Surrey's one stop shop to save energy

Surrey residents can now receive support to upgrade their homes with energy saving 'retrofit' measures including insulation, heat pumps and solar panels through an innovative Home Energy Improvement 'One-Stop Shop' pilot scheme.

Surrey County Council (SCC) is working in partnership with Furbnow, specialists in home energy improvements, to help people make the transition to a lower energy and better performing home.

The service is for households that are looking to invest in their home's energy performance but need help to get their home energy project planned, designed and installed. Eligible Surrey residents can access 60% off the cost to plan, design and manage their home energy project.

Marisa Heath, Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Environment said: "I am delighted that we are working with Furbnow on such an innovative and important pilot to support our residents to install energy saving measures.

"We know that cost plays a huge part in residents being able to self-fund improvements to their homes, but this could be a way for everyone to reduce their bills for the long-term.

"As well as saving money, and making your home more resilient and future proofed, residential energy use accounts for over 30% of Surrey's emissions so improving the energy performance of as many of our homes as we can makes a huge difference in achieving our goal of being Net Zero Carbon by 2050."

All Surrey residents can receive support from Furbnow's team via their website, and the first 245 homes can access a subsidised whole house assessment and Home Energy Plan, if they live in one of the 300,000 Surrey homes that have poor energy performance.

Becky Lane, CEO of Furbnow, added: "We're thrilled to partner with Surrey County Council on this groundbreaking initiative. The Home Energy Improvement One-Stop Shop is designed to simplify the often-complex process of home energy upgrades. By providing expert guidance, quality assurance, and streamlined service from planning to installing, we're empowering Surrey residents to make their homes more energy-efficient, comfortable, and valuable.

"This not only benefits individual homeowners through reduced energy bills and improved living conditions but also contributes significantly to Surrey's carbon reduction goals. We're excited to see the positive impact this pilot will have on the community and the environment."

All Surrey residents can receive support from Furbnow's team via their website, and the first 245 homes can access a subsidised whole house assessment and Home Energy Plan, if they live in one of the 300,000 Surrey homes that have poor energy performance.

A Home Energy Plan, after the in-person survey, outlines recommended energy efficiency improvements for a home, detailing, the benefits, estimated costs, impacts, and suggested installation order. This can reduce their energy consumption and their bills, and improve the respiratory health of their household, and perhaps even increase the value of their homes. Furbnow also manage the design and installation of any energy efficiency improvements to your home to take the hassle out of your project.

It's free to register and there is no obligation to go ahead with a Home Energy Plan or the installation of measures.

For more information about the One Stop Shop scheme, visit www.furbnow.com/surrey.

Another Epsom pub gets a major face-lift

Much-loved Church Street pub, The Faraday, has reopened after an exciting six-figure investment, creating six new jobs in the local community.

Located in the town centre, the site was originally an eclectic showroom and was named after the experimental physicist Michael Faraday. Today, The Faraday has become one of the most popular bars in Surrey.

As part of Stonegate Group's commitment to position every site for success, the investment has been carefully allocated to enhance the pub's offerings while preserving its unique charm.

All renovations have been carefully crafted to aid the pub's goal of being a welcoming space for sports teams, social societies and

locals looking for an unforgettable night out.

The venue's attractive new décor has revitalised the space, creating a contemporary setting that's perfect for bottomless brunch on Saturdays.

The sports experience at the pub has been enhanced with the addition of multiple HD TV screens. Whether it's Premier League football, rugby, boxing, or Formula 1, The Faraday has it all covered.

With a huge 60-inch HD TV, and now a whopping 23 HD TVs throughout the site, every seat has a view of the sporting action.

The Faraday also has multiple dartboards for Epsom locals who want to find their inner Luke Littler.

The pub has a popular beer garden, where guests can enjoy soaking up the last of the autumn sun, with the front garden also providing a relaxing spot for a lovely cold pint of premium world lager.

A popular student hub, the pub is renowned for its student deals, with the best student night in the city, offering alcoholic drinks starting at just £2.35, burgers or pizza and a drink for a generous £8 and soft drinks starting at 65p.

The Epsom pub offers a fantastic range of craft beers, world beers, cider, and cocktails, all at some of the most competitive prices in the area. It's the perfect place to enjoy a drink in front of one of the many big screens, with 2-for-1 cocktails available all day, every day.

However, those not drinking alcohol will be able to choose from an extensive range of no and low alcohol options, ensuring everyone is accommodated to.

What's more, furry friends are welcome throughout the pub, with the venue being a popular spot for dog walkers popping in for a pint.

MiXR users can unlock exclusive rewards at The Faraday by downloading the MiXR app and creating an account, including a free drink for signing up. Students can also take advantage of special discounts available exclusively through the app.

Samantha Camara, General Manager of The Faraday, said: "These renovations align with Stonegate Group's commitment to always improve and innovate, meaning we can give our guests the best possible experience at our beloved pub.

"We want the investment to position our pub as the place to be for students as well as being the premiere venue to watch sport in Epsom with a huge range of big screens and food and drink at competitive prices.

"I've been General Manager of The Faraday for six years now and my love for this venue only continues to grow. This renovation marks a new chapter for our team which we cannot wait to start!"

The venue features a jam-packed weekly deals schedule, including 2-for-1 pizzas on Mondays, Student Baskets on Tuesdays, Wing Wednesdays, and Craft & Cocktails on Thursdays. Additionally, there are food and drink deals available throughout the week, along with the popular 2-for-1 cocktail offer.

But that's not all, the beloved bar always has a reason for guests to visit with karaoke night on Thursday and Friday, and Saturday nights seeing local DJs spinning decks late into the night.

Finishing the week in style, the pub hosts a quiz night on Sundays at 7pm, where locals are invited to test their knowledge amongst the smartest in Epsom to win exciting prizes.

Related reports:

Landmark pub re-assembles Tuesday

Government Minister immerses herself in NESCOT

Staff and students were delighted to host Baroness **Jacqui Smith**, the Department for Education's Minister of State for Skills, Apprenticeships and Higher Education on her visit to **Nescot** (North East Surrey College of Technology) in **Ewell Epsom** on Tuesday, 3 September.

Nescot Principal and CEO, **Julie Kapsalis** and **Chris Muller**, Chair of Governors, welcomed the Minister and were proud to showcase the college's state-of-the-art facilities, courses, study programmes and skills provision. The Minister had a tour of the Skills Park that included meeting students, apprentices, staff and the college's employer partners.

Upon arrival, the Minister met Creative Media student, Charlie who won gold at WorldSkills UK 2023, the college's new alpacas, Dolly and Florence (from the on-site farm) and Rhubarb, the assistance dog.

The Minister was introduced to students studying on Nescot's new courses in Construction Skills for Highway Maintenance delivered in partnership with leading highway maintenance contractor, Ringway. She observed demonstrations from students who were learning to lay concrete slabs and drive virtual diggers.

Supporting the Government's ambition to grow apprenticeships, the Minister met apprentices from the construction industry, from Ridgeback, Premier Heating and Watkins Cole. She heard how Nescot has supported many of the students through progression pathways and finding employers. She was particularly interested to hear how Nescot is working to recruit more women into the construction trades through role models and working with employers including Wates.

The Minister was shown the college's new state-of-the-art immersive learning spaces with virtual reality driving simulators and a variety of artificial intelligence tools offering students an innovative learning experience. The Minister also met Pepper, the humanoid and programmable robot from The Sussex and Surrey Institute of Technology (IoT) at Nescot. The IoT offers specialist courses and apprenticeships available in digital technologies to equip learners with the relevant skills in an increasingly tech reliant world.

Julie Kapsalis, Principal and CEO along with Nescot's senior leaders had the opportunity to speak to the Minister about some of the college's challenges and successes. She said, "We are thrilled and honoured that the Minister chose to visit Nescot at the start of the academic year. The FE sector plays a critical role in not just the training and education of young people and adults, but it is at the forefront of enabling social mobility and meeting the local skills and employment needs."

Essential to Nescot's success are the college's relationships with businesses and the community. Ringway, the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, Surrey Chambers and Wates had the opportunity to meet with the Minister to talk about their skills needs and work with the college.

Lewis Bridgman, Service Director, Ringway said,"The collaboration between Ringway and Nescot is a shining example of how local partnerships can foster economic growth and community development in Surrey. By investing in the next generation of engineers, the community is setting a strong foundation for long-term prosperity within the delivery of the Surrey Highways service. This approach not only benefits current residents but also ensures that the future workforce is well-equipped to maintain and enhance the region's infrastructure, contributing to a robust and sustainable economy."

Julie added, "On behalf of all our staff and students, I thank the Minister for taking the time out of her busy schedule to visit us. We hope our wonderful staff and students (and animals) have left a lasting impression. I would also like to thank our employer partners for their ongoing support and collaboration."

The visit concluded with plastering student CJ presenting the Minister with a sculpture of a dog made by her department.

Image: Baroness Jacqui Smith, the Department for Education's Minister of State for Skills road-testing the vehicle simulator in Nescot's new immersive learning space.

Surrey Business Leaders Forum re-booted

Businesses across Surrey now have a much greater voice in guiding the growth of the county's economy thanks to the relaunched and revitalised Surrey Business Leaders Forum.

Just weeks after the government handed Surrey County Council greater strategic powers to support economic development across the county, steps have been taken to ensure the private sector has a stronger voice and is right at the heart of local decision-making.

The Surrey Business Leaders Forum brings together close to 40 individuals representing a diverse range of businesses – from SMEs to Surrey-based multinationals, and including businesses from Surrey's priority sectors alongside employer representative bodies.

The Forum will be a driving force to help raise awareness of local business and economic needs and act as a local business champion to ensure businesses have a voice in decision-making that impacts the local economy. Acting as an independent advisory group, the Forum will ensure businesses can input, challenge, and guide the Council's approach to growing the economy.

The revamped forum met for the first time in May, and this week took part in a workshop to support the development of a new economic strategy for Surrey.

Matt Furniss, the Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth, said: "Surrey has a fantastic economic story to tell, with more than 110,000 businesses generating over £50 billion to the UK economy.

We know there is more that we can do to work with our private sector to deliver real benefits to our residents and communities, so we've taken steps to move quickly to make the most of the new powers from government, including creating Business Surrey, which provides free and accessible support to all Surrey businesses.

"Ensuring businesses are at the heart of our decision-making process can only strengthen that approach. I look forward to working with businesses to deliver on our priority to grow Surrey's economy in a sustainable way, while ensuring no one is left behind."

Chris Hurren, the Chair of the Business Leaders Forum and partner at RSM UK, a leading provider of audit, tax and consulting services, said: "The Surrey Business Leaders Forum brings together an exciting and diverse group of local business leaders who want to be a driving force in shaping Surrey's economic future and be a voice for all businesses in Surrey.

"Their knowledge and experiences from the private sector will play a key role in helping shape local decision-making."

The Council took the role as Surrey's strategic economic leader in April this year, a role that was previously held by the county's two Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), Enterprise M3 and Coast to Capital.

The change has seen the council positioned well to lead on an enhanced, county-wide oversight and delivery role in driving sustainable economic growth across the county, a role which Surrey County Council wants to translate into actual economic benefits for residents and businesses.

It has absorbed formal responsibilities to deliver business support through the new Surrey-wide Growth Hub and deliver government-funded programmes focused on skills.

This new offer is presented via the Council's Business Surrey service, which acts as a single gateway for all Surrey businesses to access support and advice. For access to all Business Surrey's support and advice visit the Business Surrey website.

Related reports:

Epsom's leader welcomes more power for Surrey County Council

Surrey County Council on the level.

Mixed reaction to Hunt's budget in Surrey

Landmark pub re-assembles Tuesday

The **Assembly Rooms** pub, in Epsom, is reopening at 8am on Tuesday 3 September, following an extensive refurbishment project, costing £1.375 million. The Mayor of Epsom and Ewell Councillor **Steve Bridger** (RA Stamford) will officially open the pub on the day.

The Assembly Rooms is a Grade II listed building. It was built around 1692, during a period when Epsom was renowned for its spa and as a fashionable retreat for the wealthy and aristocratic. The original purpose of the Assembly Rooms was to provide a venue for social gatherings, balls, and entertainment for those visiting the town to enjoy its spa waters.

The building is noted for its classical architectural style, which reflects the aesthetics of its time. It features a symmetrical façade and large windows, typical of Georgian architecture, intended to create an elegant and welcoming space. Inside, the building originally boasted a grand ballroom, which would have been used for dances and social events.

The **Epsom Protection Society** was active in ensuring the survival of one of the Borough's premier historic buildings.

With the decline in the popularity of Epsom's spa by the mid-18th century, the Assembly Rooms underwent several changes in usage. It adapted to meet the evolving needs of the local community and continued to serve as a venue for various events, including public meetings, concerts, and theatrical performances. There followed a period of retailing uses and emptiness until 1966 when it served as the offices of the National Counties Building Society.

Now a pub, first opened as a **Wetherspoon** in April 2002, it has been completely refurbished over the Summer months. The customer area has also undergone a full refurbishment, as well as the relocation and upgrade to the bar area, including an upgrade to the drinks dispense equipment.



The pub has been fully redecorated throughout, including the installation of a bespoke new carpet and additional furniture. Customer area air conditioning has been upgraded, customer toilets repaired and redecorated, and new artwork added to the customer area. External signage and lighting have also been replaced and upgraded.

(New interior photographed)

Behind the scenes, the kitchen facilities and equipment has been upgraded, with an open gantry food hoist room, as well as new staff facilities created.

The Assembly Rooms pub will be open from 8am until 12 midnight Sunday to Thursday, and 8am until 1am Friday and Saturday. Food will be served throughout the day, from opening until 11pm every day.

The pub will be open for family dining, with children, accompanied by an adult, welcome in the pub until 9pm, throughout the week.

Pub manager **Sel Devecioglu** said: "The £1.375 million investment highlights Wetherspoon's commitment to the pub and its staff and customers, as well as to Epsom itself. We are delighted that we have also been able to create 15 new jobs for local people. The team are looking forward to welcoming customers back into The Assembly Rooms and we're confident that they will be impressed by the new-look, upgraded pub."

Leatherhead town on the way up?

Leatherhead could become a "destination town" with an updated shopping arcade and cinema screens, according to regeneration plans. The future project could also see a 'new neighbourhood' created with up to 11-storey apartment block and townhouses in

Bull Hill.

The Swan Centre has been earmarked to be the "catalyst to revitalise the town" of Leatherhead. A new leisure area is set to be the "heart" of the Surrey town with four new restaurants, bars and cafes.

Plans include 14 retail units, four cinema screens for leisure and a new central market square for events. Retaining stores like Sainsbury's, Boots, WHSmith and others is also being considered in the development proposals.

Demolishing Leret House, the former offices on Swan Street, is another key part of the proposal. Speaking at a webinar on July 30, project officers said they are looking to reuse as much of the fabric of the building as possible by retaining the concrete frame.

Locals could see apartment buildings up to 11 storeys popping up in the town centre, with houses ranging between three to four stories. Prospective plans for Bull Hill, the second part of the regeneration scheme, include apartment flats and townhouses, as well as parking facilities, offices, and a park. Officers are also looking at plans for a hotel with retail spaces on the ground floor.

Between one, two and three bedroom flats could be available in the new apartments, with the family houses being three to four bedrooms each. MVDC and Keir Property detail a mixture of open market and affordable homes for purchase and rent could be on the offer.

Councillor Keira Vyvyan-Robinson said: "We appreciate that building heights are a sensitive matter, and this is why the sketches and layouts in the masterplan show illustrative heights only at this stage." The Cabinet Member for Projects stressed that "nothing has been decided" as the plans were still in the pre-application phase and "are likely to evolve based on [consultation] feedback".

A Kier Property officer said the project is "looking to get the right balance" of housing heights, so it can "sit comfortably in its environment." Upgrading the existing park in Bull Hill is also part of the initial proposals. Project officers said they wanted to make the park more accessible to people in Leatherhead by improving the play areas.

Launched on July 8 with five consultation events, people can give feedback to the prospective plans until September 26. Leigh Thomas, Group managing director, Kier Property said the consultation events so far had given him "much food for thought". He added the team were looking to adapt the plans "according to the needs of the local community".

MVDC and Keir Property has announced new consultation dates, including:

- Monday 19 August, 5:30pm to 7:30pm at St Mary's Church Hall, 10A The Ridgeway, Fetcham, Leatherhead KT22 9AZ
- Thursday 5 September, 5:30pm to 7:30pm at Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall (Ralli Room), Woodfield Lane, Ashtead KT21 2BE
- Wednesday 11 September, 5:30pm to 7:30pm at The Old Barn Hall Bookham (Main Hall), 55 Church Road, Great Bookham, Leatherhead KT23 3PO

Keir Property and MVDC is looking at submitting a planning application in 2025 and, if approved, to start building by spring/summer 2026.

Artistic Impression Of The Arrival Square from North Street, south east corner. (Credit: Mole Valley District Council and Keir Property)

Hyperia's screams have mixed local responses

What's it like being neighbours to one of the biggest theme parks in the UK? "It depends if you like screaming," residents say. Living next to Thorpe Park has split opinion with some locals saying they like the 'nice screams' and others saying they struggle to sit in the garden.

The park, between Chertsey and Staines-upon-Thames in Surrey, has recently introduced its newest and biggest ride, Hyperia. Some locals said they could hear the screams and noise from the ride about a mile away on opening day, but not all of the park's neighbours are bothered by it.

Joyce Hunt, 93, has lived next to the theme park for 40 odd years and "loves to hear" the screaming. She said: "It's great to see young people go and enjoy it. They have a good scream there." Joyce said the park was handy when her grandchildren were

young and she could walk to the park with them.

Bricklayer Kevin Nye, 52, said it's "great" living next to the park and hearing the "nice screams". He moved into the street eight years ago for "peace and quiet". Although it's busy in the summer, Kevin said it's calmer the rest of the year.

But one couple said Thorpe Park "encroaches on [our] daily lives" and they "don't leave the house after 5pm". Jackie, 55, said the traffic on the roads is so bad after the theme park closes she "doesn't bother" leaving the house. One time, Jackie said she was stuck on the roundabout for 25 minutes, when her home was just a short walk away.

"It's one of the reasons why we're thinking about moving away from Surrey," said Jackie, "Staines is too congested". Jackie and partner Neil, 60, moved to the area 20 years ago when Thorpe was just a "small park" but now they say the number of customers is "out of proportion".

First opened in 1979, Thorpe Park has grown from strength to strength and expanded its rides and attraction offerings. A spokesperson for Thorpe Park said it has not received any complaints from local residents next door to the park about recent issues of parking, noise or litter.

Sitting outside in the garden, the couple said it's not so much the screams that disturb them but the click click clicking of the rides as the cars climb to the top, and the sudden whoosh that follows on its way down. With Halloween parties, late functions in the evening- the pair said it's "never quiet".

Other locals, like Alan, 59, said he "didn't want to sound like an old fogey" but sometimes the PA system for the autumn functions was "too loud" and lasted until 11pm at night. But he accepted it is a theme park: "What do you expect? There are worse things to live next to."

Thrill-seekers visiting Thorpe sometimes park down residential streets around the site to avoid paying parking fees. Although some neighbours said they "don't blame" people for trying to save a few quid, one couple had even taken to putting bricks on the curb outside of their house to stop people parking.

Liz and Barry Taylor, 58 and 73, said people parking outside their house at the weekends can cause a lot of traffic and congestion down their quiet road. They said sometimes they struggle to get out of their drives and dodge other cars, but it has not been "too bad" since Hyperia opened. "It's alright," said Liz, "but I'd rather it wasn't there."

Not all the neighbours mind it: Johanna said it is "no problem", adding that she is "all in favour of working people" trying to save money. She said: "When you think about the problems of the world- it's nothing. They are youngsters."

Neighbours raised issues of people chucking litter out of their car and onto the kerb as hometime comes around. "Lots of rubbish gets left along the road," said Joanne Bolton, 65. She moved next door to the park three years ago to be closer to her daughter. Residents complained of fast food packaging and wrappers being thrown out of cars and "left tumbling down the street" before people drive home.

But Joanne said: "I like looking out at the green area [of trees around the park]. If that goes I'd be mad." Although she "quite likes the screaming", she gets more wound up about the planes that fly over her garden.

A Thorpe Park spokesperson said: "Thorpe Park is very much part of the local community we operate within and has been positively contributing to the local area for 45 years. We strive to do all we can to ensure we keep our local residents, staff and guests happy, and we pride ourselves on being an established part of the community, taking our responsibility as a good neighbour seriously. We have a long-standing positive relationship with our local residents and this is something we value and want to maintain."

The vast majority of park guests visit for a single day. "Substantial" on-site car parking is available, along with good public transport links near Staines Train Station. The Thorpe Park Express bus transports guests directly between Staines Train Station and Thorpe Park at regular intervals during the day and during operational hours.

The spokesperson added: "Here at Thorpe Park we pride ourselves on being a significant employer of local people. Our teams work closely with our local community to ensure we are giving back to our local area and contributing towards making it a positive place to live and work on a number of levels."

"Thorpe Park worked hard to support the residents association in working with Cllr Hulley and Surrey Highways to bring improvements to the roundabout – at our own cost – to accelerate and resolve long standing issues impacting residents."

Some more of these initiatives include Site Conservation teams doing daily litter picking along the main road leading to Thorpe Park, in both directions, and beyond the perimeter. Teams also make regular landscaping support from our teams to ensure local green spaces are kept well maintained.

Image: Suntooooth License details

Wine tasting on the slopes of Leith Hill

Wine aficionados will soon be able to sample the delights of pinot noir, chardonnay, and cabernet in their famous fermented form after a Surrey Hills vineyard was granted planning permission to build a new tasting room.

The Tanhurst Estate, on the southern slopes of Leith Hill began planting grapes in spring of 2020 as part of a growing shift away from traditional hay and dairy farming.

The family, who have been living amidst the semi-ancient woodland there for the past 40 years, decided the best way to promote their wines was to let people visit and sample the fruits of their labour. At Mole Valley District Council's Wednesday August 7 planning committee, their efforts became a reality after members unanimously granted approval.

Speaking to the committee, the owners said: "The estate, has been in my wife's family since 1826. The estate comprises traditional farmland and semi ancient woodlands. The estate used to have milking herds but this became unviable in the 1980s although there remains a small herd of beef cows on the estate."

He added: "In order to keep its agricultural use we needed to find an alternative and economically viable way to farm the land so we consulted two of the most respected vineyard consultants in the country." The land's southern slopes make it ideal for growing grapes as it allows the berries to soak up as much sunshine as possible, while the hilly terrain helps water run off.

He said: "I believe the general public enjoy visiting vineyards and this is part of the experience of enjoying a bottle of wine that they buy. They need to see where the grapes were grown to understand the process the grapes have been through; from growing on the vine, to harvest, to fermentation in the tanks, and then bottling.

"We do all this at Birketts Farm. We are a small scale business and therefore rely on selling directly to customers and this requires interaction at the point of sale. We need to use these barns for wine tasting and other events in order to persuade customers that our wine is made totally on site, available, and worth the money they pay for English wine -once they see how much time and passion and effort goes into making it."

The plans for the Birketts Farm, in Tanhurst Lane, Abinger, allow for the existing barns to be converted and used for wine tasting and associated sales, as well as for hosting educational classes and private events and a cafe. There will also be added onsite parking and toilet facilities.

Surrey's cyber sleuth students at work

Cyber-curious students from Ash Manor School have been inspired to consider future careers in the sector after taking part in a special one-day workshop.

The event was hosted by Surrey County Council in collaboration with the **Surrey Cyber Security Cluster** (SCSC) and **SATRO Education Charity** as part of the **Inspire Surrey** pilot programme, and was held at the Hogs Back Hotel in Farnham.

The 'Digital Detective Challenge' was developed to harness the imagination of the students and encourage them to consider a future career in this exciting and fast-growing industry.

At the end of the day, almost all of the year 8 students taking part (28 out of 31) said they would now consider taking up a career in cyber – a resounding success for the day.

Matt Furniss, Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth, said: "Cyber security is a growing, highly innovative sector of huge importance to our regional economy. Events like this are fantastic to really capture the interest of enquiring young minds – the vital future leaders of this sector – and ensure cyber security's continued growth and success in Surrey. I'm delighted the event was such a triumph for all participants."

Surrey is a world-leader in cyber security, as home to a large and growing number of security firms and consultancy agencies including BAE Systems, CGI and F5.

Two of the UK's five Gold Standard Cyber Security Universities (Royal Holloway and University of Surrey) are also based in the

county, helping to drive innovation in the sector.

Surrey County Council is further nurturing the sector and supporting growth through its involvement in the Surrey Cyber Security Cluster.

Mr S Coomber, Head of Computer Science at Ash Manor School, said: "Events like this enable students to explore what it's like to work in cyber security. By showcasing the breadth of opportunities available, we hope to empower students to make an informed decision about considering a career in the cyber sector."

Jane Sheridan from SATRO Education Charity, said: "Today's event was not just about solving puzzles; it was about igniting passion and curiosity for cyber careers among young minds. We wanted to provide students with a glimpse into the exciting world of cyber security while emphasizing the importance of critical thinking and problem-solving skills."

Hani Momeninia, Director of the SCSC, highlighted the significance of nurturing future talent in the cyber field. He said: "As the cyber landscape continues to evolve, there is a growing demand for skilled professionals capable of defending us against emerging threats. Initiatives like this play a crucial role in inspiring and nurturing the next generation of cyber leaders. It's been great to work with the Surrey Cyber Security Cluster and SATRO Education Charity to design and host an engaging event for our budding cyber professionals."

The event was one of a number of initiatives intended to inspire a range of audiences to consider a career in cyber by the Council's Economy & Growth Team, in collaboration with the Surrey Cyber Security Cluster. Other events included a workshop for mums returning to work and a cyber careers fair at Brooklands Museum for secondary school students across the county.

Business Surrey, the Council's new business initiative, is committed to supporting sectors, such as cyber security, with support to grow. Discover more at **www.businesssurrey.co.uk**.

Those businesses looking for support and advice with workforce needs can contact the team for free support at www.businesssurrey.co.uk/advice-and-support/business-support-form.

The Surrey Careers Hub also works to connect employers with schools and colleges to support young people to take their next best step. Find out how you can get involved at https://www.businesssurrey.co.uk/workforce/careers-hub/.

No more German supermarkets in Epsom

Plans for an Aldi store have been rejected again over fears the increased traffic would have a severe impact on road safety.

[The site is a few hundred yards away from another German owned supermarket Lidl in Upper High Street.]

A proposal to create the budget supermarket on the vacant former Dairy Crest site in Alexandra Road was refused a second time at an Epsom and Ewell council meeting on July 10.

The application was first thrown out in 2015 following concerns about the site's location, level of car parking and traffic, and the effect on the character of the neighbourhood.

The new application for the £5m development in Epsom includes car parking, some landscaping but plans for residential units have been scrapped.

Councillor Jan Mason (Residents' Association/Ruxley Ward) said the supermarket giant should "do far better" on the design of the building if it "wants to come to a lovely area such as Epsom".

Although Aldi said it had "refined" its proposals, carefully designing an "attractive, bespoke Aldi food store" which would "respect the surrounding area", councillors were still concerned about its location.

Despite Surrey Highways advising the development "would be unlikely to result in a severe impact" on local traffic, councillors remained sceptical. Speaking before the debate, Ward Cllr Julie Morris (Lib Dem/College Ward) said there would be a "huge" impact on local residents who already feel the surrounding residential roads are a "rat run".

"The one thing you can't put in a spreadsheet is common sense," Cllr Chris Watson (Residents Association/ Ewell Court Road) said. He argued that regardless of "clever" data from the county council, "common sense" says it is a busy junction which could result in queuing traffic.

Agreeing with him, other councillors said the "already challenging junction" is "fraught with danger". It was agreed it was in the



interests of residents, motorists, pedestrians and children crossing to go to school that councillors had to reject the application.

However, Cllr Clive Woodridge (Residents' Association/ Ewell Village Ward) argued it was not viable to refuse the application on traffic and road concerns. He said Surrey Highway experts have judged the development acceptable and this could not be easily defended at appeal.

But Cllr Mason called the development a ticking "time bomb", which could lead to a fatal collision if plans goes ahead.

Speaking to the committee, local resident Leah said: "The council has had feedback multiple times that local residents don't want a food store here." She cited Aldi's own research from its application that 58-61% of local residents objected to the proposal.

Around 91 letters were sent opposing the scheme, arguing it was an 'unacceptable location' for a food store at a busy junction. Concerns were raised that traffic would be exacerbated, a pedestrian crossing would be dangerous and the brownfield site should be saved for affordable housing.

Aldi superstore. (Credit: Marques Thomas/Unsplash)