington** (RA, Ewell Court Ward) took comfort from the gender pay gap which continues to be negative, showing that women employed by the local authority earn on average more than men. This is primarily due to the majority of front-line operatives being male and senior management roles being held by a significant proportion of women. "This does suggest that this is an organisation to which woman feel comfortable applying and where they wish to stay and seek promotion within the organisation," said Cllr Kington. "I think that is something we ought to be proud of as a local authority."

However, the issue that provoked the most councillor participation was their own pay. The motion that councillors were asked to vote on suggested that their allowances should mirror the staff pay award and rise by 3% in 2023/24, with an independent Remuneration Panel determining the increase in 2024/25.

Cllr **David Gulland** (Lib Dem, College Ward) felt "personally unhappy in voting any increase for the councillors" in the current environment.

However, the meeting's chairman, Cllr **Neil Dallen** (RA (Town Ward), pointed out that the last two independent remuneration panels had recommended a considerable increase in councillors' allowances, but the council had voted at the time not to accept those recommendations, otherwise allowances would now be much higher than they are.

Councillor **Alan Williamson** (RA, West Ewell Ward) agreed. "There is a widening gap between this authority and other districts around Surrey," he argued. "In future fiscal years, we should get back on track in line with the independent recommendations."

"We have bills," said Councillor **Monica Coleman** (RA, West Ewell Ward), "and some of us have to decide if we're going to be councillors or get a job. There are some occasions when I have to decide whether to work or go to a meeting and sometimes work rules because that pays my bills."

A sentiment that was echoed by Councillor Chinn. "A really good overhaul of the allowances would be very welcome," she said, " and looking at allowances for things like carers, transport, child-minding …. to enable as many people as possible to become councillors."

The basic allowance for a councillor will rise to £4,031.70 in 2023/24. Some posts such as committee chairs and vice chairs receive additional allowances.

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Grants to save energy…. time running out

23 February 2023



Surrey residents have just three weeks left to apply for a grant to help make their home warmer and more energy efficient, ahead of applications closing on Friday 17 February 2023.

People living in hard to heat homes and on lower incomes, could receive grants between £10,000 and £25,000 to improve insulation and install renewable technology – helping to save energy, reduce emissions and combat rising energy prices. Improvement measures include loft insulation, cavity and external wall insulation, underfloor insulation, and renewables, such as solar electricity panels.

Residents can check if they are eligible by visiting the Action Surrey website – www.actionsurrey.org, or by calling them on 0800 783 2503.

Marisa Heath, (Englefield Green, Conservative) **Cabinet Member for Environment at Surrey County Council said**: "We know this is a challenging time for many and we're really pleased to be offering this funding to our residents who need our support the most.

"Improving the energy efficiency of homes in Surrey will also help us achieve our goal to be a net zero county by 2050. "I encourage residents to check if they are eligible as soon as possible."

So far, over £1.5m has been allocated across the county to fully fund over 250 energy efficiency improvements. Funding has been awarded through central Government to Surrey County Council, leading on behalf of the local authorities across the county. The project will be delivered and managed by Action Surrey – an energy efficiency advice service set up in partnership with all Surrey local authorities.

Keep up to date on progress towards our target of making Surrey net zero by 2050 and find out what you can do to help. Sign up to our Greener Matters newsletter to get updates here: Our climate change newsletter – Surrey County Council (surreycc.gov.uk)

Surrey County Council news service

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