

# Crime and Disorder committee gets policies in order

13 September 2023



Three important items were debated at the **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Crime and Disorder Committee** meeting on 12 September 2023. The Video Surveillance System Policy (VSS), the Community Safety Intervention Policy, and the Community Safety Action Plan. The press and public were excluded from The Community Safety Review Report discussion.

The Public Protection Manager, introduced the Video Surveillance System Policy (VSS). He clarified the need for the council to update its policy on video surveillance systems, highlighting the growing public concern as well as changing laws and regulations. "This item is really to start to address that," he said. "By studying the route to adopt a policy which will govern the use of video surveillance for the entire council," The proposed policy would regulate the use of video surveillance throughout the council, including body-worn cameras, CCTV, and potential emerging technologies like drones and artificial intelligence (AI).

During the discussion, Councillor **Phil Neale** (RA Cuddington) raised questions regarding funding availability. He asked, "Are there funds available from central government? And have we investigated all those routes to get the funding so that we can have a robust and working CCTV system?"

The officer assured that funds were being sourced effectively. "Yes, I can say that the present system in Epsom town is brand new, as of February of this year, replaced a system that was funded by the Home Office seemingly 30 years ago, and was updated also with Home Office funding for this year."

Councillor **Alex Coley**, (RA Ruxley) the Chair of the Committee added, "That was a sizable grant from the Home Office at £271,000 as part of the safer streets initiative, which that CCTV provision is part."

After a short discussion, the motion for the Video Surveillance System Policy was passed and is recommended for adoption at Full Council.

The second item discussed was the Community Safety Intervention Policy. The Officer explained that this policy aims to allocate resources efficiently, focusing on high-priority and needy cases, with victims' interests at the forefront. It seeks to empower individuals to resolve lower-priority issues independently, rather than relying on the council for every concern.

Councillor **James Lawrence** (LibDem College) inquired about the policy's applicability to councillors facing harassment. Lawrence asked, "I was just wondering, and I understand that resources are short in council, but is the policy for dealing with harassment [of a] councillor? Would that be through the same process as this or would there be a different route or more prioritised routes?"

The Officer clarified that criminal harassment falls under the police's jurisdiction, but the policy complements it and applies to all members of society. "There is such thing as criminal harassment, and that's under separate criminal law dealt with exclusively by the police, actually. [...]. So it certainly would apply to any member of society," Nelson said.

The community safety intervention policy was recommended for adoption at full council.

The third item was the Community Safety Action Plan. At the beginning of the discussion, Councillor Alex Coley, the Chair of the Committee said, "This is something that I've asked for. It lays out a series of actions that we are committed to taking over, I believe, a two-year period as part of the CSP (Community Safety Partnership), and it will go to public consultation, so that partners, stakeholders and the public, including councillors, have an opportunity to feedback their thoughts, and that can then be adopted at a future committee."

The Officer emphasised that this marks the first time their service area has released an action plan with the intent to involve the public in consultations. "We are primarily driven by the priorities of the Community Safety Partnership, which is a statutory coming together of partners in which two non-statutory members have also been invited to take part," he added. He further explained that while the partnership establishes a high-level strategic plan, individual organisations are encouraged to develop their specific strategies for implementing the overarching policy. In this instance, the council has meticulously extracted practical actions from the policy priorities agreed upon within the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

Cllr **Bernie Muir** (Conservative - Horton) expressed concerns about the quality of data and suggested formalising data contributions from partners within the plan's framework,

Cllr Coley clarified, "The community safety action plan is a plan for the CSP (Community Safety Partnership) itself." He

also encouraged Cllr Muir to provide recommendations during the consultation.

All councillors agreed to the draft plan for public consultation and to agree to receive the results of the consultation and any resulting revisions to the action plan at the next meeting of the committee.

The Community Safety Review Report was discussed during the private session of the meeting, which was conducted without press or public participation. The decision is based on legal advice, citing that this portion of the meeting falls under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972. Specifically, it pertains to information related to the financial or business affairs of specific individuals or entities.

Related reports:

Safer nights in Epsom in sights

Safer nights ahead in Epsom with funding boost

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## Not such a rosy report on Surrey Fire Service

13 September 2023



Earlier today Epsom and Ewell Times published a press release clearly attributed to Surrey County Council. Below is a report from our BBC Local Democracy Reporting Service partner which casts a somewhat different light on the presentation of the Report by Surrey County Council.

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Surrey's Fire and Rescue Service "needs to do more" to prepare and train for incidents in tall buildings, such as in the Grenfell tragedy, according to inspectors.

In a report released on Wednesday (September 13) inspectors gave a "requires improvement" rating to seven areas they looked at, with three areas rated "adequate" and one rated "good".

**Roy Wilsher's** report said he was satisfied with some aspects of the service's performance in keeping people safe and secure from fire and other risks, but said improvement was needed in some areas.

He said: "Given the nature of some of the problems we have identified, we will keep in close contact with the service to monitor its progress."

The fire and rescue service was given a requires improvement rating in the areas of preventing fire and risk, responding to fires and emergencies, best use of resources and promoting fairness and diversity, among others.

The report sets out that Surrey's fire and rescue service covers an area of 645 square miles and 1.2 million people.

An action plan will look at areas for improvement

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service said it was bringing together an "improvement plan" to address all areas for improvement highlighted in the report.

Chief fire officer **Dan Quin** said: "We know that there are areas where we can still improve and we will address these issues as a priority. While we had expected a more positive outcome in certain areas we recognise the benefits of an independent inspectorate. This is an opportunity for us to re-evaluate our current programmes and strategies. Our aim is to address the recommendations and further improve our services.

"I would like to thank the inspectors for taking the time to learn about our work, for their recommendations and for holding us to account. We remain committed to becoming an outstanding service as we continue to put our communities first."

Inspector 'disappointed' with tall building policies and procedures

Under the category of responding to major and multi-agency incidents, Mr Wilsher rated the service "requires improvement".

He said the service needed to do more to "prepare and train for incidents in tall buildings", such as the Grenfell Tower tragedy in which 72 people died in Kensington in 2017. He said only a "limited amount" of realistic training and exercising at tall buildings had been done, and that it hadn't included all staff groups that would be expected to respond to such an incident.

Mr Wilsher's report said: "We were disappointed to find that the service had only developed a limited number of policies and procedures for safely managing this type of incident. It has procedures in place detailing the role of the evacuation

officer but no effective tall buildings evacuation policy for operational and control room staff. The service should address these policy gaps as a matter of urgency.”

The inspection also saw a new “cause of concern” given, regarding the service not being able to accurately identify how many high-risk premises it has.

The inspector said within 28 days an action plan should be provided which would look at identifying the highest risk premises and making sure all staff were aware of expectations of them.

What has improved?

While Mr Wilsher did say inspectors were “disappointed” more progress hadn’t been made since a 2021 inspection, he did say there had been “significant change” in the leadership team as well as the transfer of some workforce to London Fire Brigade last year.

The only area rated “good” was “promoting the right values and culture”. According to the report: “We were encouraged by the cultural improvements the service has made. The service is displaying more visible leadership, and the area for improvement we described during our last inspection has been discharged.”

He added there was a “clear commitment” from staff and leaders to improve, with “some good foundations in place” but said it was “important the service gains momentum and moves forward”.

As well as that, Mr Wilsher said SFRS had good systems in place to inform the public about ongoing incidents, helping keep them safe during and after incidents. This was under a “requires improvement” rating for the “responding to fires and other emergencies” part of the inspection.

Mr Quin said: “I am extremely proud of the hard work happening across our service and want to thank all of our team for playing their part. As a service we are committed to creating a fully inclusive workplace where everybody feels supported. The improvement of the service’s culture was a priority for all staff, so we are delighted to see these efforts recognised.”

The full breakdown of services in each category is as follows:

Good: Promoting values and culture

Adequate: Understanding fire and risk, future affordability, right people, right skills

Requires improvement: Preventing fire and risk, public safety through fire regulation, responding to fires and emergencies, responding to major incidents, best use of resources, promoting fairness and diversity, managing performance and developing leaders

Inadequate: None

Related report:

Surrey Fire service praised

## Will the dust ever settle on Chalk Pit conflict?

13 September 2023



Following years of complaints of dust and noise pollution from the **Chalk Pit** site on **College Road, Epsom**, residents and local campaigners say that stricter council enforcement is still needed amidst claims that site owners are operating outside of the conditions of their planning permission.

The land at The Chalk Pit, College Road, Epsom, Surrey is an industrial and commercial site home to several waste management facilities including **Skip It Epsom Ltd** and **Epsom Skip Hire**.

EPSOM AND EWELL TIMES EXCLUSIVE

An application to transform what was a waste transfer site to a materials recycling centre was first made in 2017 but such an upscaling of operations remained unlicensed until 2 May 2023 when retrospective planning permission was granted by **Surrey County Council** (SCC). The permission is subject to several conditions including limitations on working hours as well as the containment of operations within a secondary building to mitigate resulting dust and noise pollution.

Reports from locals say that the site is much quieter in recent months attributing this to enforcement from Surrey County

Council to turn off a loud trommel which previously operated at the site. However, they also report that operations are taking place outside of the agreed hours of working resulting in continued distress.

Residents and local councillors have expressed repeated concerns since the change of operations in 2020 surrounding the impact of noise and dust to the mental and physical wellbeing of residents, as well as concerns surrounding the impact on the local environment.

At present a building to contain operations is under construction and operations are continuing pending its completion. Skip It made an application to SCC on 4 May seeking permission to continue processing waste outside of a building for up to 6 months whilst the building is under construction. Residents express strong opposition to the redactions.

Campaigners, including MP for Epsom and Ewell, **Chris Grayling**, have asked that tighter council enforcement of the planning conditions be implemented as well as urging the **Environment Agency** (EA) to maintain tight control on the waste permit conditions and to ensure the building to enclose operations is fit for purpose. Residents have also expressed concern over the number of lorries at the site causing noise in neighbouring roads which cannot be contained.

Skip It, who own the recycling centre, claim that their business has been victim to disproportionate targeting of complaints, saying that many of the passing vehicles belong to other site users and that their vehicle numbers are within council guidelines.

Skip It director, **Mo Maan**, told the **Epsom and Ewell Times**: “We modified a few things to suit our operation...no major change, because the building is going up.”

He continued: “If there was illegal activity, the Environment Agency and the council would have shut the site down, which they’re very good at doing. The same situation with dust - if the dust was so bad, don’t you think that we would have been shut down by now?”



Aerial view of the Chalk Pit site cc Google Sat.

Planning documents, which can be found on the Surrey County Council website, show information regarding the extent of noise and dust assessments.

In July 2021 a Noise Impact Assessment by the EA (known as the ‘Tofts report’) stated that “NJB [land now operated on by Skip It Epsom Ltd] was at least 10dB louder than [Epsom Skip Hire] and was responsible for all of the measured noise” and stated the presence of “noise abnormal and prolonged enough to cause significant effect on human senses”.

In November 2021, however, a report by **7th Wave Acoustics** stated that “it is likely that the noise from the on-site active processing operations will not result in adverse noise impact” and the site was “acceptable in noise assessment terms.”

Skip It director Mo Maan told Epsom and Ewell Times: “We’ve had noise assessments done, which cost me a fortune to get done - independently, and by the Environment Agency and the council.” Maan continued: “We’ve got planning permission, we’re putting a building up, but they’re still complaining.”

Former College Ward Epsom Councillor **Nigel Collin** told the Epsom and Ewell Times: “History has shown us that the operator plays the game well when it comes to observing the licence when a planning application is under consideration. Normal disruptive service resumes once the planning outcome is determined.”

On 25 July 2023 Councillor **Bernie Muir** put a motion to council proposing that they install professional noise

measurement equipment around the Chalk Pit site, leaving the equipment in place for a minimum period of three months, and responding to any breaches of noise regulations on the site with the imposition of a noise abatement order. It was suggested that £60k be allocated to the project. A vote on the motion has been deferred to the next **Environment Committee** on October 17.

Cllr Muir told the Epsom and Ewell Times that previous monitoring had not been sufficient in identifying which landowner was causing the nuisance and hence the results of the assessments were “unactionable”.

**Epsom and Ewell Borough Council** (EEBC) has faced criticism from residents for failing to issue an abatement notice to cease operations during the period of unlicensed operations to put a stop to the resulting noise pollution.

Nigel Collin described the council’s handling of the situation as “inept” and expressed concern over the lack of an overarching person or body taking responsibility for the situation.

EEBC told the Epsom and Ewell Times: “The areas of responsibility around the Chalk Pit site are complex and EEBC, SCC Planning and the EA all have different roles. EEBC have taken a leading role in co-ordinating a multi-organisational response to the various issues arising from the site. This includes regular multi-agency co-ordination briefings and a commitment to continue working with all agencies in trying to improve the lived experience of those living near to the Chalk Pit.”

“EEBC takes its responsibilities to all residents seriously and will always act where sufficient evidence is found of a statutory nuisance. The evidence gathered during the noise monitoring demonstrated that there was certainly audible noise at times from the site which could be considered as having a negative impact on the local amenity, but not enough to be considered a statutory nuisance.”

Nigel Collin, who has been a key figure in the fight against the unlicensed operations, said the definition of statutory nuisance was ‘more than met’.

Efforts from councillors to enforce restrictions at the Chalk Pit have been cross-party with councillors Steve McCormick (RA), John Beckett (RA) and Bernie Muir (Con) and Kieran Persand (Con) at the forefront of negotiations.

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council said that they have not closed the case and that they will continue to work with the SSC and the Environment Agency to ensure statutory nuisance thresholds are not exceeded.

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## Cycle hub in Dorking development

13 September 2023



A football academy, a 130-place children’s nursery, and a cycling hub, have all been approved in Dorking as the Pixham Lane masterplan steps up a gear.

The site had been seen as an opportunity for a new Dorking Wanderers FC stadium but that was kicked into the long grass when it became clear the club’s future was at Meadowbank.

Now, developers Stonegate Homes have been granted planning permission by Mole Valley councillors for three new community buildings as part of a grander vision for the site that could also feature a senior living home for about 200 people and 300 new homes.

The largest of the buildings approved last week is a 414 square metre nursery, which will be built over two floors, and have space for up to 130 children across four classrooms.

A new youth academy will be used by Dorking Wanderers Football Club and features classrooms for up to 40 students at any time.

The final building will become a cycling hub after the plans sailed through the Wednesday, September 6 meeting with only minor objections from councillors.

The council said it expected the hub to be a hit with cyclists as “a place to meet and relax, as well as a place to repair and purchase cycling equipment and accessories”.

Speaking at the meeting was Councillor **Simon Budd** who questioned the need for a nursery after two had closed within the past year, suggesting a lack of demand and that “we would be much better building and SEN school rather than a nursery school”.

The site is surrounded by Dorking railway station as well as a train line running north to London and south to Horsham.

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The application site (measuring 0.68ha) lies to the south of Pixham Lane, just east of the A24 and north of Dorking; within the Built up Area. The site, which lies at the south-western corner of the overall 'AVIVA site', comprises car parking which served the former office use. The ground level is generally flat. The site is bounded to the south west by Dorking Railway Station and rail line running north to London and south to Horsham and beyond. To the south east is a public footpath whilst to the north is the remaining part of the Aviva campus. The site itself is in the Built-up Area; adjoining to the east is land designated Metropolitan Green Belt. It is broadly level throughout. Access to the site can be obtained from the eastern end of Lincoln Road.

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Cllr **Rosemary Hobbs** said: "If anyone has visited this site and walked in from Lincoln Road, they'll know this is a particularly unpleasant looking, very messy looking, area of Dorking. It will greatly enhance the appearance of that part of the town and I think it is a good use of the land. The nursery will presumably get some business from the number of residents in the properties on the site."

Cllr **Chris Hunt** said: "The cycling hub, who can speak against that as a principle?"

The football academy, he said was also for sports, and a nursery would be used by new families moving into the area. He added - given the use of the site "I think its a good proposal".

**Mole Valley Borough Council** is currently preparing its new long-term planning bible, the Local Plan, which sets out the types and levels of permitted development in the area.

The council said it has been submitted to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and is currently under examination by an Inspector. The draft earmarks the site for 276 dwellings and at least three Gypsy and traveller pitches.

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## Surrey's Big Guns ganging up

13 September 2023



Surrey is set to benefit from a deepening of ties between **Surrey County Council** and the **University of Surrey** through a new **Civic University Agreement** being developed between the two institutions.

Opportunities to work even more closely are being discussed at a special event today that hopes to explore new areas for collaboration including initiatives for economic growth, health and sustainability. The event will be opened by University of Surrey President and Vice Chancellor **Max Lu** alongside leader of Surrey County Council, **Tim Oliver**.

Both institutions recognise the huge potential that can flow from more consistently combining Surrey County Council's leadership, capacity and resources with the University of Surrey's research and innovation strengths, enormous economic contribution to the region and multiple global specialisms.

The University of Surrey has a good track record of working in and for the local community from hosting a space industry round table with the Science Minister; delivering air quality research that has benefitted local communities and schools; and carrying out health research that is helping earlier diagnosis of cancers in Surrey residents. The University also makes a significant positive impact on the Surrey economy - supporting 17,500 jobs in the county and contributing £1.3 billion to the county's economy. (Figures taken from a report by independent economic consultants Biggar Economics).

Other examples of current joint working include the Surrey Climate Commission and One Surrey Growth Board - both projects that are key to the sustainable prosperity of the county, and involving significant contributions from academics at the University of Surrey.

Professor Max Lu, President and Vice Chancellor of the University of Surrey, said:

"The University of Surrey is a global community, with our students, staff and collaborators from all over the world, and our research has tremendous global reach and impact. But we are proudly anchored in Guildford and Surrey, and have a symbiotic relationship with our region and county.

"In particular, we have a long and proud record of collaborating with Surrey County Council and many regional stakeholders. The Civic University Agreement that we are launching today will give us a bold and visionary framework for harnessing our world-leading research to help put Surrey on the world map, to help transform lives in Surrey for the better today, and to work together to build Surrey's future prosperity, to enrich lives and protect the planet."

Cllr Tim Oliver, Leader of Surrey County Council, said:

"The University of Surrey has long been a powerful asset and a trusted partner for the County. This agreement will take that to the next level. Combining our own high ambitions for Surrey with the Universities world-leading research strengths will help us bring the best of tomorrow to Surrey today, and to project Surrey's greatest strengths on a global

stage. Our residents, our communities and our economy will be the beneficiaries of this deepened partnership with the research and education powerhouse with which we share our name.”

The new Civic University Agreement is part of a national movement to elevate to a strategic level the relationships between universities and the communities in which they are based. The agreement will focus on enhancing life in Surrey through:

- driving sustainable economic growth
- tackling health inequalities
- enabling a greener future
- empowering thriving communities.

University centres of excellence that will contribute to delivery of these priorities include:

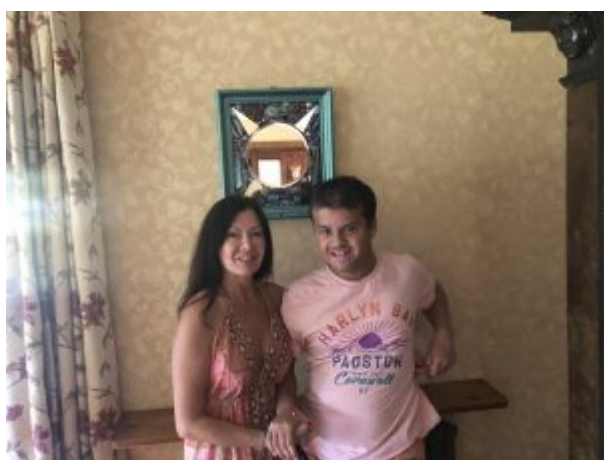
- The Institute for Sustainability - which has been founded to be a critical player in the global transition to sustainable living - through research, innovation, partnerships, education and civic engagement
- The People-Centred Artificial Intelligence Institute - which is driving research and innovation that places people at the heart of the future of AI
- The Centre for Sustainability and Wellbeing in the Visitor Economy - focusing on transport, tourism, hospitality and events
- Interprofessional expertise across human and animal health - including the combined strength of the University’s School of Veterinary Medicine, School of Biosciences and new School of Medicine
- Surrey Space Centre - which is a key partner with the growing space sector in the region
- 5G/6G Innovation Centre - representing decades of experience at the forefront of high-speed and reliable mobile communications with multiple economic and societal applications.

Today’s event is the first step in building closer ties between organisations that share a strong purpose to help society in the local region, and brings together an experienced team from across the University’s faculties, schools and institutes, with leaders from all the directorates of Surrey County Council. It is focused on identifying creative opportunities for deeper collaboration, with the potential to deliver transformational change for our community. Other local stakeholders will be invited to join the agreement in the future.

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## School transport early term teething problems

13 September 2023



Families have been left without school transport for the start of term despite **Surrey County Council** promising to “learn lessons” after pupils were left stranded last year.

One parent of a 19-year-old with severe learning difficulties said she “stopped mentioning” going back to school to her son once she realised transport probably wouldn’t be in place in time for the start of term.

**Georgie Morris** said her son, Greg, missed the first four days of his school term, but has now had confirmation that he will be able to get to school on Monday (September 11).

She first had transport approved for Greg, who has a placement at a New Malden college which is the nearest suitable place for him, in June.

But having waited through the summer for details to be confirmed she claims she was told the day before Greg was due to go back on September 5 that there was no transport in place.

Having spoken to someone at the county council on Thursday, September 7, Georgie then had Greg’s transport confirmed.

Despite some families not having transport sorted for the start of the new term Surrey County Council bosses say “significant improvements” have been made since last year but admitted there were issues with finding providers for a small number of children who require specialist provision due to their needs.

There are also more than 350 applications waiting for travel arrangements, but a council spokesperson explained these were from 544 applications made in August. So far more than 170 have been dealt with, with the remaining ones on track to be assessed within the 30 day timescales.

But she said Greg, who is non-verbal, has severe learning difficulties and global developmental delay, is bored at home, and needs the stimulation school brings.

She said: "I tell him 'It's so many sleeps until school', so he was geared up to go to school. Once I realised this wasn't going to happen, I just stopped mentioning it, we just carried on with the holidays."

She couldn't drive Greg from her Dorking home to the college, saying she doesn't always have access to the car, and it would be too stressful for her. But once she had the transport confirmed, she said she "instantly felt okay".

Georgie told the LDRS: "I'm lucky in the fact that I can chase and I've got the wherewithal to kick up a stink and to get things done, but a lot of these parents don't."

She worried about other parents, some of whom may have additional needs themselves, or might not know where to turn.

While she's sympathetic with staff at the council who have a "very difficult" job to do, she said better accountability and communication were needed.

A county council spokesperson said: "There is a small cohort of children who require specialist provision for high and/or complex medical needs that, due to a lack of suitable providers, are waiting for appropriate arrangements. "We are in direct contact with these families and are actively working with them to find a solution. Measures such as personal travel allowances have been offered in the short-term."

In May, councillors were warned that the county council needed to tackle a £12million overspend on school transport "to avoid adversely impacting services".

A review following issues at the start of the 2022 school year led to 50 recommendations for the authority, as councillors heard that families were turning to food banks in the face of delays and suffering an impact on their mental health.

Councillor **Clare Curran**, cabinet member for education and learning, told a select committee meeting in December she didn't "underestimate" the task at hand, but was "confident" that by this September families wouldn't "suffer the failure" of the 2022 start to the year.

A council spokesperson told the LDRS this week: "Significant improvements have been made regarding the assessment and planning of families' transport arrangements, and addressing the challenges faced previously. We are not currently experiencing any application or travel delivery backlogs, and across the last six months 95% of applications were assessed within our agreed timescales.

"All applications for home to school travel assistance received prior to 31 July were processed, and families had their travel arrangements communicated to them, before the start of the autumn term."

Families with specific complaints and enquiries are urged to call the council's Contact Centre on 0300 200 1004 so it can investigate.

Related reports:

[Surrey's school transport £12M overspend](#)

[School transport failings lead to foodbanks...](#)

[Families 'in limbo' as SCC fails on school transport](#)

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## Council solve Scots Pine tree puzzle

13 September 2023



The Planning Committee Meeting, held at Epsom Town Hall on 7 September 2023 centred around two key topics: a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) concerning a Scots Pine tree in Grafton Road and the modification of approved plans for a construction project in Boleyn Avenue. After a brief discussion, two motions were passed.

Regarding the Scots Pine tree TPO, a historical mapping error had inaccurately placed the tree. Originally, it was marked as if it were located in the front garden of No. 10, but it was listed under the address of No. 8 in the TPO schedule. To rectify this, it was recommended to issue a new TPO, providing temporary protection to the tree. The Planning Development and Enforcement officer presented the motion and explained the TPO application procedure, highlighting the historical nature of the error.

Three key recommendations emerged:

1. Confirmation of Tree Preservation Order No. 476A without modification
2. Revocation of Tree Preservation Order No. 476.
3. Modification of Tree Preservation Order No. 6 to remove the reference to Pine T17.

However, some debate ensued as both the tree owner and the neighbour raised concerns. Their primary worries included the tree's height, branches falling during strong winds, and damage to the pavement caused by birds. Additionally, the tree owner expressed frustration over the extended duration of their application and objection to the TPO.

During the meeting, several councillors voiced concerns about potential limitations on future actions concerning the tree if the TPO application succeeded. Councillor **Julian Freeman** (LibDem College) questioned the evaluation system and its impact on daylight where the trees were located, while Councillor **Peter O'Donovan** (RA Ewell Court) expressed concerns about the tree's size and height and its potential impact on nearby residents and properties.

On the other hand, Councillor **Neil Dallen** (RA Town) emphasised that the motion primarily aimed to correct documentation. He clarified, "As I understand, for the TPO to be corrected and put in the right place. If the tree gets too big or branches start falling off, then even though it's got a TPO, they can apply to prune the tree or do whatever's needed. It's not causing any damage to property." The motion passed with one abstention.

The second topic discussed was the modification of approved plans for a construction project at 15 Boleyn Avenue. This project involved a two-story, two-bedroom dwelling with additional garage space. After a brief presentation by the officer and clarifications by Councillor **Phil Neale** (RA Cuddington), the motion received unanimous approval.

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## White van man to go green?

13 September 2023



Diesel van owners who drive along the Guildford stretch of the A3 more than three times a week, could be eligible for a grant to replace their vehicle with an electric model.

Surrey County Council is working in partnership with Guildford Borough Council to deliver a £11 million National Highways scheme, aimed at reducing high levels of pollution in the area. Applications can be made here from today (Thursday 07 September) as 'International Day of Clean air for blue skies' gets underway.

Vehicle dealerships that sell and lease qualifying electric light commercial vehicles are also being encouraged to apply to participate in the scheme. Applications can be made at [www.surreycc.gov.uk/a3evgrantdealer](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/a3evgrantdealer). A free event is being held for interested dealerships in Guildford on **Tuesday 12 September 2023**. Tickets can be booked [here](#).

**Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth said**, "Reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality is a major priority for Surrey County Council as we strive to achieve our target to be a net-zero county by 2050. Pollution levels on this stretch of the A3 are unacceptable and we want to do all we can to improve this situation and protect the health and wellbeing of local residents.

"I'm delighted that we are able to offer van owners a financial incentive to replace their diesel vans with electric alternatives and to support small businesses in the switch to lower emissions. We'll also be increasing the provision of charge points near the A3 as we are across the county.

"I encourage franchised dealers who supply light commercial electric vehicles to support this scheme and apply to be an accredited dealership. This is an important first step in our joint work to improve air quality along the A3 and we hope to announce further joint interventions in the near future."

**Andrew Bean, Principal Air Quality Advisor at National Highways said**, "We are delighted to be working with Surrey and Guildford Councils on this scheme. Not only are we working together to improve air quality around the A3, we are reducing carbon emissions and helping businesses that regularly travel up and down the A3 at the same time.

“We strongly encourage all interested dealers to sign up and help deliver electric vans for local businesses and regular users of the A3”.

**Cllr Merel Rehorst-Smith, Lead Councillor for Regulatory and Democratic Services at Guildford Borough Council said,** “This scheme is one of the new measures we’re supporting to help improve air quality along the A3, benefitting Guildford and the surrounding villages. Our officers have worked hard to get this scheme of the ground and obtain the funding for it. We hope that local dealers and businesses will want to get involved.”

“Offering diesel van owners financial help to switch to an electric vehicle will be a real incentive for them to use a greener form of transport.”

More information is available at [www.surreycc.gov.uk/a3evgrantdealer](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/a3evgrantdealer)

Image: Will Mellor - actor from White Van Man series. CC BBC

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## Surrey to fight Ash dieback

13 September 2023



Surrey County Council will undertake a programme of woodland management across its countryside estate this autumn, with a focus on tackling Ash dieback to protect public safety where needed, as well as identifying current and future nature recovery opportunities.

As England’s most wooded county, Surrey is heavily affected by Ash dieback, a non-native fungus which weakens the structure of Ash trees, making them liable to fall in an unpredictable way. Unfortunately, there is no known cure for Ash dieback and the disease spreads rapidly, with around 80% of the nation’s ash trees anticipated to succumb to it.

While trees in higher risk areas will need to be felled in the interest of public safety, Surrey County Council recognises the amount of ecological, historical and cultural importance that woodland has in the county, as well as its contribution to biodiversity and carbon sequestration.

Residents had previously raised concerns about getting the balance right between protecting the public and protecting nature. As part of the planning process for this year’s upcoming works, several local experts have been consulted to support in developing an appropriate approach and methodology, including Surrey Bat Group, Surrey Badger Group, Surrey Dormouse Group, Save Surrey’s Countryside, Surrey Botanical Society and Butterfly Conservation Surrey amongst others. The Council will continue to liaise with local experts throughout the season in addition to its work with organisations such as Natural England, the Forestry Commission and Surrey Wildlife Trust.

Recognising the guidance provided, the Council’s approach will now focus on higher risk areas around public rights of way, car parks and roads. This approach has led to around 2400 metres of permissive path being removed from the felling programme at Sheeples in West Horsley. Notices to divert the public away from some quieter permissive paths have been installed, an approach which follows similar action on National Trust land to minimise disturbance to biodiversity and encourage areas for wildlife to thrive.

A number of other measures are being put in place to minimise the impact of necessary works on nature including:

- Having a qualified ecologist on site throughout the works;
- Investing in specialist equipment and using specialist contractors to minimise disturbance;
- Undertaking work outside of ground nesting bird season;
- Creating new habitats for protected species such as Dormice;
- Development of new long term woodland plans linked to the Council’s nature recovery strategy;
- Replanting or encouraging natural regeneration of suitable tree species wherever appropriate.

Following extensive arboricultural and ecological surveys, works are anticipated to focus around targeted areas of **Sheeples** (West Horsley), **Newlands Corner** (near Guildford), Park Ham (near Bletchingley), **Norbury Park** (Leatherhead/Dorking), **Brockham Quarry**, **Beech Avenue** (Effingham) and areas of the **Downs Link** path. All works are subject to all necessary permissions and licenses being secured, so may be subject to change. Where Ash dieback works are taking place, tree species other than Ash may also be removed for safety reasons.

**Marisa Heath, Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for the Environment comments:** “Ash dieback has had a devastating effect on ash trees not only across Surrey but nationally. Over the coming months we will be undertaking

safety works across our countryside estate, however we will be managing this carefully and have minimised felling where we can.

“We will also be looking at how we can improve the overall quality and biodiversity of our woodland in order to develop long term woodland habitat management plans, as we understand the important role that trees play in helping us reduce the impacts of climate change and also in providing important habitats to a range of species. We have facilitated the planting of over 385,000 trees and we have plans to plant more during this tree planting season, but also to ensure we have a range of habitats for nature recovery.”

As part of Surrey’s ambition to be a carbon neutral county by 2050, Surrey County Council has a target to facilitate the planting of 1.2 million new trees (one for every resident) by 2030. Tree planting season is underway and more details on how to get involved can be found online.

‘Show and tell’ walks are being offered to the public as an opportunity to find out more about Ash dieback and the Council’s plans to address it. Details of the events are below:

- **Beech Avenue, Effingham:** 9 September, 9.30am to 11am. Meet on corner of Beech Close and Beech Avenue, KT24 5PQ. Please park respectfully in nearby roads.
- **Sheepleas, West Horsley:** 9 September, 12pm to 1.30pm. Meet at Green Dene car park, KT24 5TA.
- **Newlands Corner, near Guildford:** 16 September, 9.30am to 11am. Meet at White Lane car park, GU5 9BQ.
- **Norbury Park, Leatherhead:** 16 September, 11.30am to 1pm. Meet by Wild About Coffee (please note there is no parking at the coffee van – use Young Street, Fetcham or Crabtree car parks and follow signs)

Booking is not required, simply turn up at the meeting location shortly before the start time. For those unable to attend site walks, there will also be public drop-in sessions during September and October with details available online.

Further details on Ash dieback works are available at [www.surreycc.gov.uk/ashdieback](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/ashdieback) , including a short information video. Onsite information will also be available at each site throughout the works.

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## DIY waste charges lifted in Surrey

13 September 2023



From 1<sup>st</sup> September, **Surrey County Council** lifted charges on resident DIY waste in line with Government policy changes that were proposed in June.

The County Council, like most neighbouring authorities currently charge for all rubble and plasterboard to be disposed of at community recycling centres (CRCs). From 1<sup>st</sup> September up to two 50-litre rubble bags or one large item no larger than 2m x 0.75m x 0.7m per household will be accepted for free, at a maximum frequency of four visits over four weeks. Anything in excess of this will be chargeable at current rates.

DIY waste can be accepted at nine of the 15 community recycling centres and access to the rubble and plasterboard containers will continue to be controlled and monitored. A new monitoring system will be introduced using the automatic number plate recognition system to monitor usage.

**Natalie Bramhall, Cabinet Member for Property and Waste said:** “Whilst we are still unclear on when the Government proposes to implement this law, we have made these changes already. It’s about making the system as simple as possible for our residents, while protecting our sites from commercial operators taking advantage of a tax-payer funded service.”

CRCs are for Surrey residents only to dispose of household waste and recycling, including:

- Batteries
- Carpet
- Cooking oil
- Furniture
- Small electrical items

- Paper and card
- Metal

A full list of Surrey's community recycling centres is available on the Surrey County Council website, along with details of what is accepted at each site.

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## Signs of Surrey resistance to ULEZ continue

13 September 2023



The Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) to the London Borough Kingston and Sutton borders of Epsom and Ewell, went live on 29 August.

This will have an impact on Surrey residents, especially those living near the border of London, who have a non-ULEZ-compliant vehicle.

**Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth at Surrey County Council said:** "I am incredibly disappointed that expansion of the Ultra Low Emission Zone has gone ahead today and the impact this will have on many of our residents as they go about everyday, essential journeys.

"Surrey County Council has informed TfL that we will not enter into a Section 8 agreement which is needed for them to place signage and cameras on our highway, whilst there isn't any mitigation in place to minimise the impact on Surrey residents. If they wish to install advanced signage or have safety concerns, it's in their gift to install it on their land and to change the ULEZ border.

"Whilst the extended scrappage scheme looks to be a step in the right direction, this will have no impact on those outside of London. This means that people living in Surrey will not only have to pay the ULEZ charge, but also pay all costs to scrap their own car as the scrappage scheme only applies to people living inside London. Combined with the recent decision to withdraw the day travelcard, it is now increasingly difficult for those outside of London to travel in and out at a fair price.

"We continue to urge The Mayor and TfL to do what is right and extend the scrappage scheme outside of London for those that are impacted, provide exemption for key workers, and provide more and better bus routes between Surrey and London."

The Mayor of London's office stated:

"Expanding ULEZ was a difficult but necessary decision in order to save lives, protect the health of children and tackle the climate crisis. Clean air zones like the ULEZ are the most effective tool available to quickly and meaningfully cut air pollution in a city like London and vows to continue being 'a doer, not a delayer' when it comes to taking bold climate action. All Londoners with non-compliant vehicles can now apply for financial support to scrap them - with more than 15,000 applications received in the last week alone.

Nearly £60 million has already been committed in advance of the ULEZ expansion to Londoners, charities and businesses to scrap or retrofit their vehicles. With £100 million still left in the fund, the Mayor encourages Londoners who may still have a non-compliant vehicle to apply for the support available."

Related Reports:

[London Mayor confirms drive of ULEZ to Epsom border. ULEZ explainer.](#)

[High Court gives ULEZ the green light to Epsom's borders](#)

[ULEZ court challenge begins](#)

[ULEZ driving old cars to Epsom market](#)

[Challenge to ULEZ gaining grounds](#)

[Many Surrey motorists will be paying the ULEZ charge.](#)

[ULEZ Court battle looming](#)

# Objectors fail to tear a strip off

13 September 2023



An Epsom strip club has had its licence renewed despite dividing residents on what it brings to the town.

**Stir**, in the town centre's East Street, has run as a sexual entertainment venue since 2011, though operations manager **Damon Wellman** has been running it as a bar since 2007.

Residents who wrote to the council about the application raised concerns about going into town late at night because of it, while another in support said the bar did not have the "creeps" you would find in other venues.

A licensing sub committee meeting at **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council** on Thursday (August 24) granted renewal of the venue's licence, which was due to expire.

**Stir** is Epsom and Ewell's only establishment licenced as a sexual entertainment venue.

The sub committee considered six letters of support and four objections to the application, as well as hearing from Mr Wellman in the meeting.

Letters of support included one person who used to live very close to the venue, who said they were being followed home one night by three men having left another nearby pub. The letter said: "It was late and we had to walk past Stir bar so we asked the doormen if they could help and they were brilliant. "They let us stay in the bar for free, offered to call the police if the men stayed outside, which they did not, and then after some time walked us back to our flat. After that we would sometimes just go in there for a drink as it was a really nice bar and never had the creeps that we would encounter in other bars."

But one objector said she would not go into town late at night because of the club, saying she had "seen the men coming in and out" and felt "unsafe".

Another person who wrote in support said they understood people's "reservations to this sort of thing", but added "it's important that perceptions and prejudice do not take precedent over facts and reality."

Another letter said the venue "tainted" the town, raising concerns about it being so close to a nursery and to a residential area. They went on to say: "I write to and on behalf of the young women who walk home late at night and ask you to reconsider your renewal and shut the premise down and protect young adults from these dangers."

While another letter claimed there had been a "significant increase in anti-social behaviour associated with the establishment", Mr Wellman disputed this in the meeting.

He produced a response to a Freedom of Information request he had submitted to the council regarding complaints, whether noise or otherwise, about the premises which said there had been none in the last five years.

Mr Wellman said: "We have to run a venue like this strictly. That's why we have a great reputation. We are phenomenally strict. We are very strict on who we let in. We're not a volume-led venue, this industry generally isn't."

The licence was granted, with minor changes including removing the words "female only" from a condition regarding the locations where "exotic dancing" could take place.