

Epsom's potholes. We're not alone...

24 September 2025



'Sink holes happen' was the blunt message from a Surrey highways officer when asked if the council had the budget to repair five crumbling suburban roads.

In fairness, council budgets are often in flux with authorities never knowing how much funding they will receive from the central government and whether they will get any extra pennies from grants.

But that has not softened the blow for Walton residents who say they are "disappointed" after finding out five battered neighbourhood roads might not be resurfaced until 2028.

Almost 300 people signed a petition calling for urgent repairs to Cottimore Avenue, Cromwell Close, Fairfax Crescent, Monks Close and Stuart Avenue. Residents claim the roads in Walton are riddled with cracks, potholes and uneven pavements that pose a danger to pedestrians, cyclists and drivers.

Residents say the situation has gone on for decades - with complaints about the roads dating back to the 1990s. But people say their calls for Surrey County Council to act have been repeatedly put aside and pushed back despite rat run traffic and speeding issues. One resident even claimed that it has been at least 40 years since the roads were last resurfaced.

Residents said they are worried the delays will only get worse once Surrey is broken into unitary councils in Local Government Reorganisation. "It seems the problem is simply being passed on to the next authority," said Paolo Orezzi, lead petitioner. "The road will simply deteriorate and it will increase the cost liability."

But highway bosses have said the streets will not be resurfaced any time soon at a Highways, Transport and Economic Growth meeting on September 23. Instead, they have been given a flatteringly modest 'medium priority' rating in the county's road maintenance list meaning it is unlikely the work will be complete before 2028/29.

Even then, the plan is not to fully resurface the roads but to 'fine mill' the concrete beneath the tarmac. This is a cheaper process but residents fear this will not go far enough.

Highway officers defended the decision pointing to the sheer scale of the challenge. "We manage 5,000km of roads across Surrey," an officer said. "There is no doubt the roads would benefit from work but we have to prioritise based on budgets, emergencies and needs. Unfortunately, we can't give firm timescales beyond next year- things change, sinkholes happen."

Cllr Rachael Lake, who said she has been backing the residents' calls for years, recalled: "I was standing next to a crack where the tarmac had totally worn away. You could actually get a child's foot stuck down it. It was dangerous."

The Conservative member for Walton said she was prepared to use her entire £120,000 allocated budget to fix the roads following residents accusing her of not looking after them. But Cllr Lake claimed highway officers would not even let her put the five worn out roads on a waiting list to be resurfaced.

Lead for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth, Cllr Matt Furniss relented and asked officers to reassess the five roads in question, speak to residents and see if anything can be done with Cllr Lake's allocated budget to get the roads on the list. Cllr Furniss added: "We can potentially do it next year but I am not promising anything."

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Pothole stock image. Credit Kathryn Anderson

Emily Dalton LDRS

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Elmbridge resists London's creep into Surrey

24 September 2025



Outline plans for 60 homes on the edge of a Surrey village have been scrapped again in a bid to stop “London creeping towards us”.

Elmbridge councillors said the land north of Raleigh Drive in Claygate is green belt not ‘grey belt’ and ruled it unsuitable for housing at a planning meeting on September 16.

They also said the plans failed the flood risk ‘sequential test’ meaning safer sites should be looked at first before building there.

The scheme would have seen new homes (up to 50 per cent affordable), open space and landscaping built on the land north of Raleigh Drive and to the east of Claygate House.

The application triggered more than 300 objections from residents, alongside opposition from Claygate Parish Council. Concerns centred on traffic, flooding and the loss of open countryside.

Cllr Janet Turner said: “I have seen over the years how London is creeping towards us.” The member for Hinchley Wood explained: “When you come out of London to Hinchley Wood or Esher or Long Ditton, you will immediately relax because you have an open aspect.

“This is what Elmbridge and Surrey are all about. This is the entrance into our cultural area and we must protect it. Once it’s gone you cannot bring it back.”

Other members agreed, arguing if you weakened one patch of the green belt, you weakened the whole metropolitan ring. Cllr Alistair Mann described it as “death by a thousand cuts” to the green belt if piecemeal applications keep being approved.

The site, next to Claygate house, once home to a bowls green, pitch and putt course and tennis courts, has reportedly fallen into disrepair.

A similar plan was refused in 2023 and dismissed at appeal last year with inspectors at the time ruling it was inappropriate development in the green belt.

Planning officers initially recommended the new scheme for approval, arguing that housing demand and national policy around the green belt has changed.

Elmbridge can currently only demonstrate a 0.9-year housing supply- well below the five years required by the government. Elmbridge currently has a house building target of 1,443 homes annually.

“Our housing need is so critical now, I don’t think this scratchy bit of land is putting green belt in danger,” said Cllr Elaine Sesemann.

She explained: “I would protect greenbelt forever along with every other councillor in this chamber but the world of planning has changed so dramatically.”

Council leader Mike Rollings admitted the local housing need has dramatically increased since 2023 when the plans were first put forward. However Cllr Rolling still determined the square patch of land was not appropriate for house building.

Emily Dalton LDRS

Illustrative view looking south of application site (left) and former Claygate House with Shanly Homes Oaklands Park development to the rear (Credit: Elmbridge Borough Council)

Energy storage plan takes a battering from a Surrey Council

24 September 2025



A bid to build a huge battery storage farm on green belt land in Shepperton has been thrown out after councillors decided it didn't pass the 'special circumstances' test needed to build on protected countryside.

Sunbury BESS Ltd wanted to install 50 industrial-scale battery units - each the size of a shipping container - on 3.5 hectares of land north of Charlton Lane, next to the Eco Park. The site, sandwiched between the M3 and the railway line, is designated green belt.

Objecting to the scheme, Nigel Spooner said: "We ask the committee to refuse this application and thus avoid inflicting on Charlton village, Shepperton and Sunbury an entirely inappropriate, unnecessary and hazardous blight for the next 40 years."

Officers had originally concluded the project's climate benefits - supporting renewable energy and cutting carbon - outweighed the harm to the green belt and local landscape.

But Spelthorne Borough Council's planning committee threw out the application on September 17, arguing there simply were not any "very special circumstances" to justify bulldozing into green belt land.

The scheme, designed to store energy for the National Grid and release it when demand peaks, was pitched as helping the UK hit its climate targets.

The battery site would store electricity when there is plenty spare and feed it back into the grid when demand is high to help balance the supply. The applicant's agent said at the meeting: "The project will actively contribute to decarbonisation by reducing renewable energy curtailment."

But Green Party Cllr Malcolm Beecher argued: "If we are still using fossil fuel power in our power stations to generate the electricity going into the batteries for storage, we are not reducing our carbon emissions.

"Unless we have a condition that only green energy can be stored in these batteries, there are no special circumstances to have it in the green belt."

The company halved the size of its original plans following strong objections, but locals still were not convinced. Residents wrote more than 40 letters objecting to the proposal, raising fears about fire risk, noise, health hazards and what they described as "the industrialisation" of Shepperton's countryside.

But in the end, it was the location that killed the scheme. Planning officers said the battery farm counted as "inappropriate development" in the Green Belt, causing a "significant loss of openness" and clashing with rules designed to stop urban sprawl.

Despite concerns about fire risks and safety, officials said there was no evidence to refuse the battery farm on these grounds. Surrey Fire and Rescue service as well as the Health and Safety Executive raised no objections.

A planning report stated: "The proposal would introduce a range of industrial plant within an open field, resulting in considerable harm to the openness of the Green Belt and encroaching into the countryside. These harms are not clearly outweighed by the benefits put forward."

The decision is a major blow for Sunbury BESS Ltd, which argued the project would provide vital infrastructure to balance renewable energy supply and demand.

Emily Dalton LDRS

Image: An example of a battery storage "farm": Invenergy Beech Ridge Energy Storage System at Beech Ridge Wind Farm in Greenbrier County, West Virginia. Author Z22. Licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license.

Big housing development coming to Guildford

24 September 2025



Guildford could soon see one of its biggest housing developments in decades, with fresh plans submitted to build up to 1,800 new homes at Gosden Hill.

Developers Martin Grant Homes want to transform farmland off the A3 into a new neighbourhood complete with schools, shops, sports pitches, and even a Park and Ride.

The outline applications sets out a long-term vision for the site, which would include:

- Up to 1,800 homes, including 40 per cent affordable housing
- Six Gypsy and Traveller pitches
- A new local centre with shops, health and community facilities
- Land for both a primary school and secondary school
- Around 10,000sqm of employment floorspace
- A 250-space Park and Ride near the A3
- Large areas of green space, including allotments, play areas, and a new woodland walking route

Developers say the project would create a “gateway for Guildford” for drivers coming off the A3. The site, covering more than 130 hectares of farmland and woodland, sits between Burpham and the A3. If approved, the first phase 150 homes would be built with access from Merrow Lane.

The bulk of the site will be housing in a mix of family homes, apartments and some specialist accommodation. Planning documents detail the homes will be built in phases including a mixture of sizes from smaller flats to larger family homes, around 720 affordable homes, space for self-build plots and some elderly care housing.

Most of the higher density housing, like apartment blocks, would sit around the centre and the main street of the new community, while the rest of the site would focus on family housing with gardens.

Not everyone will welcome the idea of more traffic but the scheme includes a new A3 junction, cycle paths, and upgraded bus services to ease the pressure on local roads.

About 34 hectares of open space is planned including a big new woodland walking area at Cotts and Frithy’s Wood. Developers say overhead power lines will be buried underground and much of the existing woodland kept to help the site blend in with the landscape.

Guildford Borough Council cannot currently meet government housing supply targets so the developers argue the project should be green-lit to help tackle the housing shortage.

If given the green light, Gosden Hill would become home to thousands of people, with the developer promising it will be a “healthy, happy and sociable” place to live.

Only eight people have objected to the scheme so far with the majority of comments slamming the construction traffic plan as “wholly inadequate” for the road and likely to cause “intolerable disruption”.

Emily Dalton LDRS

Outline of the proposed development on Gosden Hill Farm. (Credit: Guildford Borough Council/ Martin Grant Homes)

Big improvements required of Epsom care home

24 September 2025



An Epsom care home has been told it needs to make big improvements after inspectors found residents were being left to lead “very isolated lives.”

Fir Trees House, a residential home in Epsom for up to seven adults with learning disabilities, was inspected between October 2024 and July this year following concerns about the quality of care and facilities. At the time of the assessment, only four people were living there – most with long-term mental health conditions and several being assessed for autism.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) said the home was “not always safe” and “not well-led,” warning that some residents were at risk of harm. Inspectors branded the care homes as ‘requiring improvement’ in key areas.

Inspectors said the service “wasn’t always meeting” standards set out under national guidance on supporting people with learning disabilities and autism. In particular, they found staff often focused on tasks rather than encouraging residents to live more fulfilled, independent lives.

One resident told inspectors they were happy at the home, but others described their care as “unsympathetic” and even disrespectful. One person told inspectors: “They went on to recall their first day at the service, saying, “Staff laughed at me as I tried to get up the stairs, I felt very unwell. I had to rest on the stairs, I thought I was going to lose consciousness, my head was spinning and they were laughing.”

The CQC also criticised the service for failing to learn from mistakes. In one case, a resident was moved out after a court ruled they weren’t getting the support they needed. But no managers investigated what went wrong.

The report highlighted a lack of staff at night, meaning people’s safety could not be guaranteed in an emergency. Staff also admitted they weren’t sure which outside organisations they should contact if they had safeguarding concerns.

On top of that, the report said residents were not being encouraged to eat meals together, socialise, or take part in the local community – leaving them at risk of isolation.

However, inspectors did note some positives. Medication was managed safely, refurbishment work had started – including installing a stair lift – and staff spoke positively about the management team.

Inspectors said the home itself needed work. Kitchens and bathrooms were not always clean, and some areas were in poor condition. Since then, refurbishments have begun, with new flooring, a wet room and plans for a stair lift to help people with mobility needs.

The Care Quality Commission said Fir Trees House remained in breach of legal rules around person-centred care and governance.

Fir Trees House has been approached for comment.

283 Fir Tree Road, Epsom, Surrey. (Credit: Google Street View)

Surrey County Cricket Club ground in the red

24 September 2025



A Surrey sports ground is set to get a £114,000 hand out to keep it afloat after the site racked up a big budget shortfall last year. But councillors insist residents will now get clearer oversight on how the pavilion is run.

The sports ground – home to Guildford Cricket Club and Surrey County Cricket Club – was hit by major staffing problems in 2024/25, leaving the management company more than £114k in the red.

As the ground is run as a charity and doesn’t have money of its own, Guildford Borough Council, as trustee, has agreed to step in and cover the gap. Without the cash, the charity would be unable to pay its bills and could go under.

Alongside plugging last year’s hole, councillors have also signed off on a three-year business plan. That means topping up the ground’s budget with a further £80,687 in 2025/26 and £20,572 in 2026/27 – though beyond that no more bailouts are expected.

Without this, officers warned, the charity could fail, leaving taxpayers to foot the bill while the council runs the site

directly without the specialist know-how of its cricketing partners.

Speaking at the Executive meeting on September 12, Cllr Catherine Houston said it was “encouraging to see this coming into shape,” adding: “It is not the shadowy ‘what’s happening here’ question that we’ve all had. I’m really pleased to see the council is able to keep an eye on what is happening in a much more formal way.”

She praised the new structure, with three directors and dedicated officers in place, saying it gave the council confidence there was now ‘a vision’ for the site.

CEO Pedro Wrobel also backed the move, recognising that the problems stemmed from decisions made before the current Executive was in place.

“This is an issue that has a legacy that starts from prior to this Executive coming to force,” he said. “What you are doing here is getting a firm grip on that [...] and putting it in a position where you are able to improve the value for money the organisation is getting.”

The Pavilion was refurbished in 2018 and reopened the following year, with the idea that hosting events and matches would help cover running costs. The council’s Executive will make a decision on the extra funding in the coming weeks.

The Guildford Pavilion. (Credit: Google Street View)

Surrey Police HQ development dogged by flood risks

24 September 2025



Plans to redevelop Surrey Police’s Mount Browne headquarters in Guildford — including a new dog training school — have been green-lit for a second time despite fresh flood risk modelling showing “pockets of high surface water flooding” across the site.

Guildford Borough Council’s Planning Committee approved the scheme in November 2024, but since then national planning rules have changed and the Environment Agency has issued new flood maps.

As a result, Surrey Police and the council agreed to bring the scheme back to committee.

The updated modelling shows parts of the site, including the former bowling green earmarked for the new dog school, face a high risk of surface water flooding.

Councillors raised concerns about what that actually means in practice at another planning committee meeting on September 9.

“On one hand we say there’s a high risk of flooding — and then we say the infrastructure will support that regardless,” Cllr Stephen Hives said. “So I’m a bit confused: is there a danger to welfare or not?”

Planning officers insisted the scheme still passes the required “sequential test” — which means no safer, alternative sites are reasonably available — and that the approved drainage strategy will prevent increased flood risk.

“In practical terms it will make no difference to this development,” an officer told the committee. “The drainage strategy already approved is sufficient even with the updated flood risk.”

The development does not fall within the newly created “Grey Belt” category introduced in the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), but it was judged to still harm the Surrey Hills National Landscape.

With no new highways flooding issues identified and no change to the approved drainage plan, officers confirmed the project remains compliant with planning rules. Plans to redevelop the police HQ and build a new access road was unanimously approved.

Mount Browne has been the headquarters of Surrey Police for more than 70 years. The current campus contains a large number of buildings which have been constructed mainly on a piecemeal basis and are judged no longer fit for purpose.

Emily Dalton

Proposed Redevelopment of Mount Browne, Surrey Police’s HQ. (Credit: Surrey Police)

Surrey County Council flags up the flag issue

24 September 2025



Surrey County Council has set the record straight about whether residents can hang flags from lampposts.

In a statement shared with councillors and online, the authority said: “We recognise the importance of the Union flag and flag of St George as symbols of national pride, and we proudly fly the Union flag from our council headquarters in Reigate.”

But the county council reminded people that anything fixed to a lamppost or painted on roads needs official permission first.

Without it, the council warns, flags and other attachments can pose safety risks for drivers and pedestrians. Unauthorised flags or paint markings will be removed during routine inspections.

Waverley Borough Council leader and Godalming county councillor Paul Follows, who shared the council’s advice online, said residents should also be mindful about putting flags on property they don’t own. “Please don’t be surprised if it’s taken down or reported by the owner,” he said.

He added that removing graffiti or markings from public spaces costs money that ultimately comes out of taxpayers’ pockets. “You can of course always fly a flag from your own property if you want to,” he said.

Anyone keen to display a flag on public land is encouraged to apply for permission first. Details of how to do so are available on the Surrey County Council website.

Emily Dalton

Image: Union Jack flags on Ruxley Lane lampposts

Surrey Police tax set to rise

24 September 2025



Council tax bills could keep climbing despite warnings residents could be getting less bang for their buck. Surrey’s Police and Crime Commissioner has insisted she “will not ask the public to be less safe” as she defended plans to raise council tax for policing.

At a Police and Crime Panel meeting last week (September 4), PCC Lisa Townsend explained the decisions on the annual precept rise were driven by the Chief Constable’s assessment of what the force needs to keep the country safe.

“It’s not me plucking a figure out of thin air,” she told councillors. For Ms Townsend, the choice is clear: “Surrey Police are cutting their cloth, but what I am not prepared to do is ask the public to be less safe.”

Surrey Police must find £14.8m savings by 2029 with pay (which makes up 80 per cent of its spending) ramping up costs, a report states. Each 1 per cent pay rise for police officers adds £2.4m to the budget, equivalent to £4.80 on the average council tax bill.

The report revealed: “Whilst the force is making every effort to not impact services as a result of savings required, there is a risk that this will not be possible”.

Ms Townsend’s comments came after councillors questioned whether constant tax rises could be justified when Surrey

Police must still deliver sweeping budget cuts to balance its budget.

Cllr Richard Wilson challenged: “At some point Surrey Police has to cut its cloth. You can’t keep asking the public for more and more money when it’s a regressive tax.” He asked the PCC to “give the public a break” from the ever-increasing tax bills.

But finance officers warned that the ability to make further cuts “become more difficult every year” despite efforts to standardise IT systems, renegotiate contracts and improve procurement. They warned if Surrey Police do not increase the precept in a particular year then it has “missed that chance” in every following year to raise funds for the Force.

Although the Government has promised to fund some police pay rises above 2.8 per cent, Surrey is still waiting for clarity on how much of this money it will actually receive. The long-awaited Police Reform Bill could also see some functions stripped away to a national body or Surrey forced into merger talks — changes with potentially “major financial implications.”

Surrey remains one of the lowest government-funded forces in the country, leaving residents to shoulder more of the burden through local taxation.

Epsom care home to become hotel and staff HMO

24 September 2025



A former Surrey care home is being given a new lease of life - not for elderly residents but as a mix of hotel rooms and shared housing.

The Elders, on Epsom Road, Ewell, will now officially become a 12-room guesthouse with an 8-bed HMO (house of multiple occupation), plus a manager’s flat, after councillors approved the proposal on September 4.

The decision by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council’s planning committee follows a rocky planning history of previous refusals, enforcement notices and accusations the owners were running it without permission.

Cllr Clive Woodbridge said: “Moving it from a sort of limbo where it’s operating as it is but without any ability to be regulated - because it’s not supposed to be happening - it probably tips my balance.”

The building has been empty for several years and developers argue it is no longer suitable for modern care needs.

The scheme has divided opinion with some councillors saying they were uneasy about losing a care facility at a time when demand is only growing. Members noted the loss of the care home - capable of housing up to 24 residents - would also mean a loss of housing.

HMOs tend to have a bad reputation and are sometimes attributed for noisy neighbours and anti-social behaviour. But Cllr Phil Neale admitted this one looked “more for professional people” than “itinerant” workers.

Planning documents reveal the HMO rooms are aimed at housing staff employed by the owners in local care homes, providing affordable accommodation for new workers before moving into the housing market.

Cllr Alison Kelly argued the units could help newcomers find their feet. She said: “It’s quite a reasonable use of a HMO.”

Not everyone was convinced. Cllr Jan Mason tore into the design, claiming: “It looks like it’s been produced on a packet of cigarettes.” While Cllr Neale raised concerns about sustainability. He said: “I’m disappointed again that we’ve missed the opportunity to push solar panels.”

Outside the former care home on Epsom Road. (Credit: Google Street View)

Anti-catcalling campaign triggered ‘vitriolic’ backlash

24 September 2025



Surrey's Police and Crime Commissioner has said the "vitriolic" online abuse she faced after an anti-catcalling trial campaign went viral shows why tackling violence against women and girls must remain a priority.

The 'Jog On' pilot, launched in the summer, was led by a female police officer who had been harassed while out running. It aimed to address the harassment many women face in public spaces just going about their lives but it sparked fierce backlash online- with some critics questioning whether it was a good use of police resources.

Ms Townsend, who said she was not directly involved in the campaign, said she received the "most vitriolic messages" on social media and they were the worst she had faced in her time as a PCC.

She told a Police and Crime Panel on September 4: "The fact that this was the most awful sort of language that I've had I think tells you why this work is so important."

One X (formerly Twitter) user asked her whether the campaign was a waste of Surrey Police's time, given that catcalling was not a criminal offence. Others said it was a total waste of taxpayer's money.

Townsend has responded on social media and publicly that early intervention and crime prevention are essential parts of policing, explaining that behaviours dismissed as minor - like catcalling and public intimidation - can escalate into more serious offences.

The PCC's comments come as she set out Surrey's apparent progress against her Police and Crime Plan which says tackling VAWG is a top priority.

Councillors challenged Surrey Police's record claiming it is not possible to tell whether violence against women and girls has increased or decreased. The volume of violent domestic abuse crimes reported has decreased by 4 per cent from 7,995 in June 2024 to 7,673 in June 2025. However, the volume of serious sexual offences has increased by 2 per cent from June 2024 to June 2025.

The PCC said: "I hope to see reports of violence against women and girls go up during my term as PCC because we know it is one of the most under-reported crimes in this country, not just in Surrey but right across this country.

"I don't take an increase in reports as a bad thing. I think everyone that comes forward to talk about an experience that they may not have had the confidence to do before is a good and important thing.

"I don't expect to see a reduction in reports anytime soon."

Lisa Townsend, Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner. (Credit: Surrey PCC office)

Godstone's gasworks fury while sinkhole not fixed

24 September 2025



Godstone residents are up in arms over suddenly announced gasworks on a 'major cut through', warning the closures could turn traffic into a nightmare and hit local businesses - all while the High Street's massive sinkhole still has not been fixed.

The works, due to be carried out by SGN, are set to start on September 29 and could last around 23 weeks. Water Lane has already been closed since September 1 for similar work.

But people say the timing is crazy. Charlie Mayall, who lives on Tilburstow Hill Road, called the plan "bonkers". "I'm absolutely furious. I'm spitting feathers," He said. "It's adding insult to injury."

"The diversion is going to be at least twice as bad," he said. "Some of the side lanes aren't wide enough for two cars, let alone a lorry."

Things are made worse by claims from councillors that Surrey County Council and Tandridge District Council didn't know about the works — though SGN insists the project has been in the pipeline for some time and agreed with the authorities.

But residents remain unconvinced, claiming the council should have just told SGN to wait. People aren't stupid. We

understand the gasworks need to be done but they clearly don't need to be done when the high street is also closed."

Carol Ward, who lives on the high street, said people feel ignored. She said: "It's ridiculous — no consultation, no signs, and no proper accountability. People feel walked over," she said.

She added that local businesses are already struggling, including the Fox & Hounds pub, which has been around since 1603.

"I feel like I'm living on a building site," Carol said, explaining the village has already put up with a road collapse in the high street. "I think most people have been very very patient ...but there's a limit to the what people will put up with,"

A Surrey Highways spokesperson said: "We are sympathetic to the concerns of residents... Our Highways Officers are meeting with SGN on September 3 to fully understand the need for their works in Tilburstow Hill Road, their duration and timing. At this stage, only a 'provisional advanced authority' has been approved and an official permit has not been granted."

SGN defended the work, a spokesperson said: "It's essential we replace these 100-year-old mains to keep gas flowing safely. Delaying the work increases the risk of unexpected interruptions... We're reviewing with Surrey County Council whether temporary traffic lights could be used instead of full closures."

SGN says businesses will remain accessible and compensation is available for those affected. Bus services and refuse collections should continue, though residents are advised to check for updates.

Carol Ward on Godstone Green. (Credit: Emily Dalton/LDRS)

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Surrey police officer barred for domestic abuse

24 September 2025



A former Surrey Police officer secretly got back with his ex while under investigation for behaviour in their relationship - then tried to persuade her to retract a statement, a misconduct panel has ruled.

The officer, referred to as Officer A in the report, was supposed to stay away from his former partner, Ms A, after concerns were raised about his behaviour. But the hearing in July and August 2025 was told he started seeing her again behind the force's back and even pushed her to withdraw what she'd told investigators.

The panel said it was a clear attempt to interfere with a witness and undermine a formal investigation to the alleged misconduct.

The panel concluded the officer's behaviour as gross misconduct because he tried to interfere with a live investigation, secretly rekindling a relationship with a key witness and pressuring her to change her statement.

His harassment, aggressive behaviour and invasive social media posts were judged so serious they risked undermining public confidence in the police.

Further incidents of harassment were also proved by the hearing. Ms A said the former officer showed up to her home uninvited and barged his way in, leaving her with bruises, and confronted her in a pub where he made crude remarks in front of others.

Officer A denied contacting Ms A and asking her to retract her statement to the police. He also refuted barging into Ms A's home.

Investigators also discovered that Officer A had been posting personal and sexualised material on Pinterest- including symbols from their relationship like a fake boarding pass for her birthday trip, yellow tulips (her favourite flowers) and photos of home-made sexual restraint gear.

While not every allegation was proven, the panel ruled that Officer A had broken police rules on honesty, respect and professional conduct, and said his actions were serious enough to damage confidence in the force.

The report read: "We do note that before these matters the former officer did serve the public well as demonstrated by the service record provided. He undertook a difficult and stressful role that required a lot of hard work to achieve and

maintain during his career.

“We thank the officer for that service, however this past record would not allow us to impose a lesser outcome, given the serious nature of our findings.”

In terms of mitigating factors, the panel noted Officer A was emotionally distraught at times during the misconduct hearing and was finding matters personally difficult, as confirmed by another officer.

A Surrey Police spokesperson said: “As soon as we were made aware of the allegations involving Officer A, a thorough investigation was carried out by the Force’s Professional Standards Department.

“It was determined that former Officer A would have been dismissed had they still been serving and was placed on the College of Policing Barred List.

“Domestic abuse by any of our officers and staff simply will not be condoned and such allegations against any of our officers or staff are always subject to a thorough investigation by our Professional Standards Department.”

Surrey Police ethics print on wall at Mount Browne HQ. (Credit: Emily Dalton/LDRS)

Surrey expansion of SEN places

24 September 2025



An ‘Outstanding’ Surrey school could open a new satellite site at another primary- around eight miles away.

Surrey County Council has revealed plans to expand a top-rated school for children with severe learning difficulties. Woodlands School, in Leatherhead, could have a second location at Cranmere Primary and Nursery school in Esher – a mere 25-30 minute drive away.

The move would create up to 28 extra places for children with severe learning difficulties and autism, all of whom have an Education, Health Care and Plans (EHCPs).

Currently Woodlands only has room for 83 pupils – though it has been squeezing in an extra 16 thanks to temporary classrooms.

Meanwhile Cranmere Primary, which has been rated ‘Good’ by Ofsted, has been running under capacity for years because of falling birthrates, council documents state. The building can take 630 pupils, but numbers have dipped enough there’s now space to share.

The part of the Cranmere site earmarked for the expansion will need adapting so it can properly meet the needs of Woodlands pupils, according to reports. The work is said to have been planned to take place over the summer holidays, ready for a gradual roll-out of places from October 2025.

Surrey County Council says the set-up makes sense both for families and the budget. Officers say having local specialist places means children do not have to travel far away to school.

By providing places within the state system, the council’s education bill drops and saves money for the taxpayer. Should these pupils be required to attend an education provision in the independent sector, costs would equate to around £1.484m per year every year. This is compared to the average cost for state-maintained specialist places of £644k.

Staff at the new site will be employed directly by Woodlands School and numbers will grow slowly over time, depending on demand.

The council says the move is part of its wider ambition to increase high-quality specialist school places across Surrey as the number of children with EHCPs continues to rise- with a 10 per cent increase expected over the next five years.

The current stage of the consultation will close on Friday 5 September 2025

Outside Woodlands School, Leatherhead. (Credit: Google Street View)

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