

# “On Your Bike” to Surrey’s PCSOs?

11 February 2023



A Surrey County Councillor has criticised the reduction in the number of Police Community Support Officers in recent years. PCSOs are non-warranted but provided with a variety of police powers and the power of a constable in various instances by the forty-three territorial police forces in England and Wales and the British Transport. Surrey Police employ about 2,153 warranted officers.

Analysis of new Home Office statistics commissioned by the Liberal Democrats from the House of Commons Library has shown the drastic cuts to PCSOs in Surrey. They claim a total of 88 full-time equivalent PCSOs were employed in Surrey as of September 2022. This is in stark contrast to the 123 that were employed in March 2015 - meaning there have been 35 PCSOs cut from Surrey Police in that time.

Cllr Will Forster (Woking South) stated: “These shocking figures prove that Conservative Ministers are yet again failing to prevent crime in Surrey. They should be ashamed. Police Community Support Officers play a vital role in keeping our communities safe. The Government should be empowering them to do their job, not slashing their numbers into oblivion. Liberal Democrats are calling for a return to proper community policing, where officers are visible, trusted and known personally to local people. We will build communities where people are safe - and feel safe, too.”

Epsom and Ewell Times asked Surrey Police for their take on the figures and a spokesperson said: “In 2022, to contribute to savings across the force, we reduced the number of Police Community Support Officers in Surrey Police to 96, 22 posts fewer than our previous staffing level of 118 full-time equivalent PCSOs. This reduction did not involve redundancies and achieving this staffing level did not result in a reduction in overall numbers in our Safer Neighbourhood Teams; we maintain a strong blended mix of police officers and PCSOs in these key frontline posts.

In September 2022, Surrey Police employed 88 PCSOs. This is lower than our desired number of PCSOs, so it is inaccurate to say that 35 PCSO roles have been cut by the Force. We are actively recruiting to bring our establishment level back up to 96.

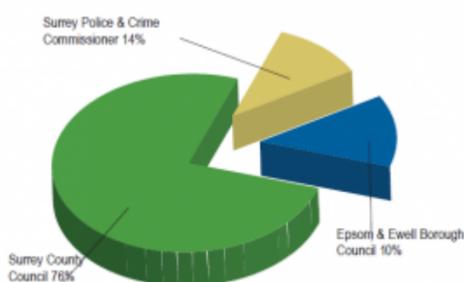
We know how important a visible police team with local knowledge is to residents in each of our boroughs. A trusted, knowledgeable, and proactive local policing presence is just as important to us, and PCSOs are a valued and integral part of that.”

What is your view about visible policing in Epsom and Ewell? Write in to Epsom and Ewell Times.

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# 2023/2024: average of £50 more to pay Surrey County Council

11 February 2023



Surrey residents will pay nearly £50 a year more to the county council for its share of council tax from April. The 2.99 per cent increase was confirmed at a full meeting of the authority on Tuesday (February 7) though opposition parties did not vote for the budget.

The raise, which is less than the 4.99 per cent councils can increase bills by without a referendum, is made up of 0.99 per cent on the core bill, and two per cent which will go towards adult social care. It will mean the average band D property

will pay 94p per week, or £48.69 per year, more from April.

Surrey's district and borough councils are still to confirm their increases.

The council's Conservative leader, **Tim Oliver** (Weybridge) told the meeting the rise came in the context of the cost of living crisis, inflation and interest rates all impacting the council as well as Surrey residents. He added: "Everything we do has simply become more expensive to deliver. That can be seen in our budget papers, showing increased spending in almost every area." Cllr Oliver said it was a "challenge" each year to deliver a balanced budget which nonetheless "prioritised those most in need of help and support but equally recognising that residents don't always see or access many of our services".

He said a "caring and democratic society" expected that people who needed to could turn to their local council for support, and pointed to nearly half of the council's budget going on adult social care "looking after people with disabilities or extra needs as they get older". The rise, he said, was less than inflation and less than in many other parts of the country.

But opposition group leaders on the council pointed to problems with the council's home to school transport arrangements, families going to tribunals for SEND support and cuts to budgets.

Cllr **Will Forster** (Lib Dem, Woking South) highlighted £30m of cuts to adults and children's social care, where "efficiencies" had been found in the budget. He said: "This budget has the wrong priorities. Rather than protecting services that vulnerable people rely on, they are targeted for cuts."

The Lib Dem group also called on the council to spend some of its £150m of reserves, or savings, on highway repairs, saying residents wouldn't understand why the council was "squirrelling" away money it could spend on improving the roads.

Residents' group leader, Cllr **Nick Darby** (Dittons and Weston Green Residents, The Dittons), said £11m spent on an IT project that was still not operational, anger from residents over a proposed Guildford road closure and the "shambles" of school transport issues were signs of poor communication and consultation at the council. He said there was a need to "acknowledge problems, recognise them and then deal with them" adding that "not everything" in the budget was wrong.

Cllr Darby told the meeting: "On the one hand, we can and do provide figures which balance. It's more difficult to fulfil our duty to residents by spending their money well, putting them first, especially the vulnerable." He also repeated his call for a rethink of council tax bands, which would need to be done at central government level.

See below for a full breakdown of how much council tax money will be going to Surrey County Council from April:

- Band A - £1,116.72 per year
- Band B - £1,302.84 per year
- Band C - £1,488.96 per year
- Band D - £1,675.08 per year
- Band E - £2,047.32 per year
- Band F - £2,419.56 per year
- Band G - £2,791.80 per year
- Band H - £3,350.16 per year

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[Surrey County Council proposes 2023/24 budget](#)

## Surrey County Council sets 23/24 budget

11 February 2023



A councillor who visited rural India paused his tour to take photos of the roads because they were "in better condition than Surrey's". The Labour group leader on Surrey County Council said he visited the state of Karnataka last month and on a visit to a village school, stopped to take a photo of the road.

Councillor **Robert Evans** (Labour, Stanwell and Stanwell Moor) told a meeting of the council on Tuesday (February 7) that his host had asked him what was wrong with the roads there. He told the meeting he had replied: "Nothing, to the contrary. I just wanted photographic evidence that the road surfaces here in rural India are better than in many parts of Surrey."

Cllr Evans also said his Stanwell residents asked him why roads in what he called the “forgotten part of Surrey” were worse than in other parts of the county. He told the meeting: “I actually tell them they’re not, they are pretty bad everywhere.”

In the meeting, councillors voted through the authority’s budget for 2023/24, though without the support of the opposition. The county council’s share of council tax will increase by 2.99 per cent from April, which means an increase of 94p per week, or £48.69 per year on the average band D property.

This is less than the 4.99 per cent which the government says councils can increase council tax by without a referendum, though Slough, Thurrock and Croydon councils were this week given permission to raise council tax by 10 and 15 per cent to help pay off huge borrowing costs.

The district and borough councils in Surrey, as well as the Police and Crime Commissioner, will also add their shares to the bills that will be paid by residents. Surrey’s £1.1billion budget, which includes spending of more than £400m on adult social care and £249m on children, families and lifelong learning was described as a “good and fair” budget by the council’s leader.

Cllr **Oliver** (Conservative, Weybridge) pointed to the council’s “ambitious” capital programme which included highways maintenance as well as low emission buses, flood alleviation measures, independent living facilities for the elderly and more accommodation in the county for looked after children.

A cabinet meeting last week heard that more government funding was needed in Surrey for repairs on the county’s 3,000 miles of roads. The Liberal Democrat group leader called on the council to spend money the council had in reserves rather than “cutting spending on roads and services for vulnerable people”. Cllr **Will Forster** (Woking South) said Surrey’s roads were “completely falling apart”. He pointed to a highways budget that he claimed would be less than £30m by 2024/25, compared to nearly £70m in the 2023/24 budget. He said: “That is not acceptable. Our residents would find that appalling.”

But another councillor said it would be “bonkers” to spend the council’s savings on road repairs or other projects.

Cllr **Edward Hawkins** (Conservative, Heatherside and Parkside) said he supported the budget and looking to the situation in the Ukraine, Turkey and Syria, that it was important not to spend money that had been put aside.

He told the meeting: “It’s bonkers to spend the money that you put aside for a rainy day, when we really don’t know what’s coming around the corner.”

The meeting opened with a minute’s silence for the dog walker who was killed in Caterham in January, the Epsom College head and her family who were found dead on Sunday (February 5) as well as those affected by earthquakes in Turkey and Syria.

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## Epsom College deaths update

11 February 2023

The incident at an address within Epsom College in the early hours of Sunday, 5 February is now being treated as a homicide investigation.

Officers were called to the property at around 01:10am by the South East Coast Ambulance Service. On arrival they found the bodies of three people who police are confident are Emma Pattison (45), her daughter Lettie (7), and her husband George (39).

The deaths have been reported to the coroner for formal identification.

The family’s next of kins have been informed and are being supported by specialist officers. We ask that their privacy is respected at this difficult time.

An investigation is being carried out to establish the full chronology and circumstances of the incident. At this stage, officers are confident there is no third-party involvement and there is no wider threat or risk to the community.

A firearm was found at the scene and has been recovered by officers, however, causes of death will not be confirmed until post-mortems have been completed later this week.

We can confirm the firearm was licensed and registered to George Pattison.

We had contact with George on Thursday, 2 February after he notified us of a previous change of address, as is routine. Due to the short period of time between that contact and this incident, we have made a referral to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).

We are aware of speculation regarding a firing range on the site. We can confirm this range does not form part of our scene or our inquiries. Any reporting to suggest otherwise is inaccurate.

Detective Chief Inspector Kimball Edey, Senior Investigating Officer on the case, said: “This is an incredibly traumatic incident and we are working around the clock to investigate and understand the exact circumstances which led to this

point.

“We understand the public concern and upset, and we will clarify what we can, when we can, while respecting the right to a level of privacy for the families of those who have lost their lives.

“We are cooperating fully with the IOPC in relation to the referral we have made, and we await the outcome of its assessment of what further action may be required. Until this has been completed, we will be unable to provide further details on a number of matters.”

Inspector Jon Vale, Epsom and Ewell’s Borough Commander, said: “I know this incident has caused upset and sent shockwaves through the local community. Although we are confident that this incident was contained to one address, and there is no risk to the wider public I fully understand the concern this can and has caused members of our communities. Therefore, the public can expect to see a heightened police presence in the local area in the coming days. If you are concerned about anything at all I’d urge you to approach an officer and discuss your concerns with them. They will be ready and happy to help you however they can.

“I would like to send my continued thanks to the school and our public for their understanding while the investigation progresses.”

[Epsom and Ewell Times adds: The BBC reported at 6pm 07.02.23 on R4 that Surrey Police believe that Mr. Pattison shot dead his wife and daughter and then killed himself.]

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## Epsom College Head, husband and child found dead

11 February 2023



In the early hours of Sunday morning 5th February, Surrey Police was contacted by the South East Coast Ambulance Service to a property on the grounds of Epsom College. Officers attended at around 01:10am where they, sadly, found the bodies of three people, including a child.

Surrey Police can confirm that the bodies found were **Emma Pattison** (45), Head of Epsom College, her daughter **Lettie** (7), and her husband **George** (39). The family’s next of kins have been informed and are being supported by specialist officers. We ask that their privacy is respected at this difficult time.

An investigation is being carried out to establish the circumstances of their deaths. At this stage, police are confident that this is an isolated incident with no third-party involvement.

Detective Chief Inspector **Kimball Edey** said, “On behalf of **Surrey Police**, my team, and I, I first want to express my sincerest condolences to the friends and family of Emma, Lettie and George, as well as to the students and staff of Epsom College, for their tragic loss. I want to give my assurance that we will conduct a thorough investigation into what took place last night, and hope to be able to bring some peace in these traumatic circumstances. I would ask that their privacy is respected at this very difficult time.”

Inspector **Jon Vale**, Epsom and Ewell’s Borough Commander, said: “We’re aware that this tragic incident will have caused concern and upset in the local community. While this is believed to be an isolated incident, in the coming days, our local officers will remain in the area to offer reassurance to students, parents, teachers, and the local community. I would like to thank the school and the community for their understanding and patience while the investigation continues.”

The three deaths have been reported to the Coroner.

**Dr Alastair Wells**, Chair of the Board of Governors at Epsom College, said, “On behalf of everyone at Epsom College, I want to convey our utter shock and disbelief at this tragic news. Our immediate thoughts and condolences are with Emma’s family, friends and loved ones, and to the many pupils and colleagues whose lives she enriched throughout her distinguished career. Emma was a wonderful teacher, but most of all she was a delightful person. In time we will commemorate Emma and her family, in the appropriate way, and in line with the wishes of her family. But for now, we ask that we are all given the time, space and respect we need to come to terms with this tragic loss.”

There is currently a significant police presence at the location, and the surrounding area, and we would like to thank the local community for their understanding while our officers continue their investigation.

Image - Epsom College - Copyright Naveed Barakzai/Maxal Photography, but licenced under Creative Commons ShareAlike 2.5.

## Local Audit meet: unexpectedly interesting...

11 February 2023



When is a question not a question? This issue was the subject of heated discussion at the 2<sup>nd</sup> February meeting of the **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's** Audit and Scrutiny Committee. Former Stamford Ward councillor **Previn Jagutpal**, who resigned his seat in December, used the council's procedures to ask a question at the start of the meeting: "When an outside agency such as ... the Local Government Ombudsman [LGO] makes a determination about the functioning of this council, what is the process for the Chair of Scrutiny ... to be informed?"

The chair, Cllr. **Steve Bridger** (RA, Stamford Ward), referred the question to a legal officer attending the meeting. "I believe the process," the officer reported, "is that there's going to be an annual report which will come to the committee which reports on any decisions made by the Ombudsman."

Invited to ask a supplementary question, Mr. Jagutpal, then asked the Chair if he was "satisfied that all communications from outside agencies such as ... the LGO in your 4 years as Chairman of this committee have followed that process and you have been informed of all such decisions?"

The Chair was again prompted. "You will receive a written answer in due course," he said.

Mr. Jagutpal then requested to ask a second question. However, the officer ruled that his supplementary question was his second question. Mr Jagutpal argued that, according to the council's constitution, a question followed by a supplementary question is one question, then a second question may be asked. But the officer responded that "You have asked a second question. There are no further questions we can answer tonight."

"Are you going to deny me my constitutional right?" Mr Jagutpal asked. "As far as tonight, that's it in terms of questions," ruled the officer and Mr. Jagutpal left the council chamber.

Cllr. **David Gulland** (Lib Dem, College Ward) wanted to discuss the matter further "Obviously that question and the answers raised further questions in many of our minds," he said and asked if the committee could discuss the matter.

Another pause from the chair was followed by "No, we continue with the agenda."

But Cllr Gulland was not so easily put off. During the course of the evening he asked many other questions relating to the information being provided to the Committee and the Council's internal processes. But he left his most damning speech for the final agenda item.

"Under the constitution," he argued, "the monitoring officer is meant to report to all councillors on any breach of regulation or of data protection or where the ombudsman has reported it to us ... I had to go and look for it, [but] I've found the letter of 20th July 2022 from the ombudsman to our interim chief executive, a public document, [which says that] 'during the year your council failed to respond in time to our correspondence during three investigations. On each occasion, we had to escalate the matter internally and were forced to consider issuing a witness summons and a public report for non-compliance. Such delays in our investigation undermine our role and can result in further distress to complainants.'

"There's a big elephant in the room," Cllr. Gulland continued, "that our processes are not working and, more importantly, this committee has not been told about that. I would welcome comments from the chairman or the officer about my comments on the ombudsman and also about data protection issues."

Again, it was the officer who responded. "You are referring to an old letter from the ombudsman," he said, the letter being barely more than six months old. "I'm very happy to look into that. We'll come back to you on issues about data protection."

The July 2022 letter from the LGO acknowledges the challenges faced by local councils coping with pandemic working practices and the impact on services. The LGO seeks to encourage and assist EEBC in improving its procedures.

Meanwhile, members of the public and possibly even members of the committee may remain in the dark about possible breaches of regulations.

When is a question not a question? You decide. These are the relevant paragraphs from the council's constitution:

1.9 At the Meeting the Chair/Chairman will ask the questioner if the response answers their concern or if they wish to ask one supplementary question. If a supplementary question is asked, it must arise from the reply given.

1.11 If a member of the public asks or wishes to ask more than one question, their

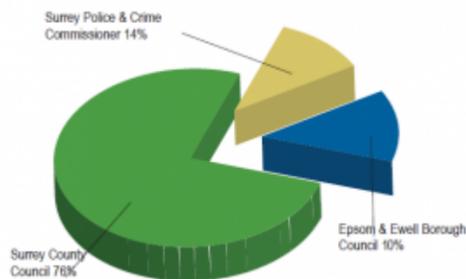
second question (written or oral) shall be taken after all other individuals who wish to ask a question have been given the opportunity to do so.

Related Reports:

Man wrongly labelled 'vexatious complainant' by Epsom and Ewell Council

## Surrey County Council proposes 2023/24 budget

11 February 2023



Surrey County Council is planning to restrict a rise in Council Tax to 2.99% in the current budget plans for 2023/24. The council's Cabinet agreed the draft budget today outlining the planned rise, which is lower than the vast majority of other councils in the UK and far lower than the rate of inflation.

Surrey County Council spends just over £1bn a year on delivering vital services such as Adult Social Care, Children's Services, maintaining roads and pavements, Surrey Fire & Rescue Service, libraries, countryside management and public health.

Image: council tax pie chart: EEBC 2022/2023

The budget also outlines the council's five-year capital investment plan that will deliver more school places and improved school buildings, increased support for children with additional needs, road improvements, big infrastructure projects like in Farnham town centre, the River Thames flood defence scheme, grant funding community projects and increasing recycling capacity across Surrey.

**Tim Oliver**, Leader of the Council, (Conservative) said: "This budget is about protecting the services that the people of Surrey rely on, while being mindful of the huge pressures household budgets are under at the moment. The rise in the cost of living, inflation and interest rates have all impacted the council as an organisation, as well as our residents. Everything we do has simply become more expensive to deliver. However, we have worked hard over the last five years to ensure our finances are in a solid and stable state.

"We think it is important to only levy the absolute minimum we need to meet increased costs, in order to protect the money in people's pockets as much as possible. "We are making the decision to face this financial challenge in the fairest way possible, balancing our needs and ambitions with the immediate cost of living impact on our residents."

The budget will go before a Full Council meeting on Tuesday 7 February to be ratified.

The full details of the proposed 2023/24 budget can be found [here](#).

### Notes:

This list shows the Council's budget plan for next year by each service area, and an indication of how much that is in terms of average Council Tax\*.

**Adult Social Care** - *Looking after people with disabilities, severe needs, and as they get older.*

£439.7m per year (That is equivalent of £668.66 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

**Public Service Reform & Public Health** - *Working closely with our NHS partners to help people live healthier lives and keep them safe and well.*

£36.6m per year (That is equivalent of £55.66 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

**Children, Families & Lifelong Learning** - *Giving young people the best start in life, with additional care for those who need it and supporting education providers.*

£254.8m per year (That is equivalent of £387.48 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

**Environment, Transport & Infrastructure** - *Improving our roads and public transport, managing our countryside, and tackling the climate emergency.*

£152.8m per year (That is equivalent of £232.37 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

**Surrey Fire & Rescue Service** - *Keeping residents safe and responding to emergencies*

£38.7m per year (That is equivalent of £58.85 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

**Customer and Communities** - *Helping local communities thrive, providing libraries, registrations, customer services*

and funding grants.

£18.9m per year (That is equivalent of £28.74 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

**Prosperity, Partnerships and Growth** – *Working with businesses and other partners to help grow Surrey’s local economy*

£1.6m per year (That is equivalent of £2.43 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

**Communications, Public Affairs & Engagement** – *Making sure residents are well informed, can access services, and that Surrey’s collective voice is heard.*

£2.2m per year (That is equivalent of £3.35 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

**Resources** – *Things like Surrey Crisis Fund, school meal provision, administrative support, IT, legal services, and management of council buildings to keep services running smoothly.*

£79.3m per year (That is equivalent of £120.59 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

**Central Income and Expenditure** – *Putting money into savings to help protect services in future, and repayments on borrowing used for our investment programme*

£76.9m per year (That is equivalent of £116.94 of annual Council Tax for a Band D property)

*\*For illustrative purposes, this represents the total budget split by the Band D council tax value. Some areas are funded by specific restricted grants, which are not reflected here. This is the County Council’s Band D figures only and does not include amounts raised by District & Borough Councils, Surrey Police or Parish Councils.*

Surrey County Council news service.

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## Gladiator light-man on demand bus

11 February 2023



It’s not every day you meet an Emmy award winner on a bus in rural Surrey. And it’s not every day the said Emmy award winner would be driving that bus either. But that’s what passengers in the north of Mole Valley may find if they book one of the on-demand, electric buses that have been running in the area since last year.

**Tim Hall** worked in TV for 40 years, including on the iconic **Gladiators** early in his career, and told the LDRS he took home Emmys for his work as a lighting director on Olympic ceremonies in Russia and Rio. Having done his last job in early 2022, he found himself in retirement, at the end of his working life and thinking: “Is this it?” He came out of retirement to drive the buses, which launched in June last year.

The LDRS\* took a trip on the bus, where passengers, both regular and new, praised the service for being reliable and good value, and for the care and attention shown by the drivers as well.

\*(Epsom and Ewell Times news partner the BBC Local Democracy Reporting Service)

As well as more than £600,000 of central government funding for better rural transport links in Surrey, the county council has put in more than £200,000 to the Mole Valley service, and hopes to expand the scheme further. Tim admitted there is often a lot of chat to be had on the buses. “You can start a conversation off and before you know it you have been excluded from it,” he said.

The buses can be booked on an app, via a website or on the phone, and have no fixed route. Would-be passengers can check the availability at the time they want to travel, and can book in advance or on the day, a minimum of half an hour ahead. The service is also part of the capped bus fares scheme, meaning that until the end of March all journeys will cost £2, though those over five miles would normally cost £3.

Mother and daughter Beryl and Alison Wood had booked the bus from Cobham Sainsbury’s, one of the extra places

passengers can travel to outside of the designated area, back to Beryl's Bookham home with their shopping. It was Beryl's first time using the service, which she described as "wonderful" but Alison said she uses the bus a few times a month, whether for visiting her mum or for other reasons.

Alison said the drivers always made sure passengers got on and off safely, including helping with their shopping, which was particularly important for elderly people or those who are less mobile. She added: "You feel like you're being taken care of. [The drivers make] sure that you're out of the bus safely."

Other out-of-area stops that passengers can travel to include Effingham Junction station and the Dorking stations, as well as Cobham's Waitrose and Epsom hospital. Tim said the bus was very important to the people who use it, especially for those with reduced mobility as well as those using wheelchairs or other aids to get around. He added: "[Walking] more than 100 yards is too much for them. This is great. We pull up right outside their front door."

[Ed: Do you think Epsom and Ewell needs these on-demand bus services? Let us know at [admin@epsomandewelltimes.com](mailto:admin@epsomandewelltimes.com).]

## Green-belters belted up and beltless

11 February 2023



Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's (EEBC) Licensing and Planning Policy Committee voted unanimously yesterday (30 January) to publish its **Draft Local Plan** for public consultation, after the chairman rebuffed claims that councillors had not been given enough time to read it. The decision followed public opposition to suggestions of Green Belt development in the borough, including a petition with over 2,000 signatures.

Image - Google - Horton Farm, Epsom in Green Belt, that could get 1500 houses.

The meeting opened with questions from the public. The chair, Councillor **Steven McCormick** (RA - Woodote Ward) told the committee that members of the public could not ask questions directly related to the meeting's agenda items. This is in the Council's Standing Orders. **Steve Gebbett**, who has been campaigning to protect the borough's Green Belt, said: "My belt's a bit too tight. I hope you don't mind me taking off my green belt." In a symbolic gesture, he placed a green belt on a table, where it remained for the remainder of the meeting.

He asked: "Does the committee ever refer significant issues that affect the whole borough to the whole council?" Mr Gebbett then described a situation in which "councillors go home and tell their loved ones their legacy is: honey, I shrunk the greenbelt".

Councillor **Julie Morris** (Liberal Democrats, College Ward) asked the committee: "Am I the only person who hasn't seen this document before? Have you all been discussing it for a long time? The assembled public might think we've been cooking it up for months. But we haven't." Councillor McCormick told her that they'd tried "to be open and transparent with the whole process." He added that there had been many member briefings throughout the summer and autumn, and several statements to full council with opportunities to ask questions.

He also said that the Draft Local Plan had been presented to all members to be discussed in December, and said to Councillor Morris: "Maybe you missed some of those meetings?" Councillor McCormick added: "It's strange to disperse the idea that it has happened behind closed doors. I'm quite disappointed Councillor Morris, I'm afraid." Councillor Morris said that she meant that she had not seen the whole document together previously.

Councillor McCormick responded: "The items were presented on 7 December to all members. You've had ample opportunity to come forward to seek clarification." Councillor **Neil Dallen** (Residents' Association, Town Ward) said he had "sympathy" with Julie Morris' comments, adding: "This is the first time we've seen the 200-page document. Most of it we have covered in different places at different times. I can't say there's parts I wasn't aware of. I still think there's bits missing."

The Draft Local Plan sets out planning policies and sites that may be developed in the Borough up until 2040. It includes nine sites for potential development, on which it proposes that a significant proportion of its housing requirement will be built.

Four of these sites are in the town centre, on previously developed - 'brownfield' - land. However, the Council has said that they would be unable to meet housing requirements within urban areas alone. The Draft Local Plan states: "Whilst these sustainable locations are our preferred locations for new development, they do not deliver adequate housing to meet our social responsibilities for providing housing, in particular affordable housing." Therefore, the other sites put forward for development are located outside of the town centre and on Green Belt land.

Green Belt land includes areas of countryside that are protected from development in order to prevent urban sprawl and encourage development within existing built-up areas. National planning policy requires that Green Belt boundaries are

only amended “in exceptional circumstances”.

In the Draft Local Plan, the council says that it “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.”

The Draft Plan also states that: “Through the release of less than 3.6% of the borough’s Green Belt, the council will be able to deliver an additional 2,175 dwellings over the plan period”.

Under the proposals, sites removed from the Green Belt for development would include:

- Land at West Park Hospital (for 150 homes)
- Horton Farm (for 1,500 homes)
- Land at Chantilly Way (for 25 homes)
- Land Adjoining Ewell East Station (for 350 homes)
- Hook Road Arena (for 150 homes)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which the Local Plan should generally adhere to, is undergoing consultation, including on a revision that states that: “Green Belt boundaries are not required to be reviewed and altered if this would be the only means of meeting the objectively assessed need for housing over the plan period”.



**Mr Chris Grayling**, MP for Epsom and Ewell, told the Epsom and Ewell Times: “The Borough’s proposal to simply build houses on 135 acres of green belt land, and not make any attempt to pursue the redevelopment of Kiln Lane and Longmead as a way of strengthening both the Borough’s economic future and meeting its housing need is a failure of momentous proportions.”

Mr Grayling has put forward his own proposals for development [reported in the Epsom and Ewell Times] on the Kiln Lane and Longmead estates. He told the Epsom and Ewell Times: “The kind of development that I proposed is happening elsewhere, but the Council thinks it is too difficult to do here. I think that is a cop out, and the result will be a massive loss of our green spaces in the area and real damage to biodiversity. It’s always easier just to build on a green field. But easy does not mean best.”

The Draft Local Plan, in reference to residential development on the Kiln Lane and Longmead estates, states that: “longer term opportunities for intensification for mixed use could be explored in time”.

The Council has said: “The Local Plan needs to protect our attractive and valued environment whilst reconciling the need to accommodate our development needs. The balance between protecting our environment and enabling development and supporting infrastructure, is at the centre of our spatial strategy.”

The borough’s housing need was calculated using the “standard method” in national planning guidance. The need was calculated as 576 dwellings per annum, equating to 10,368 dwellings over the Local Plan period. The Draft Local Plan, however, states: “Taking into account the borough’s constraints, the council is not planning on meeting its local housing need figure.” Instead, it has set a housing requirement of 5,400 dwellings over the Local Plan period.

Under another proposed addition, the NPPF will strengthen its existing point that local housing need is an advisory

starting point for setting a local housing requirement. In an email on behalf of CPRE, (The Council for the Protection of Rural England), Surrey, to the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee, **Mr Tim Murphy** said that there was “no justification” for increasing the number of homes in the borough by 5,400. He said that the standard method used to calculate housing need “relies on household projections from 2014 which are now widely recognised as significantly inflating household growth in areas such as ours”.

The Council’s Planning Policy Manager told the committee that there is “already an existing need in the borough” and that as of June 2022, there were 1,200 households on the list for affordable housing. He added: “We have a significant need for affordable housing in the borough, including for homelessness and people in temporary accommodation.”

However, the committee rejected a motion, proposed by Cllr **Kate Chinn** (Court Ward, Labour), to ensure that 40% of all new developments exceeding 10 units included affordable housing.

Councillors also raised questions in the meeting as to whether the Draft Local Plan could be altered following the public consultation. Councillor Morris asked whether, if a large number of people came forward to oppose Green Belt development, this would form part of the “evidence base” required for Local Plan policies.

The Council’s Interim Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration, responded: “It is the content of responses, and what new evidence and information they direct us towards, not about the number of responses received, or the number of times something is said.” She said that the council would be required to provide a statement on the consultation, with key issues that were raised, and how they were addressed with changes to the Plan.

Councillor Morris said: “We’ve taken an awfully time to get this far; I’d hate to see it abandoned. So much of the document is really really important. There are bits that are just not right. If I were to support it, it would not be that I support the content, but the concept of it going forward to public consultation.” She added: “Green Belt has become massively important. [...] Keeping hold of what we’ve got has become the name of the game recently.”

Councillor Dallen added: “Can I request that we don’t have 200 pages to go through in one night in future?” Councillor McCormick responded: “It’s noted. We’ll try to do better next time.”

Just before the vote, Councillor Morris said: “I am somewhat reassured that there can be significant change if this document goes ahead. I expected to want to vote against. I felt we hadn’t given it enough thought and time.” She added: “This is clearly controversial. A lot of people are not happy about this.”

After almost two hours, councillors voted unanimously to go ahead with the Draft Local Plan. Public consultation will commence today at noon and conclude on 15 March. Go to Epsom and Ewell Times Official Notices page to see how you can respond.

After the meeting Cllr Steven McCormick, Chair of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee, said: “We believe the Draft Plan provides a proactive framework for the borough to grow in a strong and positive way, so everyone will have the opportunity to live in an affordable, vibrant area with a growing economy. “The Draft Local Plan is our starting point and we strongly encourage local people to help shape the final Plan by responding to the consultation.”

[Ed: Even if the Green Belt proposals are removed after public consultation this Draft will still be of value in Planning Appeals pursued by Green Belt developers in the future].

Related reports:

[Local Plan battle heating up?](#)

[Green-belters seeing red on Local Plan?](#)

[Lessons for Epsom in Mole Valley’s “shouty” Local Plan struggle?](#)

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[Gove gives pause for thought on Local Plans?](#)

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[MP’s housing solution for Epsom and Ewell](#)

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## Surrey Council stretches Epsom & Ewell Council resources

11 February 2023



At Thursday 26th January meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council eagle-eyed financial expert Cllr **David Gulland** (Lib Dem, College Ward) spotted a loss of £250,000 in the borough council's on-street parking income.

A council officer explained that, although highways are Surrey County Council's (SCC) responsibility, they had previously contracted Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) to do the enforcement of on-street parking. EEBC already had their own enforcement officers managing the off-street carparks, so economies of scale could be realised by doing them both together. EEBC used to collect nearly £400K from on-street parking permits and enforcement notices.

But now SCC has unilaterally decided to end that contract and put it back out to a private sector contractor, so EEBC can no longer benefit from the on-street parking income or the economies of scale. Officers are doing all they can to reduce the cost and minimise the loss of income, he insisted.

Cllr Gulland was unimpressed with SCC's actions. "I think we should note that for possible action at county council election time," he suggested.

Related Stories:

[Local Parking \(enforcement\) Wars opinion piece by Cllr Eber Kington](#)

[Private Public Parking Penalisers Surrey County Council privatises parking enforcement](#)

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## Pay rises for Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

11 February 2023



At Epsom and Ewell's Strategy and Resources committee meeting on 26th January, councillors discussed rates of pay in the forthcoming year - for staff, for the Chief Executive and for themselves. Most staff will receive a capped 3% cost of living pay increase. This is a result of the Council's Employee Pay and Reward Procedure 2020-24, a four year pay deal agreed at the beginning of that period. This compares with a Consumer Price Index rise of 10.5% for the 12 months ending in December 2022.

This compares with a proposed increase for the Chief Executive of the borough of at least 15%, a figure which made Cllr **Kate Chinn** (Labour, Court Ward) feel "uncomfortable". The top of the salary range for the Chief Executive will become £143,376 in the 2023/4 year.

A council officer explained that a review of pay for Chief Officers had been undertaken some years ago, but that the Chief Executive's pay had been excluded from that review. Following an external benchmarking exercise, "this is a catch-up exercise," she said. Nevertheless, "for the staff to get 3% because of the agreement that they're in and the chief exec to get 15 to 16%, it does feel quite difficult," Cllr Chinn complained.

Cllr. **Eber Kington** (RA, Ewell Court Ward) took comfort from the gender pay gap which continues to be negative, showing that women employed by the local authority earn on average more than men. This is primarily due to the majority of front-line operatives being male and senior management roles being held by a significant proportion of women. "This does suggest that this is an organisation to which woman feel comfortable applying and where they wish to stay and seek promotion within the organisation," said Cllr Kington. "I think that is something we ought to be proud of as a local authority."

However, the issue that provoked the most councillor participation was their own pay. The motion that councillors were asked to vote on suggested that their allowances should mirror the staff pay award and rise by 3% in 2023/24, with an independent Remuneration Panel determining the increase in 2024/25.

Cllr **David Gulland** (Lib Dem, College Ward) felt "personally unhappy in voting any increase for the councillors" in the current environment.

However, the meeting's chairman, Cllr **Neil Dallen** (RA (Town Ward), pointed out that the last two independent remuneration panels had recommended a considerable increase in councillors' allowances, but the council had voted at the time not to accept those recommendations, otherwise allowances would now be much higher than they are.

Councillor **Alan Williamson** (RA, West Ewell Ward) agreed. "There is a widening gap between this authority and other districts around Surrey," he argued. "In future fiscal years, we should get back on track in line with the independent recommendations."

"We have bills," said Councillor **Monica Coleman** (RA, West Ewell Ward), "and some of us have to decide if we're going to be councillors or get a job. There are some occasions when I have to decide whether to work or go to a meeting and sometimes work rules because that pays my bills."

A sentiment that was echoed by Councillor Chinn. “A really good overhaul of the allowances would be very welcome,” she said, “and looking at allowances for things like carers, transport, child-minding .... to enable as many people as possible to become councillors.”

The basic allowance for a councillor will rise to £4,031.70 in 2023/24. Some posts such as committee chairs and vice chairs receive additional allowances.

Related reports

Balancing the Borough’s Books

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## The Surrey levels mean no level funding?

11 February 2023



The allocation of levelling up funding from central government was announced last week, with more than 100 projects given a share of £2.1billion. But no funding was given to Surrey’s councils, with one of the county’s proposed projects being improvements to Caterham town centre and flooding measures.

Three bids were put in across the county in total, with the other two being for better cycling and walking routes to the east of Woking and a new health centre in Sheerwater. Overall, government figures show £672m was allocated to develop better transport links, £821m for community regeneration and £594m to restore local heritage sites across the country.

More than £200m was given to councils in south east England, including £45m to Kent County Council for more border control points and traffic improvement measures at Dover and £20m each for improvements to Folkestone and Sheerness town centres.

Over the border in Hampshire, Rushmoor Borough Council was also awarded £20m for a state-of-the-art leisure centre, library and cultural space in Farnborough to help tackle high levels of obesity, inactivity, and poor mental health in the area. But Surrey’s councils were not awarded any cash, with only three bids being put in between the county council and the 11 district and borough councils.

We break these down in detail below, including the cash that was asked for, and those councils which did not bid for funding.

Unsuccessful bids:

Surrey County Council’s £12m bid to improve walking, cycling and bus routes to the east of Woking would have created better connections to the town centre, and were part of wider plans to improve sustainable travel options in the county. The scheme would have seen improved footpaths, cycle paths and tracks, more secure bike parking and e-bike charging stations and proposals to fund a trial e-cargo bike hire scheme for businesses and residents. Bus improvements would have included better accessibility, real-time information and bus stops with living roofs.

A county council spokesperson said: “Whilst our bids in the latest round were not successful, we will continue to work closely with government to identify and access funding for the vital work we are doing to ensure no one in Surrey is left behind.”

Woking Borough Council also put in a bid for £3.8m for a ‘health and community campus’ in Sheerwater.

A £492m project is already underway to regenerate the area, which the council said is the second most deprived area in the county. The campus would have given residents access to maternity clinics, chiropody, disability support, GP services, dentistry, parenting support and nursery care.

The council said it should have a “significant and positive impact on some of the borough’s most vulnerable and harder to reach residents”. In response to the bid being unsuccessful, Cllr Will Forster (Liberal Democrat, Hoe Valley), the council’s deputy leader, said given the area being the second most deprived in Surrey, the council felt they had “a strong case”. He said the council was “disappointed” to have missed out on the latest round of Levelling Up funding. Cllr Forster added: “The next phase of the Sheerwater Regeneration Project has already commenced and we remain committed to working with partners to develop the new health and community campus and delivering the much needed facilities.”

Tandridge District Council’s application for £8.7m would have meant money being put towards regenerating Caterham, including new flood measures to help with the regular flooding there. The East Surrey MP, Claire Coutinho, thanked the district council for its work in putting together the bid, and said she was “disappointed” the money was not awarded. She added: “I will work with Tandridge District Council and central government to explore all future funding opportunities, to make sure that East Surrey gets the funding it needs to improve our towns and villages.”

The leader of the council, Councillor Catherine Sayer (Independents and OLRG Alliance, Oxted North & Tandridge), said:

“We are extremely disappointed our bid for funding was unsuccessful. We planned to use this funding to regenerate Caterham, boost the local economy, attract more people to work, visit and live in the area and introduce much needed flood alleviation measures. This would build on the work we’ve already done to improve Caterham Valley town centre.” She said a lot of time and hard work had been put into the bid, and said the council would look for feedback on the application and appeal the decision if possible. Cllr Sayer added: “We will also consider another bid when government confirms details of the third round of funding.”

Councils which did not apply for the funding:

The other district and borough councils did not apply for levelling up funding, though some have bid for and received central government funding in the form of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. These included a £1m award to Elmbridge Borough Council to be used for the Walton Playhouse and in playgrounds, and the same amount to Runnymede Borough Council which it will use for transforming Chertsey high street and grants for new businesses.

The full list of councils which did not make a bid for Levelling up funding were:

Reigate & Banstead Borough Council  
Spelthorne Borough Council  
Mole Valley District Council  
Elmbridge Borough Council  
Runnymede Borough Council  
Surrey Heath Borough Council  
**Epsom & Ewell Borough Council**  
Guildford Borough Council  
Waverley Borough Council

Related reports:

Surrey County Council on the level.

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## Landlord thrashes tenant in friendly fight

11 February 2023



**Epsom and Ewell FC 0-5 Leatherhead FC** – Mid-Season Friendly – Saturday 21st January. An Epsom and Ewell team that hadn’t played a match for nearly three weeks came up against a Leatherhead side that had played fairly regularly during that period and in front of a crowd of 79, the score line of 5-0 to our opponents came as no real surprise.

With our League match against Arundel postponed, a friendly against our landlords on the artificial surface at River Lane, Fetcham was hastily arranged and kicking off at 2pm we gave a run out to our new signings Roan Strong, Musa Beegun and Rory Edwards while the majority of our regulars all played too, but for large parts of the game we found chances extremely limited. A change in formation just after the half hour made things a little more even for a while, but by then we were already two goals in arrears and three more followed in the second half.

The first goal came courtesy of a slight deflection, enabling the ball to creep past the wrong footed Strong in the 13th minute and a second followed after a great turn from the Leatherhead 10 which put him through to find the 9 with a good pass and he guided the ball past Strong into the bottom far corner.

The second half produced a slightly harsh score line for us as the Leatherhead keeper made three superb saves in the second half, two of which came from Nick Wilson, but to be fair, they also had other chances that weren’t taken and could have had a couple more themselves. The third goal came in the 49th minute and was harsh on Strong who made a good save, only to see an opponent reach the loose ball first for a simple finish. A spectacular fourth goal then followed in the 67th minute with a strike from the edge of the penalty area that grazed the bar on its way in. All we had in response was one near post shot from Athan Smith-Joseph after he had received a long kick from Strong, but the keeper kept it out.

We then had three chances in a minute; the 75th, as it turned out. Firstly, Wilson struck at goal with a slight deflection on the way, requiring a great full stretch save to claw the ball away. From the corner, Thomson Adeyemi’s header from point blank range was also kept out and the from the next corner Aaron Bogle struck over the bar from just inside the box.

A great deep cross from Athan Smith-Joseph was met by a superb volley from Wilson, but this was also acrobatically kept out by the Leatherhead keeper and an 86th minute penalty from Junior Kadi, after Bogle had brought a striker down just inside the area, completed the scoring. You couldn’t argue with the decision and seeing as the referee was our former Captain Alex McKay, it is only fair to say that he had an excellent game.

We now face another two weeks without a competitive match before hosting Oakwood, but this should give time for our new signings to become a little more familiar with the rest of the players as we finally commence the second half of our

season against teams of not such a high standard.

Epsom & Ewell: Roan Strong, Johnny “Sonic” Akoto, Gideon Acheampong, Ryan Smith, Oliver Thompson, Aaron Bogle, Athan Smith-Joseph, Nick Wilson, Jamie Byatt, Josh Alder, Gavin Quintyne

Subs: Rory Edwards, Thomson Adeyemi, Musa Beegun, Josh Owen all on for Quintyne, Smith, Alder, Wilson (at HT) Lawrence O’Donoghue for Acheampong (62), Wilson back on for Byatt (69), Quintyne back on for Akoto (81)

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## Voles let loose on the Hogsmill

11 February 2023



In August of 2022, years of hard work with the help of hundreds of volunteers came to fruition with the release of 101 voles back onto our local Epsom and Ewell river, **the Hogsmill**. On Saturday the 25th of February **Citizen Zoo** will be celebrating this landmark achievement and the river more broadly at the CornherHOUSE Theatre.

[Link to the website to purchase tickets.](#)

This celebratory event will feature a talk from **Dr Amy-Jane Beer**, a biologist, nature writer and campaigner. She is the author of over 30 books on natural history, a Country Diarist for The Guardian, a columnist for British Wildlife and a regular contributor to BBC Wildlife and Countryfile magazines, among others. Her recent book, *The Flow*, a beautiful and fascinating book that explores the UK’s rivers, includes a trip to the Hogsmill and features our water vole project!



Volunteers bringing voles back to the Hogsmill River

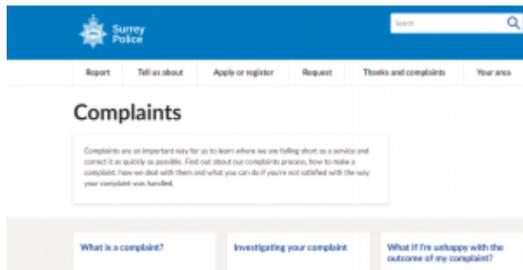
The event will also premier a short film about the **Hogsmill Water Vole** project, directed and filmed by aspiring wildlife filmmaker **Molly McNamara-Langton**. There will also be a short talk about water voles by **Elliot Newton** and **Ben Stockwell**.

This family-friendly event will include Water Vole-themed crafted-making activities for children and a book signing session with Amy where you can purchase her book at a discounted price that will also contribute to the water vole project.

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## Surrey Police Top Complaints Table

11 February 2023



Surrey Police received more complaints per officer in its force than any other in England and Wales. The Home Office recently published the statistics for the year end 31st March 2022.

Epsom and Ewell Times has analysed the tables and the top forces are as follows:

Rank	Force	Number of police officers	Number of allegations	Allegations Per officer
1	<a href="#">Surrey Police</a>	2,153	3,983	1.8500
2	<a href="#">Cleveland Police</a>	1,443	2,358	1.6341
3	<a href="#">Gloucestershire Constabulary</a>	1,279	1,940	1.5168
4	<a href="#">Essex Police</a>	3,678	5,375	1.4614
5	<a href="#">Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary</a>	3,302	4,734	1.4337
6	<a href="#">Kent Police</a>	4,064	5,527	1.3600

**Lisa Townsend**, Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey, said: “My office has been in detailed discussion with Surrey Police following the understandable concerns that the public may have following the national news this week. There is no place for misogyny or abuse of any type in Surrey Police and I have been clear with the Force that I have the highest expectations of our police officers.

“I am pleased that Surrey Police have rigorous processes in place to discourage all forms of behaviour that fall below the standards we have of every officer, and I am confident that all cases of misconduct are carried out with the utmost seriousness when an allegation is made either externally or internally. The latest quarterly data from the IOPC to last September shows a reduction in complaint cases against police officers in Surrey. However it is important to note that while every case is taken seriously, the total number of complaints received relates to a wide variety of themes. Many complaint cases are resolved to the satisfaction of the complainant.

“My office continues to play an important role in scrutinising the Force in all areas of performance, including regular meetings with Surrey Police’s Professional Standards Team and the IOPC. This includes identifying trends and working to improve the timeliness and quality of the service that every complaint receives.”

**Helen Maguire** Liberal Democrat PPC for Epsom and Ewell said: “As a former Royal Military Police Officer, it goes without saying that I fully support the difficult work that Surrey Police do. However, following the conviction of David Carrick, these Surrey figures will be seen locally as being very disturbing and so the public needs reassurance. Therefore Surrey Police Force must ask themselves why they are top of the table and how do they investigate internal complaints against their own police officers. That can only be achieved if there is external scrutiny of the figures - the public will not take kindly to seeing Surrey Police marking their own homework!”

**Mark Todd**, Chair of Epsom and Ewell Labour Party said: “In Epsom & Ewell we get a terrible deal on policing, so it’s no wonder that complaints are so high; and the huge problems at the Met show that the problems go wider still. During austerity the Conservative Government cut our police funding by 20% and Epsom’s police station was closed. It lies derelict on Church Street with just a small base during working hours at the town hall. We need a properly resourced, trained and managed police force and that’s what a Labour Government would provide. Currently our police force is not fit for purpose and it’s all the Government’s fault.”

A full table of complaints against officers in each police force is available from Epsom and Ewell Times [HERE](#)

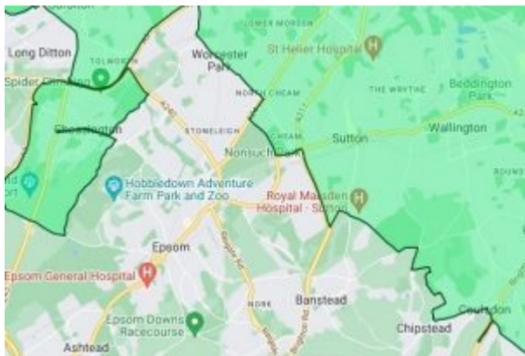
**Surrey Police** have hit back: “The Home Office figures quoted by some outlets are for overall public complaints to the force. These capture dissatisfaction with the service provided by police. The figures do not reflect misconduct investigations. This is a really important distinction to make. “

**Epsom and Ewell Times** has extrapolated the figures above from the Home Office table: “Number of individuals (officers) subject to a complaint”. Readers may explore for themselves via this Home Office website page.

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## ULEZ will come to Epsom and Ewell borders

11 February 2023



London has an air quality problem. That's why the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) is expanding across all London boroughs from 29 August 2023 to help clear London's air.

Poor air quality is not just a central London problem. In fact, the greatest number of deaths related to air pollution occur in outer London areas.

The ULEZ has already made a significant difference, helping to reduce harmful nitrogen dioxide pollution by nearly half in central London. But we need to act now to help give the five million Londoners in outer boroughs clearer air to breathe too.

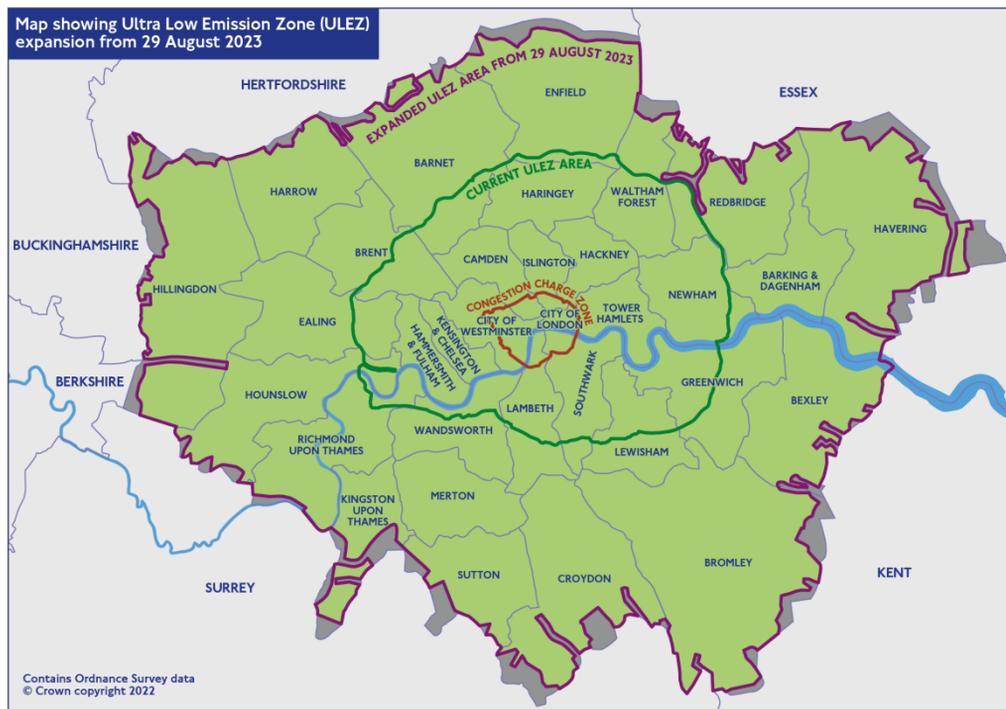
Cars, motorcycles, vans and other specialist vehicles (up to and including 3.5 tonnes) and minibuses (up to and including 5 tonnes) will need to meet the ULEZ emissions standards or pay a daily charge of £12.50 when driving within the zone, including the expanded area from 29 August.

More than four out of five vehicles already meet the standards. But, if you drive a petrol vehicle over 16 years old or a diesel vehicle over 6 years old, you need to check in case you're affected. Use our simple online vehicle checker.

Check your vehicle now To support Londoners through the expansion, the Mayor of London's scrappage scheme is providing financial assistance for those on certain low income or disability benefits. There is also help for London based sole traders, businesses with up to 10 employees and registered charities. The scheme opens on 30 January 2023. For more information on the scrappage scheme and other support, visit our website.

The ULEZ will continue to operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year except Christmas Day (25 December).

Any money received from the scheme is reinvested into running and improving London's transport network, such as expanding bus routes in outer London.



Visit the interactive map to see if a postcode, location or landmark is in the expanded area. Check your postcode If you drive within the Congestion Charge zone in central London, you will also need to pay the daily Congestion Charge unless your vehicle has an exemption or is registered for a 100% discount. The Congestion Charge zone won't be expanding.

Transport for London 19.01.2023



**Chris Grayling MP** for Epsom and Ewell has written to constituents to say:

“I am strongly opposed to the change at this time because of its impact on our area, on pensioners and people on low incomes with older cars and most significantly those seeking treatment at St Helier or the Marsden. I have asked him to reconsider this aspect of the scheme in particular.....

... the plan does not include extending the zone right to the London boundary everywhere. For us the outline ULEZ map says it will not cover the route from Epsom to the M25 via Malden Rushett or from Ewell to Tolworth and the A3 going southwards. There has been some confusion over the status of Rushett Lane and I am checking that with TfL. It will also not include the north end of Stoneleigh and parts of Worcester Park.

.... The target date for the launch is August 29th, though that may slip as some councils are refusing to work with the Mayor to install the cameras that will be needed to make it operational.”

Related articles

[Yet more on ULEZ....](#)

[More on Epsom and Ewell and Surrey and ULEZ](#)

[Council’s last minute opposition to ULEZ extension.](#)