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Epsom and Ewell to Go East in Surrey shake-up

28 October 2025



The Government has confirmed plans to abolish Surrey's two-tier system of local government and replace it with two single-tier unitary councils — East Surrey and West Surrey — in what is being described as the biggest reform of local administration in the county for half a century.

A letter from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Steve Reed MP, sent to Surrey's council leaders on 28 October 2025, confirmed the decision to proceed with the two-unitary model, subject to Parliamentary approval. The change will dissolve Surrey County Council and its eleven borough and district councils, creating two large authorities responsible for all local services.

Under the plan, **Epsom & Ewell** will join Elmbridge, Mole Valley, Reigate and Banstead, and Tandridge to form the new East Surrey Unitary Authority. The remainder of the county — Guildford, Runnymede, Spelthorne, Surrey Heath, Waverley and Woking — will form West Surrey. Each authority will be responsible for everything from waste and planning to adult social care, highways and schools.

Elections for the new shadow councils are expected in **May 2026**, with the new authorities assuming full powers from 1 April 2027, once the required Structural Changes Order has been approved by Parliament.

In a statement issued Tuesday, **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC)** said it "acknowledges the decision of Government to proceed with the creation of two new unitary councils" and pledged to work constructively to secure the best outcomes for residents.

Council Leader **Hannah Dalton** (RA Stoneleigh) said: "Although this is not the decision we had hoped for, our focus now is on supporting the transition in a way that protects our residents' interests and maintains the quality of local services. Epsom & Ewell has always prided itself on being a well-run, community-focused council, and that commitment remains unchanged."

EEBC said it would continue working closely with neighbouring councils and government officials and would "keep residents fully informed every step of the way" as plans for the new East Surrey authority take shape.

Three local Liberal Democrat MPs — **Helen Maguire** (Epsom & Ewell), Chris Coghlan (Dorking & Horley) and Monica Harding (Esher & Walton) — issued a joint statement describing the reorganisation as "an important moment of clarity for Surrey after years of uncertainty and financial mismanagement under the Conservatives".

Helen Maguire MP said she welcomed the new chapter for Surrey, particularly the confirmation that local elections will now proceed: "I am pleased that Surrey is entering a new chapter with the introduction of these unitary authorities, and it is right that the local elections will now go ahead, especially after the delays. The Liberal Democrats have always championed decisions being made closer to the people they affect. We will continue to press the Government to give East Surrey Council the funding and freedom it needs to do its job effectively."

Her colleague Chris Coghlan MP said he welcomed "the end to Tory mismanagement of Surrey County Council" and added that it was "entirely inappropriate that [the County Council] has such influence over the new structure," citing its record on special educational needs and disabilities.

Monica Harding MP said Elmbridge residents should not be "expected to shoulder the debt of the failing Tory-run councils elsewhere in Surrey," adding: "It's high time residents get the chance to vote out failed Surrey leadership and replace them with those who will deliver for our transport systems, our adult social care, and our schools."

The MPs said that while they support the simplification of Surrey's structures, there remain serious concerns about how much control Surrey County Council will retain during the transition process. They called for full public consultation and financial transparency throughout.

In his letter to Surrey leaders, Secretary of State Steve Reed MP said the decision to proceed with two new unitary councils was driven by the need for financial sustainability. Across Surrey's existing councils, total debt is estimated at £5 billion, led by the bankruptcy of Woking Borough Council.

He wrote: "In particular, I believe [two unitaries] performs better against the criterion of whether the councils are the right size to achieve efficiencies, improve capacity and withstand financial shocks. My view is that the two-unitary proposal is more likely to be financially sustainable."

He confirmed a Government commitment to repay **£500 million of Woking's debt** in 2026–27 — calling it a "significant and unprecedented commitment" necessary to give the new system a clean start.

Surrey County Council Leader **Tim Oliver** (Conservative) welcomed the decision, calling it "good news for Surrey residents and businesses. We welcome the Government's direction to create two new unitary councils for Surrey from April 2027 – East Surrey and West Surrey," he said. "Reorganisation and devolution are huge opportunities, and this is

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good news for Surrey residents and businesses. As expected, there will be elections to the new unitary councils in May 2026. This reform will unlock huge benefits for Surrey, with more powers held closer to communities, stronger local decision-making and turbo-charged economic growth for the region."

Oliver added that he was "absolutely clear that, throughout this process, our vital work supporting residents will continue – services will be delivered and we will still be here for those who need us most."

Currently, Surrey County Council runs roads, social care and education, while borough and district councils handle bins, planning, housing and leisure. Under the new model, residents will deal with one council instead of two, which ministers say will make services more efficient and reduce duplication.

Officials have confirmed that council tax rates across the new areas are likely to be "harmonised" over time, though details are yet to be finalised. The Government says the reorganisation will save money and improve accountability, but critics warn that merging larger and indebted authorities could make councils more remote and financially fragile.

For **Epsom & Ewell** — which has existed as an independent borough since 1937 — the coming eighteen months will bring detailed negotiations over staffing, budgets and boundaries as the East Surrey authority takes shape.

If Parliament approves the necessary legislation early next year, the new structure will come into force on 1 April 2027, marking the end of Surrey's 12 existing councils and the beginning of a new era in local government.

Image: Map illustrating proposed East and West Surrey unitary boundaries. Epsom & Ewell joins Elmbridge, Mole Valley, Reigate and Banstead and Tandridge in East Surrey. Source: Surrey County Council. Credit SCC

Sam Jones – Reporter



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28 October 2025



Barney Cohen (1897–1970)

By his nephew, Andy Strowman

There is a very quiet cemetery in London — East Ham Jewish Cemetery. You may be the only visitor there apart from the grave workers. Among the rows of stones lies one marked *Barnett Cohen* — the only one there by that name.

Barney, as the family called him, was born in 1897 in Whitechapel. His parents were Milka (Millie) and Hershel (Harris) Cohen, and the family lived at 17 Milward Street, behind the London Hospital. His brothers were Jack and David, his sisters Rachel and Rose. The same house later became my home too, long before I was born.

Barney grew up in hard times. Like so many of his generation, he left school at fourteen and joined the garment trade. He was gentle by nature, a man who never said a bad word about anyone. I think he lacked confidence — something I have inherited too.

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When the Second World War broke out, he enlisted. But when faced with the prospect of killing, he refused. He simply could not harm another human being. For that courage — for it was courage — he was punished. He was placed in the guardhouse and later imprisoned in Wormwood Scrubs as a conscientious objector.

In prison he suffered terribly. His weight fell to five and a half stone. My grandmother Millie, desperate to save him, sought help from her sisters in North London. Together, they visited a government office, and — as the old East End saying goes — *the brown envelope changed hands*. Only then was he released.

A retired officer once told me what those conditions were like: "You wouldn't have liked it in there. Tiny cells, no space, noise all night — shouting, banging, threats. We only stepped in if someone started hitting you."

Barney came out of prison changed. He was nervous, forever scratching, anxious about his work. If he worked beside his brother Jack, he was always asking, *"Is this all right?"*

When I was sixteen, my mother told me that Uncle Barney had endured six sessions of electro-convulsive therapy at **Long Grove Hospital in Epsom** — the same hospital that later held Ronnie Kray. Long Grove closed in 1992, but its shadow remains.

Yet Barney was no shadow. Despite his suffering, he radiated kindness. He loved to make people laugh, performing little magic tricks that delighted us as children. Once, when I was about eight, he came to visit us during his lunch break from the Ellis and Goldstein factory. While he talked to my mother, I quietly bolted the front door so he couldn't leave. My mother struggled with the latch and he burst out laughing — a moment of warmth I have never forgotten.

He married Dolly, and my mother, then fourteen, was his bridesmaid. Life was not easy for them. Poverty, mental illness, and misunderstanding strain any family, and in those days help was scarce and sympathy rarer still.

Barney once told a story about visiting London Zoo on a Sunday in his best suit. A commotion broke out near the monkey cage; he joined the crowd, only for one of the monkeys to run off and return — to spit a mouthful of water all over his suit. The crowd roared with laughter, and so did Barney. That was his nature — to laugh even when the joke was on him.

He died in 1970, still working, collapsing at his workplace at Ellis and Goldstein in Aldgate. His brother Jack said simply, "He always lacked confidence. If I was sewing beside him, he kept asking, *'Is this all right?'*"

Barney's life was not easy. He came from poverty, fought private battles with fear and illness, and faced the cruelty of others with quiet dignity. But he also gave laughter, love, and gentleness to those around him.

His was the untold story of so many — the sensitive souls caught in the machinery of war, poverty, and misunderstanding. He suffered because he refused to harm others. That is a kind of heroism that seldom earns medals.

When I think of Uncle Barney, I see not weakness but light — the quiet strength of a man who never stopped being kind, no matter what the world did to him.

I dedicate these words to him, and to all who, like him, struggled to fit into life yet gave it more compassion than it ever gave them.

Andy Strowman

Image: Barney at son's wedding. Barney on right.

You can read many stories of former patients of the cluster of Epsom psychiatric hospitals on the website of The Friends of Horton Cemetery

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Ewell's Sporting Ambition for Gibraltar Rec Hits the Rocks

28 October 2025



£3.1 Million Sports Hub Proposal at Gibraltar Recreation Ground Rejected amid Transparency and Planning Concerns

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Strategy and Resources Committee (S&R) rejected a proposal to spend £3.1 million

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of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds on transforming Gibraltar Recreation Ground (GRG) in Ewell into a “Centre of Sporting Excellence” at its meeting on 25 September 2025.

The plan, fully recommended by the CIL Member Working Group (CIL MWG), would have created a multi-sport community hub featuring new and refurbished pitches, floodlit courts, a pavilion extension, solar panels, CCTV, and improved access. The project was recorded in committee papers with an overall criteria score of 8/10 and a best-value score of 2/3.

What Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Is and How It Works

Community Infrastructure Levy is a national charge on new developments designed to fund infrastructure supporting local growth, such as schools, roads, and leisure facilities. In Epsom and Ewell, receipts are divided approximately into:

- 70–80% Strategic CIL for borough-wide projects
- 15–25% Neighbourhood CIL for community-level schemes
- 5% for administration

As of September 2025, the Council reported £6.086 million unallocated Strategic CIL and £1.138 million Neighbourhood CIL.

A Closed Decision-Making Process

The CIL Members Working Group is composed of Councillors. It evaluates and recommends spending of millions, meets privately without publishing minutes or allowing public or press attendance. The group comprises Councillors Neil Dallen (Chair) (RA Town) , Alex Coley (Independent – Ruxley) , Liz Frost (RA Woodcote and Langley), James Lawrence (LibDem College), Rob Geleit (Labour – Court), Phil Neale (RA Cuddington), Kieran Persand (Conservative Horton), Alan Williamson (RA West Ewell), and Clive Woodbridge (RA Ewell Village). Only summary scoring and recommendations appear in the Strategy & Resources Committee meeting documents, limiting transparency about debates, votes, and possible conflicts of interest.

Open Chamber Debate Highlights

Chair Councillor **Neil Dallen** reminded members that the Gibraltar project still required an additional £500,000 in revenue funding to be considered later and that planning permission was needed before any construction.

Councillor **James Lawrence** opposed allocating £3.1 million now, citing concerns over capacity and linkage to the Local Plan: “This… is the one item that there was a bit of disagreement in the member working group on… Because we had identified… Hook Road Arena would be where we provide a centre of sporting excellence, that was always our plan… This bid kind of came a little bit out of the blue… I happen to not like this bid. I think it’s a lot of money… although [Gibraltar Rec] is in need of upgrading, that would only cost about six or 700k rather than 3.1 million.”

He warned about risking depletion of Strategic CIL funds: “If we vote for [Gibraltar Rec]… we’ll have about 1.6 million left in a strategic CIL fund… it would lower our ability if we need to support Hook Road Arena… particularly because the one in Hook Road Arena will at least be near some big Local Plan development. This… will not be near new developments.”

Councillor **Kate Chinn** (Labour Court) questioned duplication and timing: “I was quite shocked when I saw this… all of a sudden, we’re going to have two super sport sites… I think it should wait until the… Hook Road Arena is decided… I’m thinking 3.1 million… Suddenly here, in the face of the local government reorganization… I’m suspicious of the motivations.”

On whether GRG would compete with Hook Road Arena, Councillor Dallen said: “It’s not an either or… Hook Road Arena… will develop… and Gibraltar Rec can be done in parallel with that, or in advance of that, or behind that… I’m not sure they’d be competing. I think they would be complementary… we’re very short of sporting facilities, and the more we can get, I think the better.”

Councillor **John Beckett** (RA Auriol) asked: “Will Gibraltar Rec be up and running before Hook Road Arena?” Councillor Dallen responded: “I personally believe it will be… long before anything at Hook Road happens.”

Planning officials highlighted that Hook Road Arena is expected beyond the first five years of the Local Plan period, projecting delivery from 2030 onwards.

Governance and Potential Conflicts

Concerns emerged about spending nearly half of the remaining Strategic CIL on a single site and whether Gibraltar Rec aligns with CIL’s statutory purpose, which emphasises investment near new developments. The Chair disclosed a personal interest in local scouting just before S&R approved a separate £50,000 Neighbourhood CIL grant to the 3rd Epsom Scouts for a community building rebuild. This expenditure was approved without discussion with Cllr Dallen remaining in the Chair.

The vote on the Gibraltar Recreation Ground Sporting Excellence project was one vote for, two votes against, two abstentions and the Chair not voting.

Cllr **Clive Woodbridge** (RA Ewell Village), a keen supporter of the Gibraltar Rec. project, told the Epsom and Ewell Times; “Naturally I was disappointed by the decision, although I accept that the bid did require a large sum of money to be allocated. However I do believe it would have provided a fantastic legacy project for the Borough, addressing for

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example the shortage of football and cricket pitches, as identified in the Local Plan's Playing Pitch strategy, while providing some exciting new facilities, such as a public Padel court to meet demand for this increasingly popular sport. I am confident also that it would have leveraged in external grant funding from sporting bodies. Hopefully we can now discuss within the council how to address some of the concerns raised during the S&R committee meeting with a view towards potentially resubmitting a new, and possibly revised bid, sometime next year. The project certainly continues to enjoy my full support, so I will persevere!"

What Happens to the £3.1 Million?

With the recommendation declined, the £3.1 million remains in the Council's Strategic CIL pot, increasing the unallocated balance to about £4.7 million. The funds remain ring-fenced for infrastructure under the Council's CIL Spending Protocol. However, the handling of interest accrued on unspent CIL balances is not disclosed.

Calls for Greater Transparency and Clarity

The controversy highlights debates about whether a private councillors working group should steer multi-million-pound spending without greater public scrutiny. Residents lack access to debates, detailed scoring, or councillor voting records, limiting accountability on how priorities are balanced or conflicts managed.

The broader question remains: should CIL funding follow the locations of new development closely, or should it support borough-wide projects deemed strategically important?

For now, the "Centre of Sporting Excellence" at Gibraltar Recreation Ground remains stuck between a rock and a hard place.

Image: Gibraltar Recreation ground – Google

Sam Jones – Reporter



Walk brings the wonders of the Solar System to Nonsuch Park

28 October 2025



Epsom & Ewell, Saturday 25th October 2025 — Visitors to Nonsuch Park can now enjoy a journey through the Solar System thanks to the successful launch of the Nonsuch Park Solar Walk, officially opened on Saturday in a well-attended community event celebrating science, nature, and local heritage.

The Solar Walk is an engaging, scaled model of the Solar System stretching through one of Epsom & Ewell's most loved green spaces. Each planet is represented by an informative plaque showing its relative distance and size in comparison to the Sun — helping visitors of all ages experience the vastness of space in an accessible and educational way.

Developed in partnership with the Ewell Astronomical Society (EAS), the project combines outdoor recreation with science learning in a fun and interactive way. The EAS provided their astronomical expertise and educational input, helping to bring the concept to life for residents and visitors alike.

"Anyone visiting the park can now experience the scale and vastness of our Solar System whilst enjoying the beautiful surroundings of the historic park," the Society explains on its website.

The launch event saw local councillors, community volunteers, and families take part in guided walks, children's activities, and talks from members of the EAS.

Cllr Steven McCormick said: "The Solar Walk is a fantastic addition to Nonsuch Park — blending education, exercise, and

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the beauty of our surroundings. It's ideal for families, schools, and visitors of all ages, and it's a perfect activity to enjoy together this half term."

The Solar Walk encourages everyone — from young children discovering the planets for the first time to adults curious about astronomy — to explore the park, learn something new, and stay active outdoors. It's a great way to spend quality time with family and friends during the half-term break.

Nonsuch Park continues to be a cherished green space for Epsom & Ewell residents, offering a mix of recreation, history, and natural beauty. The Solar Walk adds a new dimension for visitors — quite literally — to walk among the planets.

For more information about the Solar Walk, including trail maps and learning materials, visit the Ewell Astronomical Society website.

Space walk launch Nonsuch Park. Featuring Epsom and Ewell Mayor Cllr Robert Leach (2nd from right) and Cllr Steven McCormick (RA Surrey County and EEBC Woodcote and Langley ward)

Is there a neat solution to struggling Epsom Common Club?

28 October 2025



The long-established Epsom Common Club remains closed but not forgotten, as a handful of volunteers continue restoration work and urge fellow members to help decide whether a partnership proposal could bring the venue back to life.

Emails circulated by the Club Committee since late September set out a potential arrangement with **NEAT**, a local community organisation best known for transforming the disused bowls pavilion in Court Recreation Ground into "NEAT HQ". Founded by two former Chelsea Foundation coaches, NEAT provides wrap-around childcare, alternative schooling for pupils unable to remain in mainstream education, and a wide range of family and youth activities.

Under the plan, NEAT would rent the rear hall of the Club's premises for use during the week and contribute to finishing both the front and back halls. The Club explains that this could secure a steady income stream, remove the need to rent the front room to outside hirers, and revive the building as a "community hub". However, it would also mean losing the existing snooker room and restricting member use of part of the premises.

The Club's emails emphasise that the idea is still a proposal only. "Before it could proceed to this stage it would require members' consent and this was stressed to NEAT as non-negotiable," wrote the Club Secretary, Mr C. O'Neil, in response to Epsom & Ewell Times.

Three rounds of consultation emails have been sent to roughly 220 members—about three-quarters of the Club's recorded list—but only around seven per cent initially replied. Later reminders lifted the total response rate, producing an approximate three-to-one majority in favour of exploring talks, though still short of what organisers regard as a clear mandate.

With no formal committee now in place and the Club being managed informally by the Secretary and one assisting member, progress has been slow. The handful of volunteers who meet on Saturday mornings to carry out repairs are credited with keeping the building from dereliction. "If this idea is allowed to wither on the vine it could well be last orders for your Club," one circular warned.

Mr O'Neil told the *Times* that if members give approval, formal negotiations would follow to settle details such as rent, permitted uses, and neighbour consultation. Any final agreement would then be put to a members' meeting for ratification. Questions about parking, noise, and the possible need for planning or licensing changes would be addressed at that stage.

For now, the Club remains closed to new memberships while restoration work continues. "The work is currently being undertaken by a few valiant members and any member wishing to assist would be welcomed," said Mr O'Neil. Volunteers can make contact via the Club's email address: **clubeventsecwmc@gmail.com**.

Sam Jones – Reporter

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Epsom Common Club – Google Maps

Surrey SEND place surge – is it enough?

28 October 2025



Surrey County Council has announced the creation of almost 500 new specialist school places for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities during the 2025/26 academic year. The expansion forms part of the council's ongoing Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Capital Programmes running from 2019 to 2026.

Of these new places, 169 were ready at the start of the autumn term, with another 298 due for completion by summer 2026. Since 2021, Surrey has delivered over 250 new specialist places each year, supported by more than £211 million in capital investment.

New and expanded schools

Among the projects completed for the current academic year are new or enlarged SEN units at **Epsom Downs Primary School** in Epsom and Ewell, Dovers Green Infant School in Reigate and Banstead, and Guildford County School. Philip Southcote School in Runnymede now benefits from a new teaching block and hydrotherapy pool, while the Fordway Centre in Spelthorne has been completely rebuilt.

Walton Leigh School in Elmbridge has undergone significant refurbishment, and additional projects in Spelthorne and Elmbridge have already been completed this term, including SEN units at Ashford Park Primary and Cranmere School.

Before summer 2026, Surrey expects to complete 40 new places within Carrington School's Specialist Resource Provision and a further 33 at the Woodfield Education Centre in Reigate and Banstead. The largest development, a new all-through Hopescourt SEN School in Elmbridge, will provide 200 places.

Headteacher Alex Burrows said: "We're incredibly proud to be part of the expansion of specialist provision in Surrey. Our new school will give children and young people in the borough the support and opportunities they need to flourish – not just academically, but personally and socially too. We're excited to build a community where every child truly belongs and can take their next steps confidently."

Responding to rising demand

Over 17,000 children and young people in Surrey now have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), a number that has more than doubled in a decade. The county council says its timeliness in completing assessments now exceeds 90%, compared to a national average of 46.6%, placing Surrey in the top 20 performing authorities.

To meet growing demand, the council launched a £15 million recovery plan in 2023 and has since committed a further £4.9 million, increasing staff capacity in statutory SEND services by 74%.

Councillor Jonathan Hulley, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning, said: "These additional places are a crucial part of Surrey's Inclusion and Additional Needs Strategy. The strategy aims to improve inclusion and outcomes for children with additional needs and disabilities in Surrey, ensuring they can access the best possible education closer to home. To go alongside our unprecedented investment in building new specialist school places, we've invested heavily in our SEND service. We are determined that every child in Surrey with additional needs and disabilities gets the support they deserve."

Continuing pressures

While the council's figures point to record investment and rising capacity, parents, teachers and local MPs have repeatedly raised concerns about the system's ability to keep pace with demand. Epsom and Ewell MP Helen Maguire has called for urgent national action, highlighting the distress families face when children are left without appropriate school placements.

Other Surrey MPs have criticised the escalating costs of private specialist placements and the reliance on out-of-county

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provision – issues that have driven the county's dedicated schools budget into deficit. Campaigners have argued that although capital investment is welcome, progress on staffing, assessment backlogs and mainstream inclusion has been slow.

As previously reported by the Epsom and Ewell Times, the county's £4.9 million recovery package was described by some parent advocates as "a fraction of what's needed" to fix systemic problems that have built up over years of under-resourcing and policy churn.

National backdrop

Surrey's challenges mirror those across England. The number of children with EHCPs has risen nationally to more than half a million, with many councils facing multi-million-pound SEND budget deficits. The government's own review of the SEND system, first announced in 2019, remains only partially implemented, leaving local authorities to balance rising expectations with limited funding flexibility.

For many families in Surrey, the creation of new places represents a long-awaited step forward – but for others, the daily struggle to secure assessments, placements and support continues.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Phillip South Cote School classroom. Credit SCC

Related reports:

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£4.9 million not enough to solve Surrey's SEND problems

Sending pupils to Epsom's mainstream schools

Surrey sent on a U-turn on SEND by MPs

Surrey MPs unite against county on SEND silence.

Epsom and Ewell Harriers return with gold aplenty

28 October 2025



A number of **Epsom & Ewell Harriers** travelled to the beautiful island of Madeira for the European Masters Athletics Championships and returned with a big haul of medals. In total, Harriers athletes brought home seven gold and three silver medals to help GB to its most successful ever championships as the team topped the medal table with 129 gold medals, 20 clear of Germany with France a long way back in third place on 65 golds.

Most of the medals were won in the sprints. Helen Godsell claimed three golds and a silver in the W70 100m, 200m and relays while Anne Nelson was also part of the winning W70 4x100m team. Lisa Boland almost matched Helen with another 100m / 200m double, winning the 200m in a W40 British record of 25.27 seconds and anchoring the W40 team to silver in the sprint relay.

Steve Winder had a busy championships running a total of 37K across four events and capped off an exciting and enjoyable championships with an individual silver and team gold in the M50 Half Marathon on the final day.

Well done to all the Harriers and GB athletes on a memorable championships.

See below for a summary of E&E results and full results here:
https://data.opentrack.run/en-gb/x/2025/PRT/emacs/

Helen Godsell W70:
 100m 15.34
 200m 32.29 (31.94 in Heat)
 4x100m GB Team 1st
 Mixed 4x400m GB Team 2nd

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Anne Nelson W70:
100m 6th Final 17.66 (17.48 in Heat)
200m 5th Heat 2 37.31
 4x100m GB Team 1st

Stacey Gonzalez W50:
Hammer Throw 10th 36.62
Shot Putt 21st 7.99
Discus 14th 24.47

Steve Winder M50:
3000m s/c 12th 10:58.99
8K XC 10th 30:24
5,000m 17:10.36
 Half Marathon (GB Team) 1:18.53

Stuart Flack M50:
1500m 9th Heat 3 4:44.41

Lisa Boland W40:
 100m 12.49
 200m 25.27 (W40 British Record)
 4x100m GB Team 2nd

Ashley Reid M40:
100m 7th Semi Final 12.35 (12.31 in Heat)
200m 3rd Heat 7 25.05
4x100m GB Team 5th

Stuart Flack

The prefix **W** stands for *Women* and **M** for *Men*.

- The number indicates the **age category** of the athlete in Masters athletics (veterans' competition).
- So **W70** means *Women aged 70–74*, **W40** means *Women aged 40–44*, **M50** means *Men aged 50–54*, etc.

These age brackets allow athletes to compete fairly against others of similar age at international Masters events.

Photo: W40 100M final – Epsom and Ewell Harriers YouTube

Since 1890, Epsom and Ewell Harriers has been bringing together athletes of all abilities at its home in Epsom. Whether you dream of breaking records or simply want to stay active, you'll find a place at Epsom and Ewell Harriers. Join HERE

Heathrow expansion – what it may mean for Epsom

28 October 2025



The Government has launched a review of the Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS), which sets out the policy framework for major airport expansion. The key points:

- Aiming for faster progress than the previous ANPS, the Government intends a draft for consultation by summer 2026 and to reach a final planning decision on a third runway within the current Parliament.
- Expansion of Heathrow is being promoted as a boost to UK economic growth, international connectivity and competitiveness — specifically positioning Heathrow as Britain's only global hub airport.
- The review will test any proposed scheme against four criteria: climate change, noise, air quality and contribution to economic growth.
- The Government says it will ask for formal advice from the Climate Change Committee (CCC) to ensure alignment with the UK's net-zero commitments.

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- Financing must be purely private, with no taxpayer cost, and transport access improvements must be covered by the promoters.
- Two promoters remain under consideration: Heathrow Airport Limited and the Arora Group; one will be selected by end November to proceed.
- The Government also flagged wider infrastructure and planning reforms (via the upcoming Planning & Infrastructure Bill) and the establishment of a new UK Airspace Design Service to modernise airspace in the London region.

Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander said the Government is "backing the builders, not blockers", and Chancellor Rachel Reeves added that after decades of false starts, "we are backing the builders to get Heathrow's third runway built, creating thousands of jobs, boosting growth …"

Why this matters for Epsom & Ewell
Our borough is already directly affected by aircraft using the London hub airports, and the proposed expansion of Heathrow would likely increase the scale and intensity of that impact.

Flight paths and heights: The borough is within one of the "design envelopes" identified by Heathrow Airport Limited in its previous airspace consultation, meaning more frequent overflights at lower altitudes. Currently some aircraft arrive or depart over the borough at heights of 7,000 to 22,000 ft, averaging around 12,000 ft. Under the proposed expansion there could be flights as low as 3,000 ft and up to 47 arrivals per hour over the area.

Noise and air-quality concerns: The borough's geography — dense housing, many schools, and a declared Air Quality Management Area — means that increased aircraft at lower altitudes could raise noise, traffic and pollution burdens. The council previously warned of a possible four- to five-fold increase in noise levels in some scenarios.

Community and amenity risk: Residential areas, schools such as North East Surrey College of Technology, and leisure or nature sites like Epsom Common and Horton Country Park could experience greater disturbance.

Airspace redesign: The Government's plan to modernise UK airspace may change how routes are drawn. This could either reduce or shift impacts on particular communities, but consultation with affected areas such as Epsom & Ewell will be essential.

The opposing case
Environmental and local campaigners have long voiced opposition to expansion.

Climate and emissions: Groups such as Friends of the Earth argue that expanding a major hub airport is incompatible with the UK's net-zero goals, warning it would lock-in high carbon infrastructure and increase air and noise pollution.

Noise and community disruption: CPRE Surrey has said that the borough could experience up to 47 additional flights per hour at just 3,000 ft, and that such a change would be "unacceptable".

Consultation concerns: Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has criticised the information provided by Heathrow Airport Limited for lacking clarity around flight numbers, heights, and environmental impacts.

Financial and strategic risks: Critics also question whether the economic case for expansion remains strong in a changed post-pandemic aviation environment, and whether cost burdens such as community compensation and infrastructure upgrades have been fully addressed.

Current status
The Government review of the ANPS is underway, with a public consultation on the draft expected in summer 2026. One of the two promoter schemes will be selected by end November.
For Epsom & Ewell, the exact flight-paths and altitude projections are not yet finalised, and detailed new routes are unlikely to be confirmed until around 2027. Airspace modernisation may alter or mitigate local impacts.

What to watch
Residents and councillors should track:
– Future flight path proposals and altitude models over the borough.
– Noise, air-quality and health impact data once new routes are known.
– Community consultation opportunities.
– Any noise-respite or mitigation measures offered.
– The outcome of financial and planning reviews.

In conclusion
The DfT's announcement marks a major step toward the possibility of a third runway at Heathrow. For Epsom & Ewell it raises serious local questions — more frequent aircraft, lower flights, and possible increases in noise and pollution balanced against potential economic benefits.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Related reports:

Heathrow expansion reaction

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Surrey village to suffer a lot more Heathrow flights

Chance for Epsom and Ewell's say on Heathrow flights

Heathrow shown with a third runway over the M25 (image Heathrow)

Where do we stand on local government reorganisation in Epsom and Ewell and the County?

28 October 2025



The future shape of local government in Surrey is moving into its final stage, with national and local plans converging on the abolition of all borough, district and county councils in April 2027 and their replacement by new, directly elected unitary authorities. Epsom and Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) has already taken steps to ensure residents' voices are not lost in the process, while Surrey County Council (SCC) continues to pilot new neighbourhood structures that could form part of the post-reorganisation landscape.

Financial pressures driving reform

A new report from the UNISON trade union warns that councils across the UK are facing a combined funding gap of £4.1 billion in 2026/27. Demand for adult and children's social care, inflation, energy costs and homelessness are all identified as key pressures. UNISON's General Secretary Christina McAnea said local authorities "are still billions short of the money they need to provide essential services" and that cuts "often hit the vulnerable hardest". The figures provide the wider context for the government's push towards larger, self-financing unitary councils and new devolved mayoral regions.

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's position

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council voted in May 2025 to support a "three unitaries" model for Surrey, submitting its preferred plan to government. Under that proposal, Epsom and Ewell would join an East Surrey unitary alongside Mole Valley, Reigate and Banstead, and Tandridge. Surrey County Council has argued instead for two unitaries – East and West – while others have urged a single Surrey authority. The final decision now rests with ministers.

EEBC has meanwhile carried out a Community Governance Review to explore creating parish or community councils for the borough once the borough council itself is dissolved. The consultation, which asked residents how local representation should continue under a unitary structure, closed at 11.59pm on Thursday 9 October 2025. Results will be analysed and reported to the council later this year.

Chair of the Standards and Constitution Committee, Councillor **John Beckett** (RA Auriol), said earlier this year that parish councils would provide "an essential link between Epsom and Ewell residents and a new unitary council responsible for a much larger area in Surrey". He said the borough's aim was to ensure "that the interests of our residents and local communities have a platform, and that our vital local voice is not lost for future generations".

All the political parties on Epsom and Ewell Borough Council were asked by Epsom and Ewell Times for their current views. Cllr **Kate Chinn** (Labour – Court) said: "The Labour group believes LGR benefits all of us. It reduces bureaucracy and increases transparency so reducing the huge administrative back room costs of the 12 authorities which currently deliver services. As devolution develops we will have mayors with strong new powers serving and delivering services for their local communities. It would be best to have 3 unitary authorities in the county which will enable strong local representation without the additional costs of a rather meaningless additional layer with very limited powers."

Meanwhile, Cllr **James Lawrence** (LibDem College) said: "Local government reorganisation is diverting significant attention and resources away from the day-to-day work of councils, all for the promise of future efficiencies and savings from creating larger unitary authorities. Yet those savings may take many years to materialise—if they ever do—given that the government failed to carry out its own cost analysis of what is the biggest council shake-up in decades.

We welcome reforms that genuinely deliver cost savings, greater efficiency and clearer accountability to residents. But as Liberal Democrats, we believe local government should remain as close as possible to the people it serves. Councils must be representative, accessible, and structured so that people from all walks of life can realistically stand for election. We hope the Labour government upholds these principles in shaping a local government system that truly works in the public interest."

Leader of the ruling Residents Associations, Cllr **Hannah Dalton** (Stoneleigh) stated to Epsom and Ewell Times "Our

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proposal submitted in May demonstrated how three unitary councils formed around existing local economies would set the stage for future economic growth in the county, and provide a strong foundation for governance that keeps decision-making closer to residents. We are waiting to hear from government on whether the decision will be to implement two or three unitary councils in Surrey. Following the announcement and what ever the decision is, our task will be to work together with all our partners across the county to ensure that the new councils are set up for future success.

She added: “Throughout this process, our unwavering commitment is to our residents by ensuring that we continue to deliver high-quality services in Epsom & Ewell without interruption, and that we keep residents informed every step of the way. The local elections for the new shadow authority which will take place next spring will be pivotal; I urge residents to have their say to ensure that the new councils truly represent everyone in our local communities.”

Surrey County Council pilots new neighbourhood model

Surrey County Council is testing new “Neighbourhood Area Committees” to bring together partners from local government, health, police, business, education and community sectors. Farnham became the fourth pilot area in early October, joining Cobham and Esher, Dorking and Villages, and Caterham and Warlingham. SCC Leader Tim Oliver said the pilots are part of a “test, learn and grow” approach to “giving residents a stronger voice and more opportunities to influence decisions that matter to them”.

The first committees in the earlier pilot areas are meeting this autumn, and an evaluation is due in December 2025. SCC says the pilots will help shape how local engagement operates within the new unitary councils and the expected county-wide Mayoral Strategic Authority.

Are elected councils being replaced by appointed bodies?

No. The plan remains for directly elected unitary councils to replace the existing county and district authorities. A Mayoral Strategic Authority for Surrey is also proposed, headed by an elected Mayor and a cabinet of members drawn from the unitary councils. The Neighbourhood Area Committees are advisory forums rather than statutory councils. Their future form will depend on the December evaluation.

Does reorganisation bring government closer to people?

Advocates say the structure will reduce the number of principal authorities while increasing neighbourhood-level involvement through parish councils or local area committees. Critics argue that layering a Mayoral Authority above the new unitaries could have the opposite effect. EEBC’s Community Governance Review is intended to ensure that neighbourhood representation remains genuine once the borough tier disappears.

National context: the LGIU’s October 2025 findings

The Local Government Information Unit’s latest overview, published in early October, confirms that Surrey has been placed among the final “Devolution Priority Programme” areas, alongside Essex and Kent. The LGIU says the government aims to settle new boundaries by early 2026, with the most likely outcome being two unitaries under a directly elected Surrey Mayor by 2027. The report highlights that Epsom and Ewell’s Community Governance Review is being viewed nationally as a model for how parish and community councils can preserve neighbourhood representation after borough abolition.

The LGIU notes that Whitehall intends to restrict transition funding to self-financing proposals, requiring counties and districts to reach consensus by December 2025 or face a structure imposed from above. Across England, 14 regions are now engaged in similar reorganisation or devolution talks, with most combining larger authorities at the top with expanded local partnership boards and parish councils beneath.

What happens next

1. Ministerial decisions on the Surrey map and devolution deal are expected by late 2025.
2. Shadow elections for the new unitary councils could take place in May 2026.
3. The new authorities are scheduled to begin operations on 1 April 2027.
4. EEBC’s Community Governance Review results will be published before the end of 2025.
5. Surrey County Council will review its Neighbourhood Area Committee pilots in December.

The combined effect of these changes will mark the biggest shift in local government in Surrey for half a century. Whether the result brings decision-making closer to residents, or simply reorganises power at a greater distance, remains to be seen.

Sam Jones – Reporter



See today’s Epsom and Ewell Times editorial

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Surrey’s partner organisations support county council plans for local government reorganisation

Surrey Councils launch Local Government Reorganisation engagement

Surrey’s BIG debt question in local government reorganisation

Local Government Reorganisation in Surrey: Key Proposals

and others: search “reorganisation”.

Epsom MP leads cross-party delegation to Ukraine to examine impact of explosive weapons

28 October 2025



A cross-party delegation of UK Parliamentarians has travelled to Ukraine to assess the humanitarian and environmental impact of explosive weapons and to strengthen cooperation between the two countries on mine clearance and victim support.

The visit was led by **Helen Maguire**, Liberal Democrat Member of Parliament for Epsom & Ewell and Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Explosive Weapons and Their Impact. The group also included Cameron Thomas MP for Tewkesbury and Baroness Natalie Bennett of the Green Party.

During their visit, the delegation met Minister Oleksi Sobolev, responsible for Ukraine’s economy, agriculture and environment, to discuss the challenges of clearing more than 136,000 square kilometres of land now contaminated by mines and unexploded ordnance — roughly a third of Ukraine’s territory. They also visited Ukraine’s State Emergency Service, which has responded to over 235,000 explosive incidents since the start of the war, rescuing more than 6,500 people.

The MPs observed mine clearance operations with the HALO Trust and Mines Advisory Group (MAG), and learned about new training programmes in explosive ordnance disposal and emergency response being developed at Lviv State University of Life Safety. They also visited rehabilitation centres Superhumans and Unbroken, which provide prosthetics, surgery, and psychological support to civilians and veterans injured by explosions.

Speaking from Ukraine, Helen Maguire said: “As Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Explosive Weapons and Their Impact, it has been a privilege to visit Ukraine with cross-party colleagues to observe both the unimaginable devastation caused by explosive weapons, and the extraordinary courage of those working to clear them.” She added “Ukraine faces one of the largest demining challenges in history. Witnessing the bravery of the women and men working to clear this contamination has been deeply humbling. Britain must continue to support the Ukrainian people by championing humanitarian mine action and ensuring our foreign policy reflects the real human cost of explosive weapons.”

Maguire also met **Anatolii Fedoruk**, Mayor of **Bucha**, the town that became a global symbol of Russian atrocities against civilians after the withdrawal of occupying forces in 2022. Hundreds of civilians were killed there, many showing signs of execution and torture. Maguire reflected:

“Witnessing first hand the damage and loss caused by landmines has been sobering, but I’ve been heartened to know that the contributions from my own community — through **Surrey Stands With Ukraine**’s financial support towards rehabilitation for landmine victims — will have made a tangible difference to survivors of these atrocities. I’m proud to represent a constituency whose compassion knows no borders.”

Bucha holds a particular link with Epsom, as the local charity Surrey Stands With Ukraine (SSWU) — based in the town — was among the first UK groups to send aid there following the liberation of the area in 2022. Its director, Lionel Blackman, visited Bucha in July 2025, meeting the Mayor and local officials and other urban centres and aid workers to assess ongoing needs and rehabilitation projects. The charity has delivered more than £4 million worth of humanitarian and medical aid to Ukraine since the start of the full-scale invasion.

Global context: Ukraine among the world’s most landmined nations

Ukraine now ranks among the most heavily mined countries on Earth, joining the grim company of Cambodia, Vietnam, Afghanistan, and Syria. The United Nations and the HALO Trust estimate that contamination across Ukraine affects an

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area larger than England, Wales, and Northern Ireland combined. At the current pace of clearance, it could take decades to make all affected areas safe.

Globally, Cambodia remains one of the most mine-affected nations, with around 1,000 square kilometres still contaminated despite 30 years of clearance. Vietnam and Laos continue to suffer from the legacy of the Vietnam War, where unexploded ordnance from U.S. bombing campaigns still kills or injures civilians every year. In comparison, Ukraine's contamination has occurred over a much shorter period — highlighting the devastating intensity of Russia's use of explosive weapons in civilian areas.

The UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) continues to fund demining organisations in Ukraine through its Global Mine Action Programme, which supports both the HALO Trust and MAG in their life-saving work.

You can follow the work of Surrey Stands With Ukraine and make donations HERE

Sam Jones – Reporter



Related reports:

Epsom Stands in Solidarity with Ukraine on War's Third Anniversary

Sir Ed supporting Epsom based Ukraine charities

Fire Assembly for Ukraine

2 years on Epsom to gather in solidarity with Ukraine

"Imagine this house is in Epsom" says our man in Ukraine.

Image: Helen Maguire MP with LibDem Party leader Sir Ed Davey and Surrey Stands With Ukraine Chairman Roy Deadman at the "Ukraine Hub" in Global House (courtesy The Ashley Centre) the HQ for the charity and the Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network in November 2024.

Handmade in Epsom and Ewell: local makers unite to support Epsom Foodbank

28 October 2025



Handmade in Epsom and Ewell (HiEE) will hold its first community event, *The Festive Makers Fair*, on Saturday 29th November 2025 from 10am to 3pm in the Youth Hall at Epsom Methodist Church, Ashley Road (KT18 5AQ).

The fair will offer an affordable platform for local artisans to showcase their handmade products while supporting a vital community cause. All proceeds from the event, apart from stallholder sales, will be donated to Epsom Foodbank.

HiEE was founded by a group of local makers keen to create a space where craftspeople from within the borough can share their work and at the same time raise funds for charity. The organisers are particularly encouraging new makers to take part, alongside some of the area's more established names.

Visitors will find a range of handmade gifts and festive items including soaps, ceramics, upcycled furniture, art, jewellery and metalwork, all produced in Epsom and Ewell. Prices will range from pocket-money treats to larger special gifts. Twenty-two local makers are already confirmed, including Annette's Gemstones Jewellery, Bird & Bear Soaps, Colour and Sparkle, EpsomPots, H for Handmade, Martha Moon Creations, Surrey Woodcraft and Wadey Smithing.

Adding to the festive spirit, The AMP Voices choir from Nescot College will perform in the Roots Coffee Shop at the Methodist Church, which will be open for refreshments and cakes throughout the day.

All funds raised from event profits and entrance donations will go directly to Epsom Foodbank. Entry is by a suggested £1 donation. Attendees are also invited to bring non-perishable food items for the foodbank's Christmas drive. A list of items particularly needed can be found at epsomewell.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food.

Organiser Janice Heyes said: "We really hope the Epsom and Ewell community will support this event which is taking place right in the heart of town. Shoppers will find unique handmade Christmas gifts made with care and passion while

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giving something back via the Epsom Foodbank. This really is an event run by the community for the community."

The event is being coordinated by volunteers Imogen Curran, Janice Heyes, Jo Jones and Helen Worwood, supported by local craftspeople and small businesses. The group hopes that this first fair will be the start of an annual tradition, with future events expanding the initiative's reach and community impact.

For more information visit www.handmadeinepsomandewell.co.uk or follow @Handmadeinepsomandewell on Facebook and Instagram. Enquiries can be sent to handmadeinepsomandewell@gmail.com.

Event details
Date: Saturday 29 November 2025
Time: 10am–3pm
Venue: Epsom Methodist Church, Ashley Road, KT18 5AQ
Admission: Suggested £1 donation
Parking: Please walk, use public transport, or park in town centre car parks. Limited on-site parking for Blue Badge holders only.

Surrey solar study shows cheapest energy source

28 October 2025



Solar energy is now so cost-effective that, in some of the sunniest parts of the world, it costs as little as two pence to produce one unit of electricity – cheaper than power generated from coal, gas or wind. That is the finding of a new study by researchers at the University of Surrey's Advanced Technology Institute (ATI), who say solar photovoltaic (PV) technology has become the key driver of the world's shift to clean, renewable energy.

Publishing their work in *Energy and Environment Materials*, the Surrey team point out that the global capacity of installed solar power passed 1.5 terawatts in 2024 – double the figure in 2020 and now enough to supply hundreds of millions of homes.

Professor Ravi Silva, Director of the ATI and co-author of the study, said: "Even here in the UK, a country that sits 50 degrees north of the equator, solar is the cheapest option for large-scale energy generation. Simply put, this technology is no longer a moonshot prospect but a foundational part of the resilient, low-carbon energy future that we all want to bring to reality."

The study notes that the price of lithium-ion batteries has fallen by almost 90 per cent since 2010, making combined solar-plus-storage systems as cost-effective as gas power plants. Such hybrid installations allow solar energy to be stored and released when required, turning an intermittent source into a dispatchable one that helps balance grid demand.

However, the researchers warn that the next major challenge lies in connecting vast amounts of solar generation to existing electricity networks. In regions such as California and China, high solar output has already caused congestion on power lines and wasted energy when supply outstrips demand. Co-author Dr Ehsan Rezaee said: "Connecting growing levels of solar power to electricity networks is now one of the biggest challenges. Smart grids, artificial-intelligence forecasting and stronger links between regions will be vital to keep power systems stable as renewable energy use rises."

Professor Silva added that advances in materials such as perovskite solar cells could raise energy output by up to 50 per cent without using additional land. "With the integration of energy storage and smart grid technologies, solar is now capable of delivering reliable, affordable and clean power at scale," he said. "But progress depends on consistent, long-term policy support. The US Inflation Reduction Act, the EU's REPowerEU plan and India's Production Linked Incentive scheme show how clear direction can drive investment and innovation. Sustained commitment and international collaboration will be essential if we are to accelerate the world's transition to a clean and reliable energy system."

Across the UK, renewable sources supplied just over half of all electricity in 2024 – the first time that clean generation surpassed fossil fuels. Wind power dominated with nearly 30 per cent of total generation, while solar contributed about 5 per cent, equivalent to one unit in every ten generated from renewables. Biomass, biogas and hydro made up most of the rest. When nuclear is included, low-carbon sources together delivered around two-thirds of the UK's electricity.

Globally, renewables produced about 30 per cent of electricity in 2024, with wind and solar together accounting for roughly 15 per cent and expanding faster than any other energy source. The International Energy Agency expects global renewable capacity to rise by almost half again before 2030, with most new investment in solar.

While Britain's relatively low sunshine hours limit its solar potential compared with southern Europe or Asia, domestic generation costs have plunged, making rooftop and community-scale arrays increasingly popular. Planning delays and grid connection backlogs remain obstacles, but the UK Government has set a target to increase installed solar capacity fivefold by 2035.

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As Professor Silva observed, solar power has crossed the threshold from promise to practicality. The next test, he said, is building the smart, interconnected systems and political consensus needed to make affordable solar energy work everywhere – even in less sunny countries like the UK.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Parabel GmbH – Solarpark Jännersdorf. CC BY-SA 3.0

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Annual Report

28 October 2025



EEBC publishes an Annual Report amid some questions over priorities and spending.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has released its *2024/25 Annual Report*, showcasing a range of achievements over the past year — but opposition councillors have questioned both the purpose and timing of the publication.

The report, available on the council's website, highlights milestones such as a balanced budget for 2025/26, the allocation of over £2 million in Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding to neighbourhood and strategic projects, and a 100% success rate in determining major planning applications within statutory deadlines. It also notes environmental achievements, including Epsom Common's eighteenth consecutive Green Flag Award and new solar panels installed at the Rainbow Leisure Centre.

Chief Executive **Jackie King** said she was "proud to present Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's 2024/25 Annual Report which reflects the dedication and impact of our teams on the borough over the last financial year."

She praised the efforts of the council's 280-strong workforce, highlighting the Waste Services team's 99.9% on-time bin collection rate and the Planning Policy team's award-winning work at the Royal Town Planning Institute's South East Awards for Planning Excellence.

"I am grateful for the hard work and dedication of everyone at Epsom & Ewell Borough Council and I know we are in a good position to meet the challenges ahead," said Ms King. "I look forward to continuing to deliver the council's new strategic priorities and working towards local government reorganisation – whilst continuing to provide the high-quality services our residents depend upon."

However, some opposition councillors have some reservations about the report.

Cllr Alex Coley (Independent – Ruxley) said: "I wonder who the audience is for this brochure and what the staff resource was for this work at a time when the Council is already struggling to deliver work on its strategic priorities. I also wonder who decided to do this piece of work."

Cllr James Lawrence (Liberal Democrat – College) drew attention to ongoing financial pressures, particularly on housing budgets: "It is worth noting that at the same time this report is being published, an £875k overspend on temporary accommodation by the end of the financial year is being predicted. This is due to a combination of an increase in temporary accommodation need, and a substantially too optimistic budgeting of 71 temporary accommodation spaces when for the past year and a half approximately 90 spaces have consistently been required. It would not be accurate to describe the current 2025/26 budget as balanced."

Neither the Labour nor Conservative parties, both with small representations on the Council, offered comment.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council continues to be run by the borough's network of Residents' Association councillors, who hold the majority of seats.

Image: Cover page of the EEBC Annual Report. © EEBC

Sam Jones – Reporter

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Reducing food waste nationally and in Epsom and Ewell

28 October 2025



A growing number of major UK supermarket chains are removing ‘best before’ dates from many fresh fruit and vegetable products in an effort to reduce food waste.

Asda, Tesco, Sainsbury’s, Marks & Spencer, Waitrose and Co-op have each begun phasing out the labels on selected produce such as apples, potatoes, citrus and salad vegetables. The move follows guidance from the government-backed Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), which says that scrapping date labels from uncut fruit and vegetables could prevent thousands of tonnes of perfectly edible food from being thrown away every year.

WRAP research has shown that many households confuse ‘best before’ dates, which indicate when food is at its best quality, with ‘use by’ dates, which mark when food may no longer be safe to eat. As a result, millions of items are discarded while still fit for consumption.

‘Use by’ dates remain compulsory on foods that pose a higher safety risk, such as meat, dairy and ready meals. These indicate the final day on which food can be safely eaten, cooked or frozen. By contrast, ‘best before’ dates are about quality, not safety, and appear mostly on products such as bread, rice, tins and dried goods.

Marks & Spencer has removed best before dates from about 85 per cent of its fresh produce, while Waitrose has dropped them from nearly 500 lines. Some retailers are instead using small printed codes visible to staff for stock rotation and freshness checks.

Food safety expert Dr Richard Anderson of High Speed Training said that while ‘use by’ dates should always be observed, ‘best before’ guidance can be treated more flexibly. “Best before dates are an indication of quality rather than safety. You can still eat food after its best before date, but its flavour and texture may not be as good as before the date,” he said.

WRAP encourages consumers to rely more on sight, smell and touch to judge whether fruit and vegetables remain good to eat. The organisation says there is no legal requirement in the UK to label uncut produce with a ‘best before’ date.

According to WRAP, the average UK household wastes the equivalent of eight meals a week, with 4.5 million tonnes of edible food thrown away annually. The removal of best before dates is part of a wider drive across the food retail sector to tackle avoidable waste and reduce environmental impact.

Some critics warn, however, that removing dates altogether may cause confusion for some shoppers or make them more cautious, leading to continued waste. Others say the change puts greater responsibility on consumers to decide what is still edible.

The UK government’s food waste reduction roadmap aims to halve national food waste by 2030 in line with UN sustainability goals. Industry groups say supermarket labelling reforms are a practical step towards achieving that target.

In Surrey, FareShare Sussex & Surrey plays a key role in reconnecting surplus food with those who need it. The charity rescues safe, in-date food from farms, retailers and producers and redistributes it to charities, community groups, food banks, pantries and other support services. In 2024, FareShare opened a new depot in Surrey to handle more fresh, chilled and frozen food for redistribution across the region.

Locally, Epsom & Ewell Foodbank, part of Good Company Surrey and the Trussell Trust network, distributed almost 8,000 emergency food parcels last year to people in crisis. The network serves Epsom, Ewell, Banstead, Leatherhead and Tadworth through a voucher referral system and provides three days of nutritionally balanced food to those referred. It operates from local church halls and community centres, with donation points in major supermarkets and strong support from volunteers.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council also promotes “Help with Food” schemes, directing residents to emergency support and a community pantry in Epsom that offers fresh fruit, vegetables and store cupboard items for a small weekly subscription.

Jonathan Lees, Good Company’s Managing Director and Founder told the Epsom and Ewell Times: ‘At Good Company,

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both our food provision projects, Foodbanks and Pantries, are very grateful for the food surplus we receive from local supermarkets. These donations ensure there is variety in our offer and are a very welcome addition to the ambient food donations. We offer the food on a help yourself basis to people that use our projects ensuring that there is some for all. If dates were removed, then we would need to look at how we used the food under appropriate guidance and of course less waste would mean we could have less to offer people in need.'

As supermarkets adapt their labelling to cut national food waste, the efforts of local redistribution organisations such as FareShare Sussex & Surrey and Epsom & Ewell Foodbank remain vital in ensuring surplus food finds its way to those who need it most.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Image courtesy High Speed Training

Notice of Marriage

28 October 2025

Dr Madhav Parik holder of Indian Passport No. Z5989629 residing at 4 Rutland House, Epsom KT187EZ & Dr Pritha Roy holder of Indian Passport No. Z5991976 residing at 70 George Roche Road Canterbury CT13FG intend getting married at the High Commission of India, London under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969 of India. Objections, if any, may be conveyed to the High Commission of India, London within 30 days.

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