

Residents aroused by “sleeping” residents?

26 February 2023



Amid claims of the Residents Association Councillors being “asleep at the wheel” one of the biggest residents’ protests ever held in Epsom took place yesterday. Over 200 demonstrators waved banners, wore green or green belts, and chanted “Green not Greed” in the town centre on Saturday (February 25).

Fury was directed at not only the EEBC planners’ Draft Local Plan containing proposals to build 2,175 homes on Green Belt sites, but also the controlling Residents Association councillors group, which, it is claimed, “were asleep at the wheel” in voting Green Belt inclusion through. Over 40% of the total 5,400 Local Plan homes are destined for the Green Belt, the majority of which will be market-priced and unaffordable to those starting out on the property ladder, protestors argue.

Of nine “preferred options” for housing sites earmarked by the Council in the Local Plan, five are on Green Belt sites, which include Horton Farm (1,500 homes proposed) and Ewell East playing fields (350 homes, up to six storeys high).

Despite a “brownfield first” brief, planning officers have not proactively engaged with developers on central urban rejuvenation possibilities, near facilities, preferring instead to accept opportunistic bids from selected Green Belt landowners and developers, protestors claim.

In a display of some cross party support, the protestors were joined by representatives from political parties standing in forthcoming local elections in Epsom & Ewell, including two RA councillors who had voted against their colleagues on Green Belt inclusion. Cllr **Eber Kington** (RA Ewell Court Ward) and Cllr **Christine Howells** (RA Nonsuch Ward). They were joined by Cllr **Bernie Muir** (Conservative – Stamford) and **Mark Todd** Chair of the Epsom and Ewell Labour Party.

Demonstration organiser, **Kathy Mingo**, from the *Epsom & Ewell Green Belt Group*, said “It was heartening to see everyone uniting beyond party political lines against these unjustified Green Belt destruction plans, given new emerging Government guidelines that puts the focus squarely on brownfield development to meet only advisory, not mandatory, housing targets”

Alex Duval, vice-chairman of Clarendon Park Residents Association, which adjoins the Horton Farm Green Belt site said “The data does not add up. The Council’s own reports show that the site contains a critical drainage area with high flood risk; their transport analysis recommends not taking the site forward; and reliance on outdated ONS 2014 population figures – rather than the lower 2018 and official 2021 Census figures – means Epsom’s housing needs are significantly overstated. The real housing need can be accommodated on brownfield alone, without any Green Belt destruction. Their own evidence is clear – the Council should save our Green Belt”

Tim Murphy, a vice president of CPRE Surrey and chair of Epsom’s CPRE group, said “CPRE’s experience is that, once sites are listed in a Council’s Local Plan as a “preferred option” for development, then, in 99% of cases, they eventually get developed. So EEBC has already put a number of Green Belt sites at real, permanent risk by identifying them for housing in its Draft Local Plan, which may not be justified as current Government policy on Green Belt evolves”

“Many RA councillors’ seats may now be at risk in May if they do not join the minority of their colleagues in clearly stating their policy objection to unjustified Green Belt destruction” said **Jenny Coleman**, chair, Ewell Downs Residents Association. “It is clear, not least from a residents petition signed by over 7,000, but also from this impactful, united residents protest, that many think the RA councillors have been rather asleep at the wheel. They must listen to the voice of the people”.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Draft Local Plan. Details how to submit your views.

A petition is available at epsomgreenbelt.org

Related reports:

The BIG plans for Epsom and Ewell – reports on Hook Road Car Park and SGN site plan.

MP’s housing solution for Epsom and Ewell

The Epsom and Ewell Town Hall plan

A new Town Hall for Epsom and Ewell?

Land adjoining Ewell East Station

Land at West Park Hospital

The really BIG one: Horton Farm

Ashley Avenue

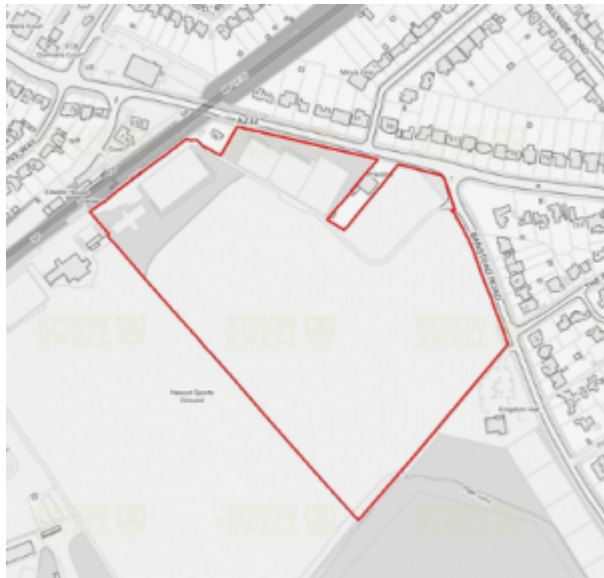
West Park

Local Plan battle heating up? and other related reports.

Local Planning Matters – Tim Murphy’s opinion piece for Epsom and Ewell Times

Land adjoining Ewell East Station

26 February 2023



This is the seventh of nine reports on the BIG PLANS for Epsom and Ewell proposed in the **DRAFT LOCAL PLAN** that is out for public consultation till 17th March. We do not intend to state any support or opposition but may ask some questions.

This 8.3 hectare sports pitches and open space is earmarked for residential development with the following justifications:

- At least 350 net zero carbon dwellings
- Building heights up to 6 storeys
- New local retail provision at ground floor
- The re-provision of the playing pitches at Hook Road Arena

The site will contribute towards meeting the need for housing in the borough and ancillary community infrastructure.

The site has well defined boundaries and lies adjacent to existing residential areas and adjoining Ewell East railway station, creating a suitable context for residential development and lowering the risk of adverse landscape impacts. The site is also in relatively close proximity to local services and facilities and to bus and rail transport connections. Vehicular access can be achieved without detriment to the character of the local area.

When will the site be developed?

It expected that a planning application will be submitted in the middle of the plan period with development likely to start by 2031 once new sports pitches have been provided.

Planning officers note:

Development proposals must identify ways of improving pedestrian access to Ewell East Station and maximise the linkages between the site and surrounding area, and provide opportunities for walking and cycling.

The design of development would need to minimise impacts on Priest Hill Nature Reserve (Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) located on the Southern Boundary of the site.

Part of the site to the east along Cheam Road is within Flood Zone 3. Any development proposal will need to take this into account.

The development proposal will need to work with the topography of the site to ensure that visual impacts of development are minimised

Infrastructure requirements include:

Provision of new retail unit(s) to provide convenience retail to meet local needs.

The loss of playing pitches will require reprovision at the Hook Road Arena site (Policy SA9). The developer will be expected to re-provide the playing pitches off site prior to development commencing to ensure that the scheme is acceptable in planning terms.

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The Epsom and Ewell Town Hall plan

A new Town Hall for Epsom and Ewell?

Ashley Avenue

West Park

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Land at West Park Hospital

26 February 2023



This is the sixth of nine reports on the BIG PLANS for Epsom and Ewell proposed in the **DRAFT LOCAL PLAN** that is out for public consultation till 19th March. We do not intend to state any support or opposition but may ask some questions.

The plan is for residential development, comprising:

- approximately 150 dwellings
- A target of 5% of homes to be provided through the provision of serviced plots of land for self-build and/or custom-build homes
- Floorspace to support NHS services (if required)

The reasons given include:

The site will contribute towards meeting the need for housing in the borough.

The site comprises of two parcels north and south of existing West Park Hospital residential area. The areas are currently previously developed land within the Green Belt, consisting of buildings that are currently in use as part of the original West Park Hospital operation which are no longer fit for purpose.

The site lies adjacent to existing residential creating a suitable context for residential development and lowering the risk of adverse landscape impacts.

When will the site be developed?

It expected that a planning application will be submitted in the early part of the plan period with development likely to start by 2027.

Site Constraints and mitigation

- Northern parcel is adjacent West Park Conservation Area and Southern parcel is within the Conservation Area therefore any proposal should ensure it is sensitively designed to reflect the parkland setting
- Maximise the linkages between the site and surrounding area; and provide opportunities for walking and cycling.
- Development should not adversely affect the Protected Trees within and on the boundaries of the of the site.
- Work with the topography of the site to ensure that visual impacts of development are minimised.
- Development proposal to focus the built form to the north of the site to preserve the undeveloped (open) land to the south.
- Any development proposal will need to incorporate mitigation relating to surface water flooding for those parts of the site that are susceptible.

The NHS may require the provision of some floorspace for healthcare needs, however there is currently no certainty as to whether there will be a need for such floorspace.

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Ashley Avenue

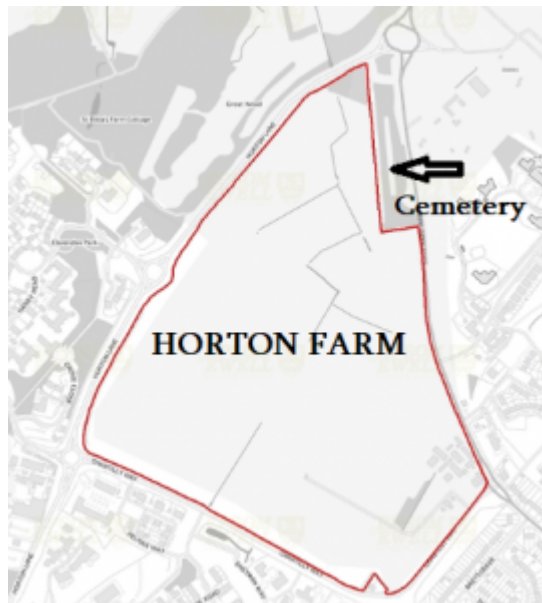
A new Town Hall for Epsom and Ewell?

Depot Road plans

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The really BIG one: Horton Farm

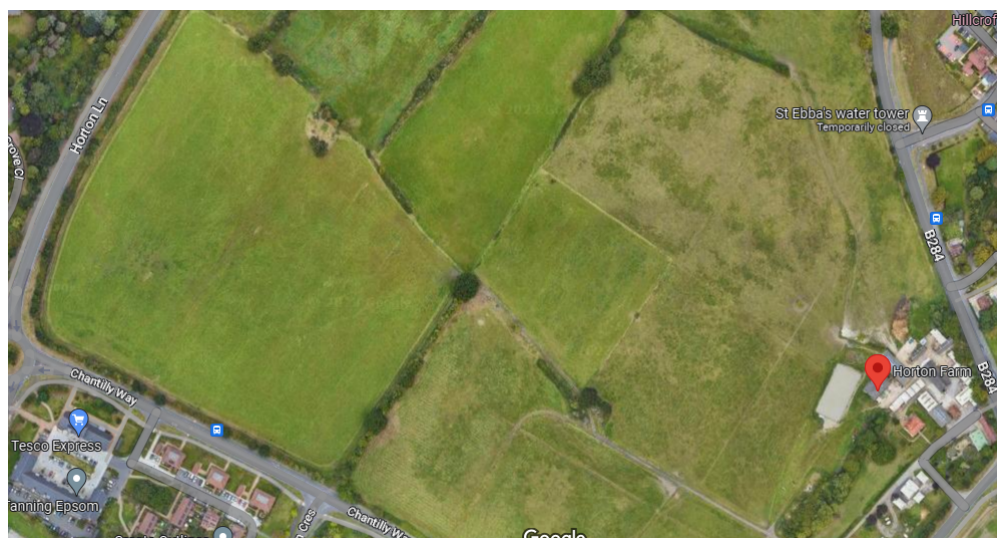
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This is the fifth of nine reports on the BIG PLANS for Epsom and Ewell proposed in the **DRAFT LOCAL PLAN** that is out for public consultation till 19th March. We do not intend to state any support or opposition but may ask some questions.

This near 100 acre site is a farm, a riding school and “open space” and the plan is to build 1500 + “zero carbon” dwellings on the site.

- A target of 5% of homes to be provided through the provision of serviced plots of land for self-build and/or custom-build homes
- A minimum of 10 serviced gypsy and traveller pitches
- Public open space
- Green corridor / habitat enhancements



And the reasons given for the plan include:

The site will contribute towards meeting the need for housing in the borough, including making a significant contribution towards the delivery of affordable housing and in meeting the needs of the boroughs Gypsy and Traveller population to create a new community.

The site has well defined boundaries and lies adjacent to existing residential areas, creating a suitable context for residential development and lowering the risk of adverse landscape impacts. The site is also located close to local services and facilities and to bus and rail transport connections. Vehicular access can be achieved without detriment to the character of the local area.

[Epsom and Ewell Times notes that it is also adjacent to the 5 acre Horton Cemetery where 9000 bodies are buried. See www.hortoncemetery.org for details.]

When will the site be developed?

The site is expected to be developed from 2028/29.

The planners note a number of issues:

- The majority of the site is bordered by existing residential areas. New access points should maximise the opportunities for improved connectivity and linkages in and around the area, in particular for walking and cycling.
- Development should not adversely affect any protected trees within and on the boundaries of the site.
- The design of development would need to minimise impacts on the Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) located to the north-west of the site.
- Any development proposal will need to incorporate mitigation relating to surface water flooding for those parts of the site that are susceptible.

- Development should work with the topography of the site to ensure that visual impacts of development are minimised.
- Horton Farm House is a listed building in the south-east of the site. Therefore, sympathetic design is required.

The development of the site will require: New highways access to the West and East and Improved pedestrian and cycle infrastructure.

Epsom and Ewell Times can report Horton Farm is owned by The Church Commissioners and is leased to a farmer who has farmed the area for many years. The Council state that a developer has an option on the land.

Related reports:

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Ashley Avenue

West Park

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Ashley Centre and Global House plan

26 February 2023



This is the fourth of eight reports on the BIG PLANS for Epsom and Ewell proposed in the **DRAFT LOCAL PLAN** that is out for public consultation till 17th March. We do not intend to state any support or opposition but may ask some questions.

The plan for this 3.19 hectare site (nearly 8 acres) that presently consists of a shopping mall, a multi-storey car park and offices to the rear is for a mixed use development, comprising:

- The retention and refurbishment of the Ashley Centre
- The redevelopment of Global House to provide at least 70 homes
- Building heights between 5-8 storeys
- Retention of the Playhouse
- Maintaining existing planting and green verge along Ashley Avenue
- Retention of the Multi Storey Public Car Park



Reasons given for the plans include:

There is the opportunity for the comprehensive refurbishment of the Ashley Centre, the shopping centre in Epsom Town Centre. The redevelopment of Global House to the south of the site alongside the refurbishment of the Ashley Centre offers the potential for an upgraded retail environment, improved facilities, and a better utilised site, with the provision of housing.

The site provides an opportunity to make more efficient use of land in a highly sustainable location. The Ashely Centre makes a valuable contribution towards the town centres retail offer and the council wishes to encourage the refurbishment of the centre to attract new tenants and maintain its vitality and viability. The redevelopment of Global House to provide additional housing will make a valuable contribution towards meeting housing needs. The successful regeneration of this site will attract new residents and businesses to the town centre.

When will the site be developed?

The council expects that a planning application will be submitted in the early part of the plan period. The development of new housing is expected to start in 2027.

The Draft Local Plan document notes:

- The site adjoins the Town Centre Conservation Area and several Listed buildings. Therefore, sympathetic design is required.
- The site is within Area of High Archaeological potential, therefore this need to be investigated.
- The site includes a well used multistorey car park that serves the town centre and may be required to be re-provided. This will need to be investigated.
- The site will likely need to continue operating throughout any construction stage(s), development will need to be carefully phased, and retail use, parking, servicing issues carefully coordinated.
- Potential ground contamination to be investigated and adequately mitigated for residential development
- Potential to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity including from the site to the town centre

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Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Draft Local Plan. Details how to submit your views.

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Depot Road plans

The Epsom and Ewell Town Hall plan

Depot Road plans

26 February 2023



This is the third of nine reports on the BIG PLANS for Epsom and Ewell proposed in the **DRAFT LOCAL PLAN** that is out for public consultation till 17th March. We do not intend to state any support or opposition but may ask some questions.

Depot Road and Upper High Street

In a somewhat short description provided the plan is for residential development, comprising:

- At least 100 new homes
- The reprovision of public parking by the provision of a decked car park including 1x basement level and 4x above ground levels on Depot Road.
- New access road
- Building heights ranging between 2 and 4 storeys

And the reasons given are there is an opportunity to make more efficient use of well-located town centre land by re-providing car parking in a decked structure, releasing land for new homes.

Its successful regeneration will attract new residents and businesses to the town centre.

When will the site be developed?

It is expected that a planning application will be submitted for the comprehensive redevelopment of the main site in the early part of the plan period with development likely to start by 2027.

Possible obstacles include:

- The site lies adjacent to Church Street and Epsom Town Centre Conservation Areas. It is also in the vicinity of several listed buildings. Therefore, sympathetic design is required.
- Some of the trees within and very near site are protected by Tree Preservation Orders.
- The site is within an Area of High Archaeological potential.
- Potential to improve pedestrian and cycle connectivity including from the site to the town centre.
- Any development proposal will need to incorporate mitigation relating to surface water flooding for those parts of the site that are susceptible.

Council Officers will be available to speak to you in person at the following places

- Tuesday 21 February 14:30 – 19:30, Bourne Hall, Azalea room
- Wednesday 22 February 10:30 – 15:30, Community & Wellbeing Centre, Sefton Road
- Saturday 25 February 11:00 – 16:00, Ashley Centre, Central Square
- Tuesday 28 February 10:30 – 15:30, Community & Wellbeing Centre, Sefton Road

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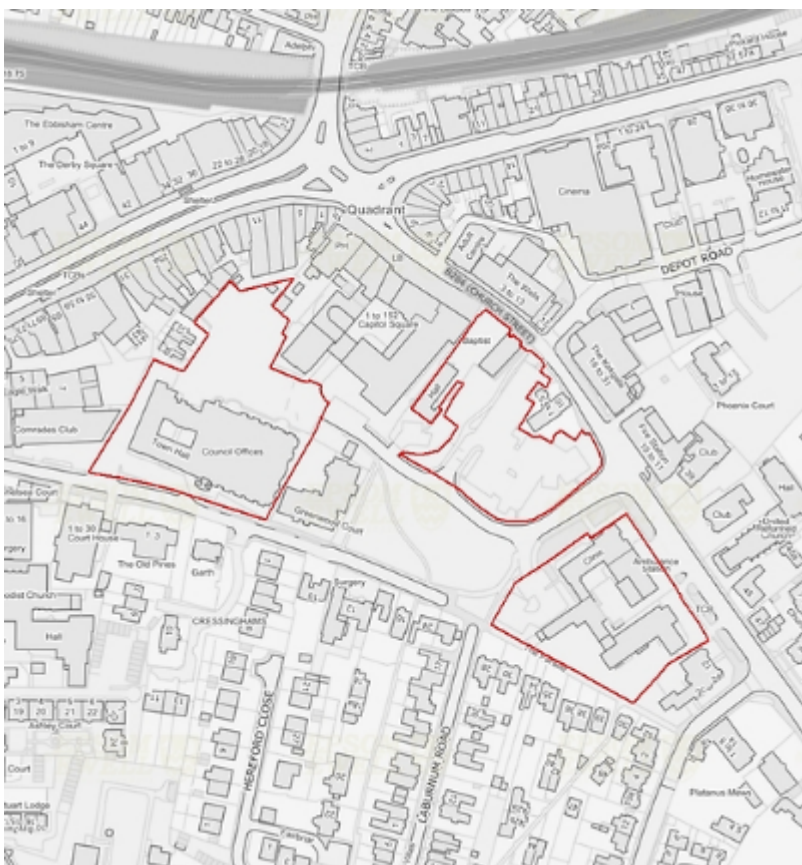
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The Epsom and Ewell Town Hall plan

26 February 2023



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Town Hall , Hope Lodge & Epsom Clinic

The Town Hall and Hope Lodge Car Park is owned by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council and is being promoted for development. The Epsom Clinic and parking lot to the rear is owned and being promoted for development by NHS Property Services, while the former Epsom Police Station and Ambulance Station is under private ownership

The plan is for a residential development, comprising:

- A new residential area focussed around Dulshot Green
- At least 90 new homes
- The total redevelopment of Town Hall, Hope Lodge Car Park and Epsom Clinic

- Building heights ranging between 2 and 4 storeys
- The reprovion of some public parking on the Town Hall site

The reasons given are that the sites provide the opportunity of making a more efficient use of land in a highly sustainable location that is currently underutilised. Its successful regeneration will attract new residents and businesses to the town centre.

When will the site be developed?

It expected that the redevelopment of the area will involve several planning applications based on a comprehensive scheme for the whole area. Planning applications are likely to be submitted early in the plan period with development likely to start by 2028.

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The BIG plans for Epsom and Ewell

26 February 2023



Starting today and the next EIGHT days **The Epsom and Ewell Times** will publish details of each of the NINE BIG plans for Epsom and Ewell. These plans are proposed in the **DRAFT LOCAL PLAN** that is out for public consultation till 17th March. We do not intend to state any support or opposition but may ask some questions.

Hook Road Car Park and SGN Site

This near 12 acres site comprises a public car park, retail units, an education establishment and a utilities site containing redundant gas holders.



The site is to be allocated for a comprehensive residential led mixed use development, comprising:

- At least 640 new homes
- Student Accommodation (potential for about 400 student rooms)
- Mixed use ground floor active frontages accommodating space for office, retail and creative start-ups
- Performing Arts Centre
- Café
- Building heights ranging between 2 and 7 storeys
- Two-level podium parking (i.e., parking underneath a building) with smart technology solution allowing different users to access spaces at different times of the day/evening
- Provision of a new public square adjacent to the leisure centre entrance
- A neighbourhood park in the heart of the development with direct connection to the existing Public Rights of Way network
- Relocated SGN (the gas company formerly known as Scotia Gas Networks) infrastructure
- Improved public realm and connectivity within the site and to adjoining areas

The reasons for the plans are to regenerate this brownfield site in a highly sustainable location that is currently unattractive and under-utilised. Its successful regeneration is important for the success and attractiveness of the town centre.

There is the opportunity to redevelop the site into a prominent, high-density, mixed-use development, which would result in an improved, attractive and better utilised environment to the eastern gateway of the town centre. New development would offer the opportunity for a better connected and rejuvenated area that would attract new residents and businesses to Epsom Town Centre.

When will the site be developed?

It is expected that a planning application will be submitted for the comprehensive redevelopment of the main site in the early part of the plan period with development likely to start by 2029.

Council Officers will be available to speak to you in person at the following places

- Tuesday 21 February 14:30 – 19:30, Bourne Hall, Azalea room
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Can Epsom and Ewell get more dense?

26 February 2023



Exclusive to the Epsom and Ewell Times we report on the housing targets of every Surrey borough council. **Epsom and Ewell** is the smallest borough in Surrey with the highest density of population. Yet aims to have the highest density of new housing, according to the draft Local Plan, out now for consultation.

The table below contains the population stated in a Local Plan, if evident in the document. Otherwise the latest population figure from Wikipedia is used.

Council	Population	KM sq	Density	Housing target (15 yr)	Target per KM sq	Plan To Year	Status
Epsom and Ewell	80938	34	2,380.53	8640	254	2040	Draft
Spelthorne	99900	51	1,958.82	9270	182	2037	Submitted Nov 2022
Runnymede	83488	78	1,070.36	7920	102	2030	Adopted July 2022
Elmbridge	138800	96	1,445.83	9705	101	2037	Drafting
Woking	92000	65	1,415.38	4380	67	2027	Adopted 2012
Reigate and Banstead	147757	129	1,145.40	6900	53	2027	Adopted Sept 2019
Surrey Heath	88874	95	935.52	4980	52	2038	Draft
Tanbridge	87600	248	353.23	12900	52	2033	Submitted Jan 2019
Guildford	137183	271	506.21	10395	38	2034	Adopted 2019
Waverley	121272	345	351.51	8850	26	2032	Adopted Feb 2018
Mole Valley	87245	258	338.16	5295	21	2037	Drafting

The Local Plans vary in the period covered and some are in drafting flux. The table provides the average per annum new build over a 15 year period for each Council as far as stated or indicated.

Many plans were submitted or adopted before Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, indicated November 2022 that “Housing targets remain, but are a starting point with new flexibilities to reflect local circumstances” and “If we are to deliver the new homes this country needs, new development must have the support of local communities. That requires people to know it will be beautiful, accompanied by the right infrastructure, approved democratically, that it will enhance the environment and create proper neighbourhoods. These principles have always been key to our reforms and we are now going further by strengthening our commitment to build the right homes in the right places and put local people at the heart of decision-making.”

The table above does not reflect many variables that may justify different housing targets. For example areas designated as areas of special scientific interest or areas of outstanding natural beauty. Also, there are many demographic variables: distribution of the ages of populations, family sizes and average incomes.

Furthermore, the mix of different housing types of the new builds envisaged in the plans vary from one Council to another. Big houses, small houses or flats etc.

However, the table does provide a broad overview.

Epsom and Ewell's Draft Local Plan states: "The housing need for Epsom and Ewell generated by the standard method is 576 dwelling per annum, which equates to 10,368 dwellings over the Local plan period. The Councils Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (2022) confirms there is no justification to increase the housing need figure over that generated by the standard method."

"The council considers that the scale of unmet development / housing needs in the borough that would result from pursuing a brownfield only approach provides the exceptional circumstances and justification to make changes to the Green Belt boundaries in the borough."

You can meet planning officers of Epsom and Ewell Council at the following times and discuss the draft Local Plan.

Monday 13 February 14:30 – 19:30 Bourne Hall, Azalea Room

Thursday 16 February 12:00 – 17:00, Ashley Centre, Central Square

Tuesday 21 February 14:30 – 19:30, Bourne Hall, Azalea room

Wednesday 22 February 10:30 – 15:30, Community & Wellbeing Centre, Sefton Road

Saturday 25 February 11:00 – 16:00, Ashley Centre, Central Square

Tuesday 28 February 10:30 – 15:30, Community & Wellbeing Centre, Sefton Road

How you can express your views on the Local Plan can be seen [HERE](#).

See today's editorial

Related reports:

Green-belters belted up and beltless

Local Plan battle heating up?

Green-belters seeing red on Local Plan?

Lessons for Epsom in Mole Valley's "shouty" Local Plan struggle?

Crucial month for local Local Plans?

Gove gives pause for thought on Local Plans?

Local Plan Battle: early skirmishes on Downs Farm

MP's housing solution for Epsom and Ewell