

# Need to sell Council property spelt out for Spelthorne



Spelthorne Borough Council has been warned it must sell off its commercial property empire fast or risk losing tens of millions of pounds and plunging even deeper into financial crisis. The financially-stricken authority agreed on November 17 to overhaul the way it repays its £1.1bn debt, adopt a new debt-repayment policy ordered by government commissioners, and start a rapid sell-off of its investment portfolio.

If the council delivers the plan on time, it could strengthen its budget by around £37m over the next decade, thanks largely to a £361m discount for repaying long-term Public Works Loan Board debt early. But the window to the cash in is narrow. Council officers say that slipping just six months behind schedule would slash the benefit to £12m, and a 25 per cent drop in sales prices could wipe out around 60 per cent of expected gains. The message from senior officials was blunt: delays are dangerous.

The warning triggered fierce rows in the chamber. Conservative councillors argued members still lacked key information and should not be rushed into decisions with such huge consequences. Cllr Margaret Attewell said the analysis so far was “all interpretation and it is not right”, calling for more advice before committing to the strategy.

But others insisted hesitation would be reckless. Cllr Howard Williams said rejecting the new repayment policy would be “the most irresponsible thing this council could do”, warning that commissioners could seize control and force a fire sale if Spelthorne failed to act.

Tory members remained unconvinced. “I don’t see how Spelthorne residents are going to be the winner in this,” said Cllr Sinead Mooney. “Why rush this through now?” Cllr Karen Howkins added that councillors had once believed their previous investment decisions were sound and could not be certain history wouldn’t repeat itself.

Behind the political clash lies a collapsing property empire. The council bought £1.077bn of commercial buildings over several years; they’re now valued at just £552m. Selling them is essential to meet government demands, but the council must still prove it is getting “best value” for every disposal.

The financial strain will be felt quickly. The amount Spelthorne must set aside for debt repayments, its Minimum Revenue Provision, will jump to £59m next year before slowly dropping to £9m over the next decade.

With stakes this high, the council plans to hire external property specialists to handle valuations, marketing and negotiations, admitting its in-house team is far too small to manage such a vast sale programme.

What this all means for residents is still unclear, but councillors warned cuts and higher council tax are almost inevitable. “We’ve looked purely at the financial side,” said Cllr Paul Woodward. “We have no idea what impact on our residents this is going to be.”

Emily Dalton LDRS

Image: Spelthorne Borough Council offices in Knowle Green, Staines. Credit: Emily Coady-Stemp

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# Sara Sharif murder report on Surrey services



Numerous safeguarding flaws over many years “cumulatively laid the foundations for the severe abuse” Sara Sharif experienced, a new independent report has revealed. The 10-year-old schoolgirl was found dead in her dad’s home in Byfleet, Surrey, in August 2023. After Sara’s dad, Urfan Sharif, and stepmum, Beinash Batool, were sentenced for murdering the girl in December 2024, Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) launched an independent safeguarding review. The reviewers were tasked to investigate how professionals responded to concerns about Sara’s welfare throughout her life. The 62-page review, published on November 13, concluded that weaknesses in how professionals assessed risk, shared information and followed safeguarding procedures meant signs of harm were not acted on effectively. “Expected robust safeguarding processes were not followed,” the report found. “Information gathering and assessment at this stage did not adequately triangulate information and respond to the presence of bruising alongside inconsistent explanations. Sara’s ‘voice’ expressed through her change in demeanour was not heard.”

In March 2023, Sara’s school raised concerns with Surrey’s children services after she appeared with bruising on her face and teachers were given inconsistent explanations for how it had happened. Her normally positive demeanour had also changed, but the report found that this was not sufficiently recognised as a sign that she might be at risk. Instead, the service decided no further action was needed after speaking to her father and did not hold a formal strategy discussion with other agencies. The review also found that information was held across multiple agencies but not consistently shared, leading to an incomplete understanding of the family’s situation and therefore assessment of Sara’s safety. It read: “This serves to highlight the challenge for practitioners in coming to a holistic understanding of a child’s life both in the past and present and using this understanding to identify risk of harm.”

Sara was withdrawn from school to be home educated in April 2023, which the review said removed her from professional oversight. Surrey’s policy at the time required a home visit within ten working days when a child is withdrawn from school but this did not take place. The report added that management oversight failed to identify this gap in practice. The decision to home educate should have triggered further checks given the family’s history with children’s services. The review also identified long-standing domestic abuse concerns, finding that professionals underestimated the risks posed by Sara’s father and relied too heavily on his reported attendance at a perpetrator’s programme rather than assessing if his behaviour had changed. The authors recommended domestic abuse training and awareness should be strengthened across agencies locally and nationally.

Additionally Sara’s mum had limited access to Polish interpreters during key family court proceedings in 2019. The report said her views were not fully heard and that little consideration was given to Sara’s mixed Polish and Pakistani heritage in decision-making. The review also admits that sometimes agencies must “think

the unthinkable” and consider the potential risk of harm in daily practice. It states: “Although the aim will always be to try and work alongside families and support them to care for their children, [...] we must remain alert to the possibility that some parents will deliberately harm their children [...] This is not the responsibility of any one agency.” The review made 15 recommendations, including ensuring multi-agency discussions in all cases of unexplained injuries, improving home education oversight, and embedding cultural and domestic abuse training for staff.

Terence Herbert, Chief Executive of Surrey County Council said: “We are deeply sorry for the findings in the report related to us as a local authority. We have already taken robust action to address those relating to Surrey County Council, and that work will continue with every recommendation implemented in full. We will also work with partners across the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership to ensure a joint action plan is implemented as quickly as possible.” In 2019 Surrey’s Children Services was given an ‘Inadequate’ rating from Ofsted. This was then upgraded to ‘Requires Improvement’ in 2022 and then ‘Good’ in 2025. Surrey County Council has said it has already made “significant change” to how it handles child safeguarding. These include the creation of a multi-agency safeguarding hub to improve information sharing between social care, the police, and health services and mandatory domestic abuse training for all children’s social workers. The council said it has also strengthened oversight of home education cases and requires additional checks and management reviews when a child is taken off the school roll.

However, the council has not clarified how it will acknowledge the importance of race and culture when considering child safeguarding, or how it will provide access to a translator if needed. Tim Oliver, Leader of Surrey County Council said: “I am certain that everyone involved with this family will have reflected on what more could have been done to protect Sara, and my thoughts and condolences are with anyone affected. The independent and detailed review makes a number of recommendations both for national government and local partners and it is now essential that every single person in every organisation involved in child safeguarding reads this report and understands the lessons learnt. I am deeply sorry for the findings in the report that relate to us as a local authority. We will now act on those findings and continue to review and strengthen our culture, systems and processes designed to support good practice in working with children and families, as per the recommendations. I call on the government to review the findings and, where appropriate, legislate for the changes in the national system that it calls for.”

Emily Dalton LDRS

Image: Surrey County Council headquarters. Credit: Emily Coady-Stemp

## Epsom’s Famous Turf Set for a Smoother Ride



Racehorses galloping down Epsom’s famous turf could soon enjoy a smoother start, after The Jockey Club won backing to re-route a battered path cutting across the six-furlong chute on the Downs.

The current crossing, used daily by racehorses heading back from morning workouts, has become so uneven it is now seen as a safety risk, with one official saying it’s “unbelievably close” to where horses enter the starting stalls.

After years of wear and tear, heavy machinery, and wet weather, the path has been left in “horrible” shape and “uneven”.

The Jockey Club says the surface has simply had its day, with horses “almost tripping up” as they head for the start line.

Under the plan approved by Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators on November 3, the existing crossing will be shut for good and replaced by a new route looping neatly around the back of the chute.

The redesign will tidy up the area, improve safety for riders and horses, and, importantly for locals, be fully paid for by The Jockey Club. Officials say there will be no cost to taxpayers and no loss of public access, since the old path was never a legal right of way.

“We would re-grass the section of the racetrack that the path would come up from [...] we are looking at a hardcore base topped up by suitable weather surface,” said Clerk of the Course Andrew Cooper. He said the new path should be a permanent, long-lasting solution.

Mr Cooper was enthusiastic about the proposal, describing it as a “definite improvement” both for racing and for the look of the Downs. “You wouldn’t have a track disturbing the start at Ascot,” said Vice Chair Jim Allen. “We’re trying to improve Epsom standing in the international horse racing world.”

Officials say communication with Downs users will be key to managing the change, but most agreed it is long overdue.

“Of course, safety is really important,” said Cllr Kim Spickett. “But people who live here really, really love the Downs. It’s beautiful and they really care about it.” The councillor for Cuddington said she approved of the designs and said the whole chute would look aesthetic.

“It’s not just about safety,” one member said. “It’ll make the whole area look smarter and more in keeping with what you’d expect at an international racecourse.”

The £10,000-£15,000 project could be completed before next year’s Derby Festival, depending on The Jockey Club’s budget approval. If all goes to plan, by the time the 2026 Derby rolls around, horses will be cantering to the stalls on a smoother, safer, and smarter stretch of turf.

Emily Dalton LDRS

Image: View of uneven starting chute on Epsom Downs and racecourse. (Credit: Epsom and Ewell Borough Council documents)

## Surrey prison drug smuggling drones might be investigated



Drones smuggling drugs into prison will be investigated in an inquest into a man who died in custody. The full inquest, which opens next month, will also look at his care and supervision.

Oliver Mulangala, 40, was found dead at HMP High Down, Sutton in July 2024. A pre-inquest review was held at Woking’s Coroner’s Court on October 29, ahead of a 10-week inquest due to begin on November 17.

At the hearing, Coroner Jonathan Stevens said it was his role to investigate any potential factors contributing to Mr Mulangala’s death, including the possibility that drugs may have entered the prison by drones. However, Ministry of Justice (MoJ) representative Mr Simms said there was no evidence to suggest the substances consumed by Mr Mulangala were delivered by drone.



He warned releasing details of intelligence related to drone activity in prison, and measures to reduce or minimise drones, could risk compromising the prison’s security. Mr Simms said the MoJ’s decision had “not been taken lightly” but said “it was not in the public interest” to provide this information.

Barrister Michael Etienne, acting on behalf of Mr Mulangala’s family at the coroner’s court in Woking, said the family wanted the inquest to look at the monitoring, care and supervision in the 12 months prior to Oliver’s tragic death. The court heard that the prison officer who failed to conduct the roll call the morning of July 13 was subsequently dismissed. When Mr Mulangala was found by officers, they undertook initial life support.

Coroner Stevens asked to see all the evidence available from family statements, the MoJ and NHS trust, before deciding if it is relevant for the full inquest. A full inquest with a jury is due to take place for two weeks from November 17. Numerous witnesses will be called, including senior figures from HMP High Down, current prisoners and those responsible for Mr Mulangala’s health.

The Ministry of Justice and North West London NHS Trust have been identified as interested persons in the inquest.

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HMP High Down from Google maps

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## Residents sigh of relief if Government bail out bankrupt Woking



The government’s whopping £500m bailout for debt-ridden Woking Borough Council may not be the last. The cash injection, announced as part of Surrey’s local government reorganisation on October 28, will cover roughly a quarter of Woking’s debt. But ministers have described it as only the “first tranche” of support. Surrey County Council leader Tim Oliver said commissioners appointed to oversee Woking’s finances are still selling off property assets to reduce the total debt and the government has left the door open to further payments.

“They’ve called it a first tranche. So this is £500 million now to get on with selling down the assets, reducing the debt as much as you can, and then we’ll have a conversation about that balance,” he told the Local Democracy Reporting Service. “The expectation is that whatever the rump of the debt remains, the government will pick it up.”

Woking’s debts, which peaked around £2bn, stem from a series of risky property investments that left the council effectively bankrupt. The government’s intervention prevents the shortfall from being passed on to other Surrey residents, something Cllr Oliver said ministers have been “very clear” would not happen. “It’s nobody’s fault, least of all residents’, but they were at risk of being penalised just for living in the wrong place,” the council leader said. “We worked hard to make sure that didn’t happen.”

He added that securing government support for Woking’s debt was a collective effort between Surrey’s council leaders and MPs. Cllr Oliver added that ministers were keen to stress Woking’s situation was “exceptional” to prevent other indebted councils seeking similar bailouts. Although Woking council may be able to breathe a slight sigh of relief with the government’s handout, residents are still left wondering what will happen with the rest of the debt across Surrey.

Cllr Oliver said the coming months would be focused on “getting the detail right” and ensuring that the reorganisation delivers simpler, stronger local government. “It’s great to get a decision, but now the hard work starts,” he said. “We’ll make sure this works for residents and that the government honours its commitment to clearing Woking’s debt.”

The announcement came alongside confirmation that Surrey will be split into two new unitary councils, replacing the current county and district system by 2027. While more than half of those who responded to the public consultation backed a three-way split, ministers said the two-unitary model was “more likely to be financially sustainable”. Local government minister Alison McGovern said the decision “does not set any precedent” for other areas, but acknowledged Surrey’s “unique financial context”: a hint that more support could still be needed. The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government have been asked for comment.

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Image: Woking Victoria Square Towers (View From North)

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## Surrey Fire service workshop needs maintenance check



The garage that keeps Surrey’s fire engines safe and running is “no longer fit for purpose”, according to a new report

Surrey County Council has admitted that the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service’s (SFRS) main vehicle workshop in Reigate needs important maintenance work.

Without urgent work, the service “will no longer be able to continue to carry out critical safety checks” on its fire engine, a new report has revealed.

The Wray Park site, which looks after more than 140 fire engines and other vehicles, has been running on fumes for years. A council report says the buildings are riddled with problems, such as they are difficult to heat in winter and cool in summer, the ventilation system “inefficient”, and the roof too low for newer, taller fire engines to fit inside.

Surrey’s council cabinet, meeting on October 28, is being asked to sign off spending for a full refurbishment between 2025 and 2028, using money already set aside in its capital budget.

Officials describe the investment as “essential” to ensure Surrey’s fire engines can keep rolling and protecting residents. The report says the overhaul will deliver

“fit for purpose facilities to enable the maintenance, repair and servicing of the SFRS vehicle fleet”.

Without it, the council warns, the fire service’s ability to keep its engines roadworthy will be at risk – a situation that could impact optimal Fire Service provision and the protection of Surrey residents.

The revamp has been a long time coming. A decade ago, the county council had hoped to build a joint “blue light” maintenance centre with Sussex Police. But the plan collapsed when the shared site proved too cramped and too costly.

Instead, the council has now decided to invest in its existing Reigate site, which it says is “centrally located, easily accessible, and well-connected to major transport networks”.

An alternative site study found nowhere better, with other options ruled out for being “unsustainable” or too expensive.

If approved, the rebuild will literally raise the roof to fit newer fire engines and include solar panels, insulation and new automated doors.

The report says the work will reduce the carbon footprint and environmental impact on neighbouring Surrey residents and ensure compliance with Health and Safety legislation. It will also mean “a secure and healthy working environment” for fire service staff.

As part of the upgrade, the fire service also plans to start servicing its smaller “white fleet” vehicles (like cars and vans) in-house for the first time, instead of paying private garages.

The council insists the project is viable and affordable within its current budget, though the exact figures are being kept under wraps for commercial sensitivity. It will be paid for through a mix of council borrowing and Home Office funding for ‘Blue Light Collaboration’, the report states.

But officials admit money is tight. The report warns the council “continues to operate in a very challenging financial environment, with significant budgetary pressures and limited financial resources”.

Cabinet members are being urged to “have regard to fiduciary duties to residents in utilising public monies” in other words, make sure taxpayers get value for money.

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Surrey Fire Service Wray Park aerial view Google Maps

## Surrey County Council under pressure over safeguarding review



Surrey County Council is facing growing calls to come clean about when it will publish the findings of its independent review into how it dealt with Pride in Surrey and its former co-founder Stephen Ireland — now serving 24 years in prison for child sexual offences.

Ireland, who co-founded Pride in Surrey in 2019, was sentenced in June to 24 years in prison — plus six years on extended licence — for the rape of a 12-year-old boy and multiple child sexual offences. His partner, David Sutton, who also worked with Pride in Surrey, was jailed for four-and-a-half years.

Rebecca Paul, MP for Reigate and county councillor for Tadworth, Walton and Kingswood, said the council must “urgently clarify” when the long-awaited report will be made public, saying residents “deserve clear answers” over how the authority handled safeguarding concerns

The review, commissioned earlier this year after Ireland’s conviction, was set up to examine the council’s interactions with Ireland and Pride in Surrey, and whether concerns were properly dealt with. But so far, Surrey County Council has not shared the terms of reference or a release date.

Cllr Rebecca Paul previously told the council she raised safeguarding concerns about Ireland in 2023 and gave evidence to the independent reviewer in April this year.

At a full council meeting on October 14, Ms Paul pressed for clarity but got mixed messages

Council Leader Tim Oliver said the report would be published “within the coming weeks”, while Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Public Health, Cllr Mark Nuti, suggested it would be released “by the end of the year”.

Speaking afterwards, the Conservative MP said: “Stephen Ireland’s despicable crimes against children, including the rape of a young boy, are horrific. Residents deserve clear answers about how public bodies engaged with Mr Ireland and Pride in Surrey over the relevant period, and what approach was taken when safeguarding concerns were raised.”

She added that “it has now been many months since this review was commissioned” and warned the council was “dragging its feet”, saying that accountability was “the only way to restore public confidence”.

Cllr Mark Nuti, cabinet member for health and wellbeing and public health, said: “The review is being conducted by an independent person with experience in complex safeguarding issues. The conclusions are currently awaited, and we are committed to sharing the learning from the review alongside any action plan as soon as possible.”

Cllr Oliver told members that while the review was being finalised, there needed to be “openness and transparency” about what the council knew and how it acted.

However, he also indicated that some names might be redacted before the report is made public.

In a statement, Surrey County Council said it “recognises the very significant concern” raised by Ireland’s conviction and confirmed the review began in March, immediately after his sentencing.

Pride in Surrey has also commissioned its own independent report.

Emily Dalton LDRS

New Surrey County Council HQ, Woodhatch Place on Cockshot Hill, Reigate. Credit Surrey County Council

## Surrey elections: Democracy delayed, democracy denied?



Surrey’s politicians have clashed over rumours that Conservative council leaders have tried to stop local elections taking place next year.

An article in The Times this week, by Max Kendix, claimed that ministers were “considering accepting private pleas from Tory leaders of seven county councils” to delay local elections currently scheduled for May 2026 until 2027.

The report alleged that council leaders were “lobbying hard” to move the polls back to avoid potential gains by Reform UK and to maintain stability during plans to reorganise local government.

But senior Conservatives in Surrey have strongly denied making any such request.

The story references that fact that the Conservative-held county councils of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Surrey, East and West Sussex, and Hampshire postponed elections until 2026 to prepare for the transition to new councils. But the article does not name Surrey as part of the lobby group nor does it name any other county council.

Surrey County Council leader Tim Oliver said in a post on social media: “Any decision on whether to postpone elections is ultimately up to the government, but we are absolutely not calling for a delay to Surrey’s elections in May next year.

“We expect the government to announce their decision on local government reorganisation at the end of October, and elections to be in May 2026 as planned.”

Since the story was published in The Times, Mr Kendix clarified on X (formerly Twitter) that although some county councils may have their local elections cancelled, Surrey is on a different devolution timeline so “would go ahead”.

Max Kendix X

However, Dr Al Pinkerton, Liberal Democrat MP for Surrey Heath, said he was “deeply concerned” by The Times’ report and had written to the Secretary of State to seek clarification.

He wrote in a social media post: “If such lobbying succeeds, Conservative county councillors could remain in office for up to two years longer than their current mandate allows — an unacceptable democratic deficit.”

Dr Pinkerton accused the Conservatives of “seeking to delay the inevitable verdict of the voters”, citing growing anger over “the state of Special Educational Needs provision, adult social care, our schools, and the county’s deteriorating roads.”

The news comes as the Lib Dems won a clean sweep of council seats at six different by-elections across the county last week, prompting claims the Tories are “running scared”.

A spokesperson for Surrey Conservatives accused the Liberal Democrats of “spreading baseless misinformation” in a Facebook post, adding: “We have not sought to delay any elections, nor will we. Surrey will definitely have elections either to the new unitaries or to the county council if we are not being abolished.”

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## LibDems continue to rise in Surrey



The blue wall has crumbled a bit further with the Liberal Democrats having completed a clean sweep in Surrey, winning all six by-elections in a county once seen as the beating heart of Conservative Britain.

The party’s so-called ‘Super Thursday’ victories mark another major step in the slow unravelling of the traditional Tory stronghold across the South East, as Reform failed to make the breakthroughs many had predicted.

Among the winners were Alan Ashbery in Camberley West, Catherine Houston in Guildford South East, and Tony Pearce in Caterham Valley – each elected to Surrey County Council following by-elections. For Caterham Valley, Mr Pearce won 48% of the vote which was enough to flip the seat decisively into Lib Dem hands.

The results mean the Lib Dems have absorbed three more county council seats, taking their total to 19 and cementing their position as the main opposition to the ruling Conservatives. The results signal growing frustration with local Conservative leadership amid complaints about potholes, debt, and children’s services, the traditional flashpoints in county politics.

Surrey Lib Dems group leader, Paul Follows said he was delighted with the results. He said in a press statement:

“These results also underline how Surrey’s political landscape continues to change. It is clear the Conservatives are in retreat and since they cancelled the elections last May, they have not won a single by-election, whereas we have now picked up wins in all six.

“We are approaching a period of unprecedented change in the form of Local Government Reorganisation so I look forward to welcoming the new members to our group so that we can all work together in preparing for the two or maybe three new unitary authorities.”

While the Lib Dems’ surge is striking, the scale of their challenge remains. Conservatives still hold overall control of Surrey County Council, and Reform’s vote share, while not translating into seats, hints at turbulence on the right.

The party also celebrated borough and district-level success in Staines, where Laura Barker was elected as councillor, as well as Mark Johnston in Meadvale and St John’s in addition to Mr Pearce again in Whyteleafe.

Leader of the Lib Dems Sir Ed Davey, buoyed by the results, said: “What remains of the Blue Wall is crumbling away. People across Surrey and beyond have voted for true community champions who will put them first.”

The victories included Camberley, part of the Surrey Heath constituency once held by Michael Gove, and Caterham, in the East Surrey seat of Claire Coutinho, now the Shadow Secretary for Energy Security and Net Zero.

Not only a story of Conservative decline, the Liberal Democrats also gained from the Greens in Spelthorne, suggesting the party’s resurgence stretches beyond anti-Tory protest votes. Although the Lib Dems won decisively in many if the seats, Reform UK was second place in four out of six seats.

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## Epsom Downs leftovers



Heaps of leftover racing dirt and old equipment have been abandoned on Epsom Downs, prompting criticism of the “weed-infested eyesores”.

Epsom Civic Society has raised the alarm over soil heaps and discarded equipment left on the beauty spot. The group claims that in some cases, the rubbish has been dumped on the Downs out of convenience rather than necessity.

The most recent example, at the junction of the path at the top Ebbisham Lane and the lower gallop track, was supposed to be removed a year ago after a new horse slipway was completed.

But it is still there, according to the society, and now adorned with discarded plastic rails.

“It’s difficult to say that these are just there because they’re needed for operational reasons,” said Nick Lock, from the civic society at a Epsom and Walton Downs Consultative Committee meeting at Epsom and Ewell Borough Council on October 13. He said: “They’re just there for convenience of not taking it somewhere else.”

Other spoil piles have been spotted at the 7th Furlong car park, behind the Derby Start of the main racecourse and near the bottom of Six Mile Hill.

The materials vary from soil and chippings to old water containers and tractor equipment. All this contributed to a cluttered, unsightly scene on what should be a natural scenic area, the civil society claims.

The Downs Conservators, who manage the site, say the area is a working environment for racehorse training, and some spoil heaps are awaiting future projects.

Cllr Steven McCormick told the Epsom and Walton Downs committee meeting he will go around the site with the Jockey club and identify the mounds to see what they are there for or not there for.

But Cllr McCormick added there is a “balance” between the council’s responsibility in protecting the Down’s natural beauty and the function of the site as a working training ground. He added the council would also have to find a budget to move the spoils as it will cost money and resources.

Some progress has been made, the committee acknowledged. A large pile from resurfacing the bottom nine-furlong gallop was removed following Civil Society pressure, and most reported flytipped material has also been cleared.

But Mr Lock said more needs to be done. “It still does look quite a mess up there,” he told the committee. “It seems a bit of a shame if you’re sitting looking at the nice view from the grandstand and the grounds and the downs and you’re sitting next to all these piles of rubbish.”

Nigel Whybrow from the Training Grounds Management Board confirmed that current materials in the car park are earmarked for planned projects, and redundant equipment will be removed over the winter with some hoped to end up in a museum.

For now, the Civic Society is urging the Conservators to adopt a clear policy: reusable spoils should be stored neatly in designated areas, and all other material should be removed from the Downs promptly.

Emily Dalton LDRS

Image: Dumping of material on the Downs. (Credit: Epsom Civil Society/ Epsom and Ewell Borough Council documents)