

Check your Epsom and Ewell train journeys January weekends.

14 January 2025



Residents of Epsom and Ewell are advised to prepare for disruptions to South Western Railway (SWR) services due to essential engineering works in the Wimbledon area. Bus replacement services will operate on key routes over two consecutive weekends: January 18-19 and January 25-26.

While services on the London Waterloo line from Epsom will be affected, passengers can still reach Waterloo by using Southern Railway services via the Victoria line and changing at Clapham Junction. However, there will be no SWR services between Epsom and Guildford, and SWR trains to Dorking will also be unavailable.

The works will involve renewing 800 meters of track, ballast, and sleepers between Wimbledon and Earlsfield, alongside replacing points and installing 100 meters of conductor rail. These upgrades aim to improve track reliability and reduce faults, providing smoother journeys for passengers.

Key Impacts for Epsom and Ewell Residents

- **No SWR trains from Epsom to Guildford.**
- **Southern Railway services to Dorking via the Victoria line remain available.**
- **Rail replacement buses will operate between Clapham Junction and Worcester Park, affecting onward connections.**

Additional Service Changes

- SWR services between London Waterloo and Chessington South, Hampton Court, Dorking, and Woking (stopping services) will not run.
- Longer-distance services to Portsmouth Harbour, Exeter St Davids, and Weymouth will be revised, taking up to 30 minutes longer.
- Berrylands station will be closed during the works.

Plan Ahead

SWR advises passengers to check travel options in advance via the SWR website (southwesternrailway.com/plan-my-journey) or National Rail (nationalrail.co.uk) and to allow extra time for their journeys.

Apologies from Network Rail and SWR

Peter Williams, SWR's Customer and Commercial Director, acknowledged the inconvenience: "Customers should plan ahead if they intend to travel on these weekends, as engineers carry out vital maintenance at one of the busiest parts of our network. We're grateful for our customers' patience."

Mark Goodall, Network Rail's Wessex Route Director, added: "We're sorry for the disruption but completing these upgrades back-to-back is the most efficient option. We encourage passengers to check their journeys and plan ahead."

Further closures in the Wimbledon area are also planned for Sunday, February 2, and Sunday, February 9. Updates will be available on the SWR website.

For Epsom and Ewell residents, alternative travel routes and extra planning will help navigate the disruptions while these essential upgrades take place.

Going South from Epsom for Xmas? Check your

trains

14 January 2025



Epsom residents are being urged to check before travelling as South Western Railway (SWR) services to Guildford face significant disruption due to emergency engineering works. The works will take place from **Saturday 21 December to Tuesday 24 December**, affecting trains running via Cobham & Stoke D'Abernon and Epsom.

The disruption comes as Network Rail works to stabilise an embankment near Clandon following the detection of ground movement. Trains in the area have been operating at reduced speeds, and urgent repairs are required to ensure passenger safety.

Impact on Services

During the works, limited train services will operate between London Waterloo and Effingham Junction via both Cobham & Stoke D'Abernon and Epsom. To help passengers, replacement buses will run on the following routes:

- **Surbiton to Guildford**, every 30 to 60 minutes depending on the day.
- **Effingham Junction to Guildford**, every 30 minutes, with some extending to Epsom.

Passengers travelling between Epsom and Guildford will be served by either a train or replacement bus. Normal services are expected to resume from **Friday 27 December**, but journey planners will be updated daily, and travellers are advised to check before setting out.

A Safety Priority

Explaining the need for the emergency works, Tom McNamee, Network Rail's Wessex Route Infrastructure Director, said: "We detected ground movement at an embankment in the Clandon area, which has made it necessary to operate trains at slower speeds. Stabilising the embankment is critical to ensure the safety of passengers and staff. While we recognise this will be disruptive, it's essential to carry out these repairs to prevent further movement and restore full services as quickly as possible."

Passenger Advice

SWR is apologising to passengers for the inconvenience. Steve Tyler, Planning and Performance Director at SWR, added: "We are sorry for the disruption and are working hard to provide as many train services as possible during the works. Buses will operate to ensure passengers can still reach their destinations, and we encourage everyone to check journey planners before travelling. We appreciate your patience as these essential repairs are completed."

Key Information

- Trains will not stop at **Horsley, Clandon, or London Road Guildford** stations during the works. These will instead be served by replacement buses.
- No SWR services will operate on **Christmas Day or Boxing Day**, and an amended timetable will be in place from Friday 27 December.

For the latest updates, visit southwesternrailway.com or use journey planners to confirm service availability. Passengers are encouraged to allow extra time for their journeys during this period.

Surrey: Free school buses withdrawn

14 January 2025



Free school buses are being axed after a cross-country route was judged safe by Surrey County Council. Parents say the letter outlining the new walkable route explicitly states that the “personal safety issues of children travelling alone” were not considered. About 81 children from Esher High School are said to be affected. Compounding the problem, the council has stated that further funding to increase capacity on regular bus services is not available.

The Local Democracy Reporting Service understands parents are appealing the decision and have been in touch with Surrey Police. This comes just weeks after parents in South Nutfield were told children could walk across open rail tracks and flood-prone cow fields as the county council looks to make further service cuts.

Children who live more than three miles from their nearest school are eligible for free buses. The new route across the heath reduces the distance to just under that mark, meaning the children no longer qualify for the service. The council says the move will save about £180,000 per year and create space on “stretched coach resources to provide travel assistance to those eligible.”

One of the affected parents, Plamena Naydenova, received a letter that included directions on how her children could get to school, with 30 separate steps to follow. Among the instructions were phrases like “take the alleyway,” “follow the footpaths through Molesey Heath Nature Reserve,” and “turn right through the squeeze stile.” Later, children are told to “cross the River Mole Viaduct Sluice.”

Mrs. Naydenova said: “How can you call an 83-minute walk through dark heaths and unlit river paths a safe route? It’s just honestly outrageous, the whole thing. It isn’t about one child, it’s a principle. It will affect many families, not just my two children. I walked it with my sister as I was afraid to walk it on my own. It goes through narrow alleyways, fields, mud along the embankment of the River Mole, with no fencing.”

She added: “The bit that annoys me the most is the word safe—or safe for an accompanied child. Parents must accompany them, but the council doesn’t see that other parents have other children to drop off or work commitments. I would need to leave the house at 7 a.m. to get to Esher. How would I get the other children to school, never mind my work commitments? It’s very, very shocking. We all know it’s about the money and cost-cutting. But be honest and transparent—say ‘we can’t afford to pay anymore,’ not that there’s a new safe route.”

Since the shock email, parents have banded together. They understand about 81 other students have been impacted. Very few are expected to take on the route and, if their appeal fails, will instead use the standard bus network—although these services, she said, are often full, leaving school children at stops.

Mrs. Naydenova said: “It will put a lot of pressure on the existing paid buses. We aren’t going to let them walk across the heath. We only have one car, so the only other option is cycling, but how safe is that?”

Travel assistance will run until the end of the school year, but from September 2025, children will need to find alternative routes unless there is a change.

Surrey County Council’s cabinet member for children, families, and lifelong learning, Councillor Clare Curran, said the route to Esher High School was established following “individual safe walking route assessments” applied in line with national guidelines. She explained: “It is important to note that the guidelines consider the relationship between pedestrians and traffic, and assessments are undertaken on the assumption that the child will be accompanied by an appropriate adult if necessary. The Department for Education’s own school transport guidance also supports this position. It is suggested that suitable footwear and a torch are used where needed.”

She added: “The council provides contracted coaches to those eligible for travel assistance to Esher High School. By limiting the services only to those eligible in line with statutory guidance, the council expects a cost saving of approximately £180k per year, as well as the benefit of utilizing the stretched coach resources to provide travel assistance to those eligible. The national picture is of increased demand on transport services and therefore council budgets. We spent £64.9m in 2023/24 on home-to-school travel costs for around 10.7k children and young people.

“We take our responsibilities regarding home-to-school transport very seriously; however, we must balance this with our duty to ensure we are only using public funds for those who meet statutory guidelines for free transport or who are most in need of assistance. Amidst a set of challenging financial circumstances, the council is not in a position to continue to pay for transport for families where they are no longer eligible for assistance due to a safe route being established.”

Related report:

Surrey school kids’ country walk saving money

Image: Surrey County Council’s recommended safe route to Esher High School (Palamena Naydenova)

Epsom and Ewell to be served by publicly owned trains

14 January 2025



The government has announced that South Western Railway (SWR), which serves commuters from Epsom, Ewell West, Stoneleigh and Worcester Park to London Waterloo, will be the first train operator to transition back into public ownership. The move comes following the passage of the Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Act 2024, signalling a historic shift for Britain's railways.

Starting next year, SWR services, including the Epsom to London routes, will come under the direct management of DfT Operator Limited, a publicly owned body. This change aims to address long-standing issues of delays, cancellations, and high costs that have plagued privatized rail services for decades.

What This Means for Epsom Commuters

Epsom's SWR services connect thousands of local residents daily to key destinations such as London Waterloo, Wimbledon, and Clapham Junction and south to Dorking and Guildford. These routes are lifelines for commuters and leisure travellers alike, and reliability issues have often sparked frustration among passengers. Under public ownership, improvements in punctuality, affordability, and customer satisfaction are hoped for.

Local resident and commuter Sarah James commented: *"I've been using the Epsom to Waterloo service for over ten years, and while it's convenient, the delays and rising ticket prices have been hard to justify. If public ownership can bring real improvements, it'll be a welcome change."*

Government's Vision for the Railways

Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander said: *"We're putting passengers back at the heart of our railways. For too long, privatization has failed to deliver for the British public. South Western Railway is the first step in our plan to rebuild a rail system that works for everyone."*

The move forms part of a broader government commitment to overhaul the rail network, with c2c and Greater Anglia services also set to follow suit by 2025. The goal is to save up to £150 million annually by eliminating franchise fees, redirecting those funds into service improvements instead of shareholder profits.

How Will the Transition Work?

The Department for Transport (DfT) is prioritizing a seamless handover, ensuring minimal disruption for passengers. Ticketing systems and staffing will remain unchanged during the transition period, with SWR's current workforce continuing to support commuters.

Publicly managed services will eventually integrate into Great British Railways (GBR), the government's new overseeing body for track and train operations. GBR promises a more unified and efficient approach to rail management, focusing on reliability, accessibility, and value for money.

Local Impacts Beyond the Commute

Epsom is known for its vibrant community and attractions like Epsom Downs Racecourse and Epsom shopping centre, which rely on reliable rail links to draw visitors. Public ownership of SWR could boost local tourism by ensuring smoother travel to and from Epsom.

Additionally, the promise of greater transparency and accountability could restore faith in public transport, encouraging more residents to opt for trains over cars, which aligns with Surrey County Council's environmental goals.

What's Next?

The first publicly run trains will start operating in 2025, and residents can expect regular updates on planned improvements, including timetable adjustments and station enhancements. The Epsom and Ewell Times will continue to monitor the situation closely, bringing you the latest developments as they happen.

For now, commuters and local businesses will be watching closely to see if public ownership delivers the transformative results promised by the government.

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Planning buses not missing them says Epsom's MP

14 January 2025



Dear Editor,

Thank you to Stuart Gosling for his contribution and for highlighting the important issue of transport links in relation to the new hospital development.

Has Epsom's new MP missed the bus to a new hospital?

I completely agree that good transport connectivity is essential for the success of this project, and I want to reassure residents that we have already considered this as part of the planning process.

New transport links will be introduced once the hospital is built, and discussions around the best way to serve the site with appropriate public transport will take place as we progress along the development timeline. It's important to note that transport infrastructure often needs to be developed alongside the new services and demands that arise from it.

I'll be at the forefront of ensuring that the new hospital is well-served by transport, and I'm committed to ensuring that Epsom and Ewell's needs are fully met. The process may take time, but I'm confident the results will be worth the wait.

Yours faithfully,

Helen Maguire MP

Surrey showing true grit for winter roads

14 January 2025



Surrey's team of gritter drivers are now available 24/7 to help keep residents moving during the colder months.

Our 39 state-of-the-art gritting vehicles are ready to grit the county's busiest routes before and during severe weather, using the 10,000 tonnes of salt stored at our four Surrey depots.

Winter arrangements typically begin in October and run until the end of March although this period can be extended depending on weather conditions.

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth said, "We're committed to keeping drivers safe here in Surrey and investing in our roads.

"When temperatures plummet, our highways teams across the county will be ready to work around the clock to keep traffic moving on our primary routes using our new, efficient gritters.

"Keeping our roads safe this winter is part of a series of highways improvements we'll be making across our busy network."

Has Epsom's new MP missed the bus to a new hospital?

14 January 2025



Dear Editor,

Our new MP Helen Maguire has supported the construction of a new hospital, complete with an accident and emergency (A&E) department, near the Royal Marsden Hospital in the southern area of Sutton. [See Epsom and Ewell Times 12th October 2024 "Public meeting about Epsom Hospital future"].

While well-intentioned, her recommendation seems to miss a significant concern shared by residents in Epsom, Ewell, and much of Sutton: accessibility.

The current sites—Epsom Hospital and St Helier Hospital—are better served by public transport than the proposed location near the Royal Marsden, which lacks convenient train and bus links. Moving our local A&E services to this "public transport desert" would place a greater burden on people relying on public transport, particularly those without access to a car.

Epsom Hospital, for example, is within walking distance of Epsom Station (though it's still a 20-minute walk). It is served by several bus routes, including:

- **E5** (Langley Vale - Epsom - Watersedge): every 30 minutes from Epsom Clock Tower, though it only passes the hospital every two hours.
- **166** (Epsom Hospital - Epsom - Banstead - West Croydon): an hourly service from Monday to Saturday, no service on Sunday.
- **293** (Epsom Hospital - Epsom - North Cheam - Morden): every 20 minutes during peak times.
- **408** (Epsom - Ashted - Leatherhead - Cobham): runs approximately every hour on weekdays.
- **479** (Epsom - Ashted - Leatherhead - Guildford): every 30 minutes at peak times.

St Helier Hospital, also in Sutton, has additional connections:

- **151** (Wallington - Sutton - Worcester Park): every 10 minutes peak.
- **157** (Morden - Croydon - Crystal Palace): every 12 minutes peak.
- **S1** (Mitcham - Sutton - Banstead via Wrythe Lane): every 20 minutes peak.
- **S4** (Roundshaw - Wallington - Sutton - St Helier): every 30 minutes peak.
- Other services such as the **154**, **164**, and **280** serve nearby areas, with buses stopping outside or near the hospital.

In contrast, public transportation from Epsom Clock Tower to the Royal Marsden site involves multiple transfers. A trip requires at least two or three buses, such as the S2, S4, 293, SL7, and S4, taking anywhere from 45 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes depending on timings. For many, this could be inconvenient, time-consuming, and impractical—especially in emergencies.

For residents reliant on public transportation, moving A&E services to a poorly connected area would be disruptive. We should seek solutions that keep healthcare accessible and ensure that those who need urgent care can get there quickly. I urge our MP and local authorities to consider this reality as they deliberate on the future of our local healthcare services.

Yours faithfully,

Stuart Gosling

Epsom Resident

Surrey school kids' country walk saving money

14 January 2025



Children have been told they can walk 4.9km through fields and over an unguarded railway line by Surrey County Council bureaucrats who cancelled their free bus passes.

The decision has left their family feeling "let down" and "frustrated" after the vital service relied upon for years was cut because a 10 kilometre hike was found by county hall officials.

Joe Massey was sent the letter informing him of the council's decision after a "review" found the route was considered a safe walking route for children travelling from South Nutfield to Carrington School in Redhill.

The free bus service historically served the area but the so-called discovery of the new route means notice has been served on those who depended on the county council's travel assistance.

Normally, free bus access is only provided to those who live more than three miles from their chosen school.

South Nutfield is within that distance but the narrow lanes linking the village to the school are unsafe for young people to walk along.

Now the council has written to parents telling them that a new 4.95 kilometre route - across muddy fields and unprotected railway lines is a suitable alternative - but as a precaution children should wear suitable footwear as the farmer's field is prone to flooding.

The instructions, seen by the LDRS, on how the children should get to school read: "Follow the public right of way until you reach Mid Street.

"In places it is narrow, and it can be muddy with surface water, occasionally liable to flooding so appropriate footwear would be advisable after inclement weather.

"There are two stiles to climb over; these are easily scaled.

"The train track is an open crossing with no gates, barriers, attendant or traffic lights. The sightlines in both directions are long, straight and clear. It is a rural line, Redhill to Tonbridge, on average there are two trains per hour and occasionally a freight train making it safe to cross."

Adding: "The public right of way continues across a farmer's field which it can be muddy with surface water, occasionally liable to flooding."

The decision was taken by the Surrey Travel & Assessment team alongside the Safer Travel team who had reviewed a number of routes across the county previously been deemed unsafe.

They team wrote: "We understand that this may be disappointing news, however we have undertaken a thorough investigation into your child's current eligibility, applying the travel assistance policy robustly, and this is the resulting outcome. "

Joe Massey, said they have two boys who will be impacted, one in year 10 the other in year 7.

He said: "We qualify for the council's assisted travel scheme because the nearest school to us is over three miles away but we've received a letter f saying that as of September next year they're going to be cancelling both passes - because they've found an alternative route that's less than three miles.

"A big chunk of it is cross country through cow fields and rail roads with no bridge. It's just open tracks.

"It's a public right of way. We did the walk, there's a cow field, you're wading through mud.

"The council says it's fine because its only 2.96 miles but the app says 3.06."

"Some of the roads are really uncomfortable to walk along and to expect anyone to do it, especially in winter, is just unsuitable.

"And the fields are not lit at all; it's just plain dangerous."

Mr Massey said: "I'm extremely frustrated by the situation. Obviously the money is a big thing but it's the principle.

"It took us an hour to do it, there's no way in hell you'd send your child on that route.

"To then expect your child to walk for an hour ,they're going to be exhausted.

"My wellies were caked in mud - they said in the letter to wear suitable footwear.

"It's traumatic enough at secondary school but to have to carry muddy wellies around all day....

“We just feel let down and the option they’ve given us is just unbelievable.

“If any normal human being would have looked at that route, I can’t believe they would have sent the letter.”

Clare Curran, SCC cabinet member for children, families and lifelong learning said: “This route has been established between South Nutfield and Carrington School following individual Safe Walking Route assessments that were carried out by the council.

“Safety of route assessments are carried out in line with Road Safety GB Guidelines. It is important to note that this is an assessment of the road safety of a walked route by an accompanied child – national guidance advises that the child should be “accompanied as necessary”. It is the expectation that the child, and the accompanying adult, will wear appropriate clothing and footwear for the conditions underfoot.

“The current travel assistance provided by the council is an annual bus pass on a public bus service. This costs the Council £881 per year for each pupil. In line with statutory guidance, these pupils are no longer eligible to receive a free bus pass through the council. Amidst a set of challenging financial circumstances, the council is not in the position to continue to pay for transport for families where they are no longer eligible for assistance, due to a safe route being established.

“The council is not prescribing that children should walk to school via the safe route that has been established; the option is still available to use the bus service. Families will be able to purchase a bus pass directly from the operator to continue to use the bus. Families can appeal against the decision to withdraw travel assistance via the stage one safety of route appeal form, and a link to this was included in the initial correspondence with the family.”

Image Joe Massey - on the new school walk

Epsom High St in need of more love?

14 January 2025



Driving safely, parking appropriately. Romy Sustar reports:

This is the second article in my series following on from “Epsom town as a safe place to Live”. It seemed to me that for the second article it was worth looking at a specific business issue around anti-social behaviour in Epsom High St, that is currently being discussed widely. And one that currently projects an image of decline and lawlessness in our High St.

My all-time favourite McDonald’s meal has always been—and still is—the Filet-O-Fish Combo. I’m “lovin’ it” and really want to hold onto this positive feeling. However, like so many others, McDonald’s seems to have forgotten its leadership role.

Last Friday night, on my way to the cinema, I walked by McDonald’s and counted 23 drivers parked on the pavement, completely blocking the pavement between Creams and McDonald’s, extending along the High Street towards the crossing. Pedestrians had no choice but to either walk on the busy street or navigate through the maze of motorcycles. It made me feel very unsafe and angry, but I don’t blame the drivers.

Drivers for UberEats, Just Eat, and Deliveroo frequently express their frustrations on platforms like Glassdoor and Indeed, highlighting their shared challenges with residents impacted by these services. While UberEats drivers appreciate the quick onboarding process, this excitement soon fades as many struggle to earn even £10 during entire shifts, facing inadequate customer support that leaves them feeling isolated and undervalued. Deliveroo riders share similar grievances, describing their experiences as akin to “slave labour,” contending with low pay and fierce competition for orders. Issues with app reliability and poor management responsiveness only deepen their dissatisfaction. Just Eat feedback on Glassdoor clearly states that management doesn’t really understand the performance of the business. I wonder how many of the drivers are aware that the minimum hourly rate for 2024/25 in the UK is £11.44 for age group 21 and over.

Let’s consider McDonald’s in Epsom High St, it’s been a pillar of the community for more than two decades, in that time most of us have come to understand the fantastic benefits brought by Ronald McDonald House allowing parents to stay with their sick children. We have seen the support for thousands of UK and Irish farmers in very difficult times, and for the organic farmers as their industry developed. We have noticed the healthy options appearing in the menu, the sugar content reducing, and have been reassured as recycled cardboard content has increased. All of this happening, whilst most of us simply continued to enjoy the product as one of the love brands in our local economy.

Are they truly so insensitive that they fail to recognise the damage they’re inflicting? Or is it that they simply don’t care about the residents and migrants at all, revealing their brand identity to be a facade? When I mention “residents,” I mean

everyone—from young children and mothers with baby pushers to the elderly and those with disabilities, the blind and those in wheelchairs.

We reached out to McDonald's and a spokesperson: "At McDonald's we strive to be a good neighbour in the communities we serve, and the management team at our Epsom restaurant are continuously working with local stakeholders to help find a solution to the on-going parking issues which are affecting a number of businesses in the town. The safety and wellbeing of our people, customers and local residents remains our top priority and as such we have asked our delivery partners to ensure that all couriers continue to drive safely and park appropriately."

When the views of the local manager were sought McDonald's asked for nothing to be added to its spokesperson's response.

The phrase "Continue to drive safely and park appropriately" seems more like a message to maintain a facade than a reflection of daily reality in Epsom. This raises my curiosity about which local stakeholders McDonald's claims to be "continuously working with." It suggests a disconnect between their messaging and the actual experiences of the community.

So I contacted Russell Bailey from Swail House, a local Blind charity severely affected by the issues: "I am in touch with the Surrey Council parking enforcement team and councillors and our MP Helen Maguire regularly about the issue, but there does not seem to be any progress. It seems to be that it will take an accident before any real action is going to be taken".

Then I contacted the Ebbisham Centre owners of the land just behind McDonalds who said: "We are as frustrated as residents and customers of Epsom Square about the prevalence of mopeds parked on our premises and at the entrance to our squares, on council pavements. The mopeds themselves are unsightly and a hazard. The congregation of moped drivers, usually with full face helmets still worn, creates an intimidating and threatening atmosphere in the town and at the entrance to our squares. This is not good for the economy or for the wellbeing of residents, and seems to serve only the benefit of one or two national-multiple fast food outlets on the High Street".

The Council are now vocal on the issue and are reacting to pressure from the community. **Steve McCormick** (an RA Surrey County and Borough Councillor) passed a unanimous motion at the County to deal with the problem. So who is McDonald's actually talking to and how could it possibly be, that McDonalds, our love brand, is still entirely oblivious to the oncoming storm if it is "continuously working with local stakeholders to help find a solution"?

Town Ward RA Councillor **Neil Dallen** is aware of the problem but a Council led solution is proving elusive.

Epsom and Ewell Times sent a simple survey to all Epsom and Ewell Councillors. These are the few responses received to the questions how many times in the last year have you used these services and what is your solution?

Date	Name	Party and Ward	Orders last year	Do you have a solution to the problem of many delivery riders on two-wheels obstructing roads and pathways in Epsom? If so, please describe the solution briefly
12/10	Steve Bridger	RA Stamford (Mayor)	0	Dedicated area for them to park - NOT obstructing the pavement at one of the busiest areas with a bus stop! Also to check the insurance, licences and validity of the electric scooters of the drivers
12/10	Julie Morris	LibDem College	12	Create dedicated parking areas for delivery bikes. For example, Epsom Square, taxi bay in Upper High St, convert small sections of pavement where it's wide enough and use that for delivery.bike parking, etc. eventually deliveries will come via drones and it won't be so bad. After segregated parking has been put in place, enforce illegal parking from delivery bikes
12/10	James Lawrence	LibDem College	1	There need to be dedicated parking bays for them, similar to the bays outside Dreams (near the Odeon). Enforcement then needs to be used to ensure these bays are used. This will allow them to continue their very useful activities of providing delivery services to businesses and residents, without blocking the pavement or being an obstruction for pedestrians.
12/10	Robert Geleit	Labour Court	15	Find them a place to go. Make sure that they don't have to work 12 hours a day 7 days a week.
13/10	Phil Neale	RA Cuddington	0	Have a system where the riders can be reported to the company that employs them then operate a three strikes and out policy.
16/10	Alison Kelly	LibDem Stamford	0	There needs to be a designated parking zone for the delivery drivers. It is clear that many people want home delivery. The solution is not asking the police to continually move them on.
18/10	Chris Ames	Labour Court	12	Police enforcement, including stopping riders with illegally powered bikes

And finally we contacted the closest local residential management company whose residents are most affected by the issues on a daily basis.

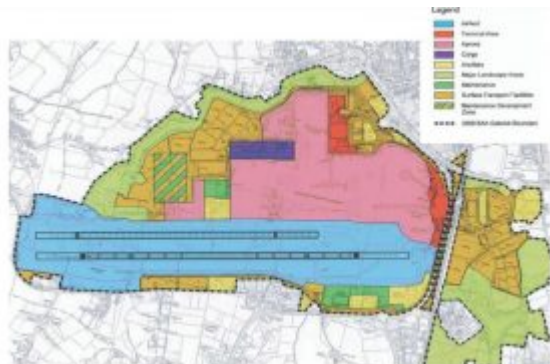
“Nobody from McDonald’s has ever contacted us. Our residents are almost 100% in favour of a thriving High St. We live in Town ward because we like the hustle and bustle, the bars, the businesses, and yes even a cheeky Mac and chips, along with the immediate access to all the wonderful things on offer in Epsom.

It should however never be forgotten that this is our manor, it does not belong to corporations and they do not have any right to ruin our environment, subject our families to unacceptable risk or to impede our disabled, simply because it is convenient and profitable to do so. McDonald’s should be reminded that you can only kick a dog so many times and that once kicked the dog is unlikely to care, if someone else is kicking it as well.”

In conclusion, my investigation indicates that McDonald’s has not engaged with the local stakeholders most affected by its new business model. Merely claiming that other businesses are doing the same raises ethical concerns, and the message that “all couriers continue to drive safely and park appropriately” seems both absurd and disingenuous. This suggests that McDonald’s has indeed lost touch with its core values. As a result, local stakeholders may soon be expressing their discontent by singing, “Ba Da Ba Ba Bah, Not Lovin’ It.”

Gatwick expansion update

14 January 2025



Local authorities have said they will not support Gatwick Airport’s plans to expand unless its growth is dependent on meeting environmental and noise targets.

According to legal documents, the impacted councils are concerned that there is currently a “lack of sanction” against Gatwick if the growth of the airport exceeds expected environmental guidelines without clear accountability.

Airport chiefs at Gatwick, the country’s second busiest airport, want to modify its northern runway so that it can increase passenger numbers to about 75 million a year on 386,000 flights. It says this will help minimise delays, bring in about £1 billion into the region’s economy every year, and create 14,000 jobs – all while staying within agreed noise levels. It also has a carbon action plan for how the airport will be net zero for its own emissions by 2030, with aviation emissions excluded.

Gatwick Airport has applied for a Development Consent Order (DCO), a legal document that allows the construction of major infrastructure projects. Part of the process requires the applicant to show the planning inspector how it will mitigate the impact of the development.

The airport’s current position is that the impact from the growth of the runways will be controlled by an air noise envelope (a way to limit sound) an annual cap of 386,000 commercial air transport movements, surface access commitments/SACs (55 per cent people accessing the airport by public transport by 2040) and a carbon action plan (to reduce carbon footprint).

Councils such as Crawley Borough, West Sussex County, Surrey County, Reigate and Banstead Borough, Mole Valley District and Tandridge (together the JLA) have been consulted on the proposals and have written to both Gatwick Airport and the planning inspector with recommendations.

The JLA say they are “concerned” that the current project “will impose unjustified adverse impacts on local communities, local businesses, and the receiving environment”. The group disagree with the Planning Inspectorate’s recommendations for the major development and believes it does not go far enough to address their concerns.

Instead, the JLA has put forward an approach where any increase in passenger numbers would be dependent on Gatwick Airport’s achievement of specific targets which would avoid, limit and reduce impacts of the project. The group said that if all their recommended measures were adopted, including the Environmentally Managed Growth framework (EMG), they would “not object”.

Under the JLAs’ proposed approach, Gatwick Airport would be required to continually monitor and regularly report on the extent of the environmental effects associated with the airport in the four areas: noise, air quality, greenhouse gases and surface access. In each of the cases, the JLAs say they want to ensure Gatwick meet their specific targets and are held accountable, to prevent the airport expanding at any cost.

The group has proposed a tier system in which to monitor potential breaches in environmental commitments. For instance, if air quality or green gas emissions go above a certain point (level 1), Gatwick will review the current measures and work on mitigation. Then, if air quality gets increasingly poorer (level 2), Gatwick will review its pollutant

contributions and introduce mitigation measures, perhaps preventing further capacity. If the limit for air pollution is breached, further mitigation would be required to solve the problem and no more aeroplane flight slots will be allocated.

The JLAs also want further clarity on the impacted areas exposed to higher levels of aircraft noise, especially areas where noise could wake people up. Measures should also be applied to give Gatwick Airport an incentive to transition to quieter aircraft and noise insulation as soon as possible, according to the JLA's statement. The JLAs also want to secure night time controls for flying.

The examination of the proposed DCO closed on August 27. The Planning Inspectorate will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport, who will then make a final decision on or before February 27.

A London Gatwick spokesperson said: "We are fully committed to making sure the airport's growth is sustainable. London Gatwick has thoroughly assessed the environmental impacts of its growth plans, which include environmental mitigations related to noise, carbon emissions and surface access improvements.

"As part of our sustainability policy we are committed to reaching net zero for our own scope one and two admissions by 2030, as well as continuing to reduce overall energy use, invest in on-site renewable energy, and continuing to source 100% renewable electricity.

"London Gatwick is delighted with the strong support shown by many local people and businesses during the recent hearings, who all voiced their desire to see the airport grow for the economic benefit of the area. We thank them for their ongoing support."

Related reports:

Gatwick Airport Expansion

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Gatwick Plans (Image PINS / Gatwick)

Will Surrey reporting tool fill the pot-holes?

14 January 2025



Surrey County Council's new 'FixMyStreet' online reporting tool will now make it easier for residents to report potholes, faulty traffic signals and other street defects, following its launch today (Tuesday 17 September).

FixMyStreet allows people to quickly and simply report issues in their area which need fixing, cleaning or clearing. Accessed via **Surrey County Council's website**, residents are also able to see issues which have already been reported, to sign up for local updates and to track the progress of repairs using their mobile phone or other device.

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth said, "We're very aware that well-maintained roads are highly important to our residents. This is why here in Surrey, we're investing nearly £300m in repairing and improving Surrey's roads and pavements by 2028.

"Introducing the 'FixMyStreet' platform is another example of our continued investment in our vital highways service. This new reporting platform will make it easier for people to report potholes and other defects, and to check the progress of all repairs in their local area.

"Keeping Surrey's busy road network moving and investing in improving our roads continue to be top priorities for Surrey County Council."

To report an issue and see existing reports in your area, visit <https://tellus.surreycc.gov.uk/>

Related reports:

Don't blame us for potholes say Surrey's highway authority.

90% of Surrey road hole damage claims go to pot

Prevention costs less than cures.....

Image: Pothole in Woodcote Road Epsom. Copyright Epsom and Ewell Times

Surrey roads get better marks

14 January 2025



Nearly £2m will be spent this year on improving road markings across the county, with over 48 miles of line painting already completed.

Surrey County Council has substantially increased its funding for this and coming years to make the county's roads safer and improve their visual appearance. This is in addition to the largest ever surface dressing programme which will see over 100 roads improved across Surrey to help prevent potholes.

The programme of works will see white and yellow road markings refreshed on roads across the county, with busy roads and those most in need of refreshing prioritised. This will also include major motorway junctions including the M25 J6 (Godstone), J8 (Reigate), J9 (Leatherhead) and M3 J1 (Sunbury Cross).

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth, said: "We're very aware that well-maintained and presentable roads are highly important to our residents. This is why here in Surrey, we're investing nearly £300m in repairing and improving Surrey's roads and pavements by 2028.

"Our increased investment in line painting will improve the safety and appearance of many roads across our highway network, along with our surface dressing programme which will significantly strengthen 85 miles of the county's busiest roads, preventing deterioration in years to come.

"Our highways teams are also continuing to trial new products which can complete these works in half the time, whilst also using more sustainable equipment."

Residents can keep up to date with works in their local area by signing up to our weekly highways newsletter here: **Your Highways Update landing page (surreycc.info)**.

Mixed responses in Surrey to 20mph zones

14 January 2025



Plans for new speed limits in Surrey could go ahead despite lack of confidence it would improve road safety.

Locals said they considered road conditions and potholes to have a greater impact on safe driving and cycling.

Reviewing speed limits is part of Surrey County Council's (SCC) road safety strategy called 'Vision Zero' in partnership with Surrey Police (including the Police and Crime Commissioner), Surrey Fire and Rescue and National Highway colleagues. It aims to halve the number of collisions where someone is killed or seriously injured on the roads by 2035, with the ambition to get to 'zero' by 2050.

In the early 2000s Surrey had 60-70 deaths on the road every year and in the last few years it has reduced 30 or under, a Surrey County Council committee heard July 18. Cllr Matt Furniss (Conservative Cabinet Member for Transport and Infrastructure) said the number of collisions has "plateaued" around the 30 mark.

Highlights of the strategy include: introducing more 20mph limits around schools, town centres and residential areas, investing in sophisticated speed cameras to tackle the worst speeding and casualty routes; review 60 mph rural speed limits and replace them with lower limits.

Over 3,600 people responded to the consultation between January and March this year, both Surrey drivers and local residents.

Concerns were raised that 70 per cent of respondents were not confident or neutral that the strategy would improve road safety in Surrey, causing councillors to question whether it should rethink the proposal.

Respondents said they felt road maintenance had a greater impact on road safety and therefore the money would be better spent on fixing potholes and improving roads. "I would much prefer to see the roads we already have maintained better rather than new interventions," one respondent said.

Officers admitted road maintenance is "crucial", but said it was not the purpose of the multi-partner strategy. They added that "significant work" was already taking place to address the road defects.

Despite not having data to hand to show if improved road maintenance would lead to less road collisions, officers said police reports would let SCC know if this was the case.

The committee heard that potholes and road defects were occasionally mentioned in police reports but the speed limits and road maintenance "goes hand in hand" and "needs to work together" to improve safety.

Half of the responses (1,832) disagreed with the proposal for new 20mph speed limits, with 10 per cent (around 366) feeling neutral. The report stated the public had a "mixed view" on the subject.

Sceptical of this, Cllr Mark Sugden (Conservative) said: "Is the issue a lack of understanding and communication, or is there a fundamental disagreement to the proposed strategy?"

Officers claimed not everyone understood the policy. They highlighted 135 (4 per cent) of the respondents who had disagreed with implementing 20mph speed limits, had in fact aligned with the proposals. These included comments that did not support a blanket approach but only supported 20 mph limits in town centres, residential areas or near schools but not on main roads.

Negative comments by the public said 20mph limits do not improve safety (170 responses) and increase congestion and air pollution (132 responses). Officers accepted some people may be against the proposals but argued their reasoning went against national research shown in their report.

Officers repeatedly stressed that enforcing 20mph speed limits would not be a "blanket approach" and would, if approved by the cabinet, be subject to local consultation. They added the council needed to communicate its road safety message more effectively with residents.

With only 46 per cent of respondents being happy or very happy with the approach, officers said they had "hoped for more support" for the proposals. A further 20 per cent were neutral to the safe roads approach.

The committee resolved that SCC needed to address the public's perception that fixing potholes would improve road safety and the concern whether the strategy will succeed.

Image: Neighbouring London Borough of Kingston's Bridge Road approach to Epsom and Ewell 20 mph zone.

90% of Surrey road hole damage claims go to pot

14 January 2025



Pothole damage has given rise to 5,619 claims for compensation from Surrey residents to the county council since May 2021.

Since the last local election three years ago, only 581 claims were successful (just over 10 per cent) resulting in £190,000 spent on repayment.

in 2024 so far, up to May, only 12 out of 1,204 claims have been repaid by Surrey County Council (SCC), with £4,435.15 being paid.

As the local highways authority, SCC is only liable to pay for damage to vehicles if it can be proved it has been negligent in the inspection and maintenance of its roads.

"Rather than 90 per cent of the claims being fraudulent, it is more likely that only 10 per cent of people are determined enough to see through a difficult process to the end," said Cllr George Potter (Lib Dem/Guildford East) at a county council AGM meeting on May 21.

Cllr Potter said the process is "very difficult and time consuming and bureaucratic" which will "discourage many people from going all the way through with their claims."

Residents can apply for compensation if they suffer personal injury or property damage due to council-owned roads.

For their claim to be successful, they must provide a long list of information such as the details of damage plus two independent estimates for repair, exact location, proof of ownership and current MOT and insurance, travel direction as well as time, date and weather conditions.

Rebutting the accusation, cabinet member for finance and resources, Cllr David Lewis (Conservative/Cobham) said he did not believe the claims were "fraudulent" in any way but that the criteria was not met.

“We have a duty to protect our finances and money raised from residents,” Cllr Lewis said. “[SCC] simply can’t have a process where every claim put in is paid out. The system we currently have is fair.” He added there are no plans to review the criteria or the process of compensating pothole claims.

Fixing approximately 50,000 potholes a year on average, Surrey County Council has budgeted to spend £5m of its annual budget on repairing potholes and other road safety defects.

SCC inspects its major roads (A roads), roads connecting traffic between A roads and smaller roads (B roads) and some smaller roads (often linking a housing estate or a village to the rest of the network) once a month. Rural roads connecting to smaller communities are inspected once every three months, according to guidance on SCC’s website.

As a general rule, the county says, the diameter of the pothole at the surface level should be less than 150mm on carriageways for cars to require it to be repaired within five working days. If it is not possible to permanently correct or repair the defect within the time period, a permanent repair should be carried out within 20 working days.

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Don’t blame us for potholes say Surrey’s highway authority.

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