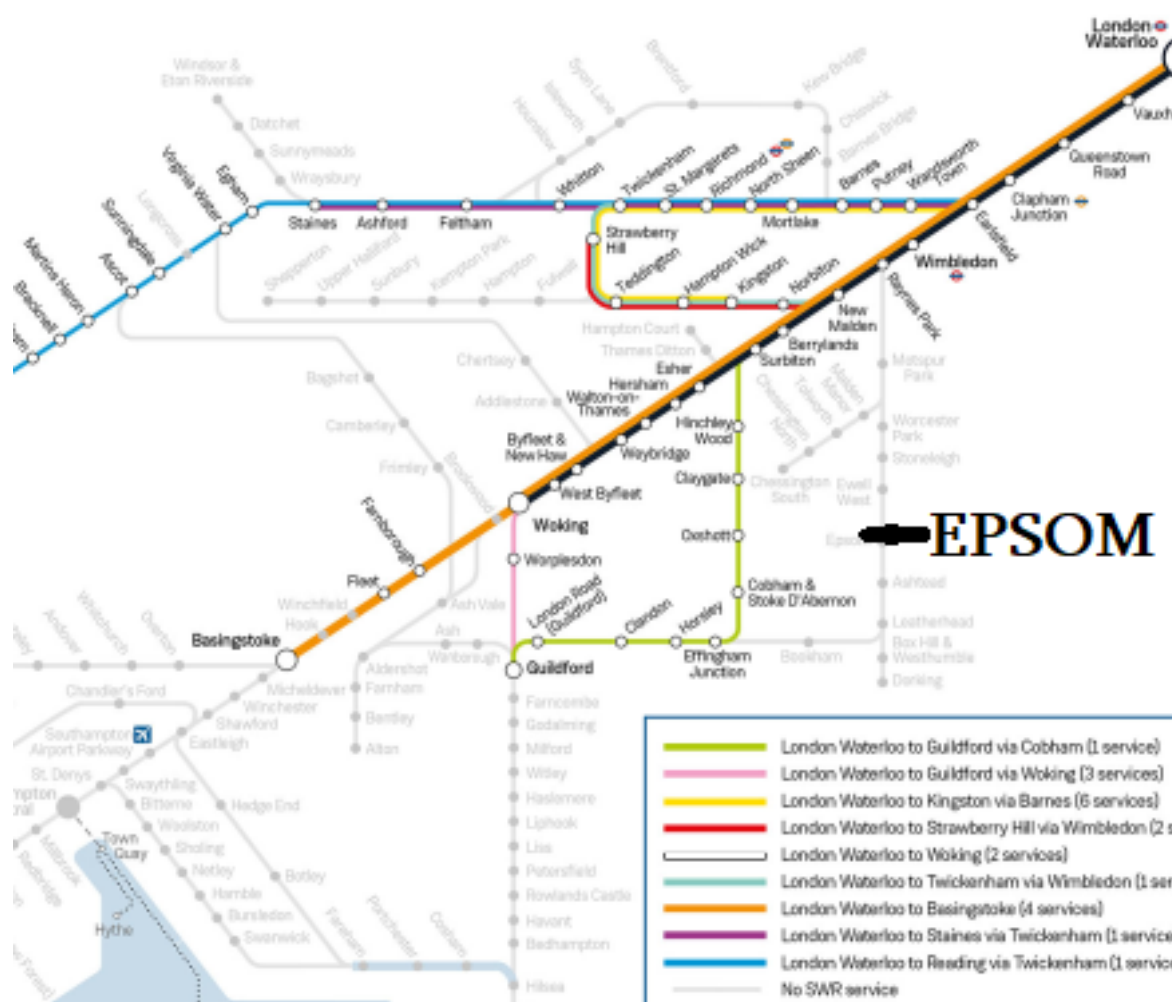


Epsom and Ewell miss out on New Year transport

24 December 2022



South Western Railways will run 21 extra services between midnight and 3.15am on New Years Day but none down our line. You could get to Oxshott. Not closer. Southern trains are no better with all services out of Victoria rescheduled to depart from London Bridge. Last train 23:45 (you'll miss the fireworks) - but you'll need to double-check that on the day.



South Western Railways late night New Year services on the coloured lines.

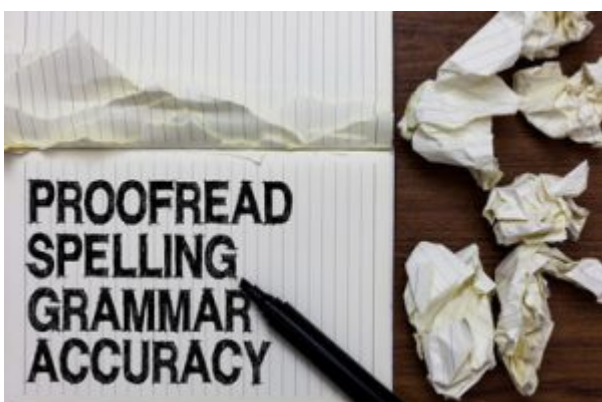
Tube services will run all night on most lines and that means you could get the Northern Line to Morden and the last 293 bus to Epsom is still scheduled to depart at 00:25. The tube journey takes 30 minutes - so you'll still miss the fireworks.

There are night-buses throughout the night that could take you to Wimbledon, Morden, Raynes Park and Kingston and the closest to Epsom and Ewell being the 93 from Putney Bridge to North Cheam. But threats of strikes may effect journeys and you must check on the day to avoid being stranded.

If you know of any other alternatives to get back to Epsom and Ewell leaving London after midnight do let us know.

Two petition river pollution correction

24 December 2022



Epsom and Ewell Times refers to our reports:

River “Bogsmill” blights Borough 30 June 2022

and

Local sewage uploaded 12 December 2022

In the second report we stated the first “Labour” sponsored petition had expired. Epsom and Ewell Times apologises to Mark Todd and the local Labour Party. The petition raised by them on change.org is still live. The link may have been temporarily broken when we checked on 12th December 2022. The link to that petition is [HERE](#). The second report provides a link to a more general petition to tackle river pollution nationwide raised by Liberal Democrats.

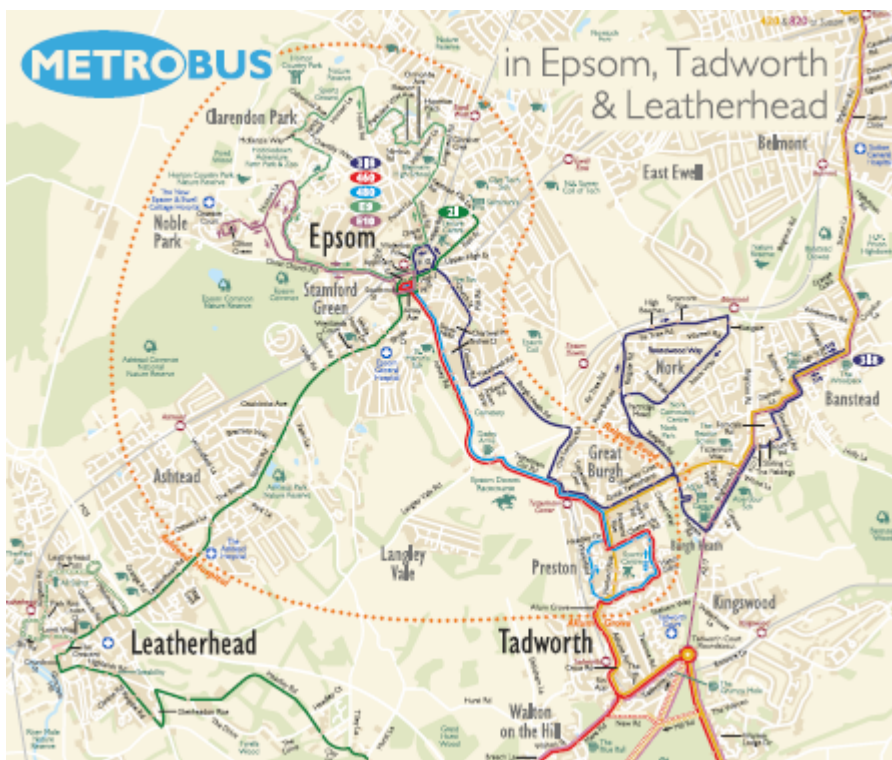
Epsom and Ewell Times will always publish justified corrections when we are in error.

Epsom bus fares being capped at £2

24 December 2022



Epsom’s main bus operator Metrobus joins nine other bus operators across the county in signing up to the Department for Transport’s £2 bus fare cap scheme announced 19 December 2022. The Epsom buses include numbers 318, 460, 480 and the E9 and 10.



From 1 January to 31 March 2023, a single bus journey will cost no more than £2 on selected routes across Surrey, helping people to save money and use their car less. With an average single local bus ticket costing £2.80, passengers are expected to save almost a third of the ticket price per journey.

Operators taking part so far are:

- Compass operating in Cranleigh, Dorking, Godalming, Guildford, Redhill and Reigate
- Stagecoach operating in Camberley, Farnham, Guildford, Haslemere, Hindhead, Woking
- Metrobus operating in Banstead, Caterham, Epsom, Horley, Leatherhead, Lingfield, Redhill and Reigate
- Falcon operating in Addlestone, Byfleet, Chertsey, Cobham, Epsom, Esher, Leatherhead, Molesey, Sheerwater, Staines, Walton, Weybridge and Woking
- Waverley Hoppa operating in Godalming and Guildford
- Thames Valley Bus operating in Camberley
- Surrey Connect (Mole Valley DDRT) operating in Leatherhead and Dorking
- East Surrey Rural Transport Partnership operating in Tandridge
- First operating in Staines and Egham
- Southdown operating in Caterham, Horley, Lingfield Oxted, Redhill and Reigate

Matthew Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth said: “We welcome this scheme which will help our residents to take the bus at a significantly reduced price, at a time when many are facing pressures

from the rising cost of living.

“The bus industry is also facing a challenging time, resulting from the drop in passenger numbers and rising costs following the COVID-19 pandemic, so we hope that this scheme will also encourage new and old passengers to get back on the bus.

“We are currently investing £50m to improve bus services and grow patronage. This will see more zero emission buses, more real time passenger information and more measures to help buses run to time. When this £2 flat fare scheme ends, we will introduce a half fare scheme for young people aged 20 and under to further encourage bus usage.

“With transport accounting for 41% of carbon emissions in Surrey, it is hoped that cheaper bus travel will also lessen the need to travel by car for some journeys.”

POSTED BY SCC · DECEMBER 20, 2022

Tunnel vision for Surrey's A3?

24 December 2022



Guildford's MP says it is time to tunnel the A3 under Guildford to help with traffic. **Angela Richardson** said “short-term sticking plasters” were not enough to help with the pollution outside the town, claiming the road is the most polluted in the strategic road network.

Speaking at Prime Minister's Questions on Wednesday (December 14) the Conservative MP said it was time to “think big”, following the green light being given to the Solent free port this month. The development could lead to more traffic on the A3, with Ms Richardson highlighting the point where it narrows through Guildford as very polluted. She said “short-term sticking plasters” like nine-metre high air pollution barriers would further entrench divisions in Guildford and were not acceptable to her or to her constituents.

The MP said: “It is time to think big, it's time to think long term. It's time to tunnel the A3 under Guildford.”

In response, the **Prime Minister** thanked the MP for her question, recognising it was an issue she had “long-championed”. He said **National Highways** were “developing a range of solutions” for the A3 through Guildford and that the Department for Transport would consider the case.

Guildford councillors have been considering a congestion charge as one way to reduce traffic and pollution in the town, which is due to see major redevelopment in the coming years.

It has been met with concerns it could impact on businesses in the town and “discriminate” against those who can't afford to upgrade their cars.

Related report:

County Town to charge congestion?

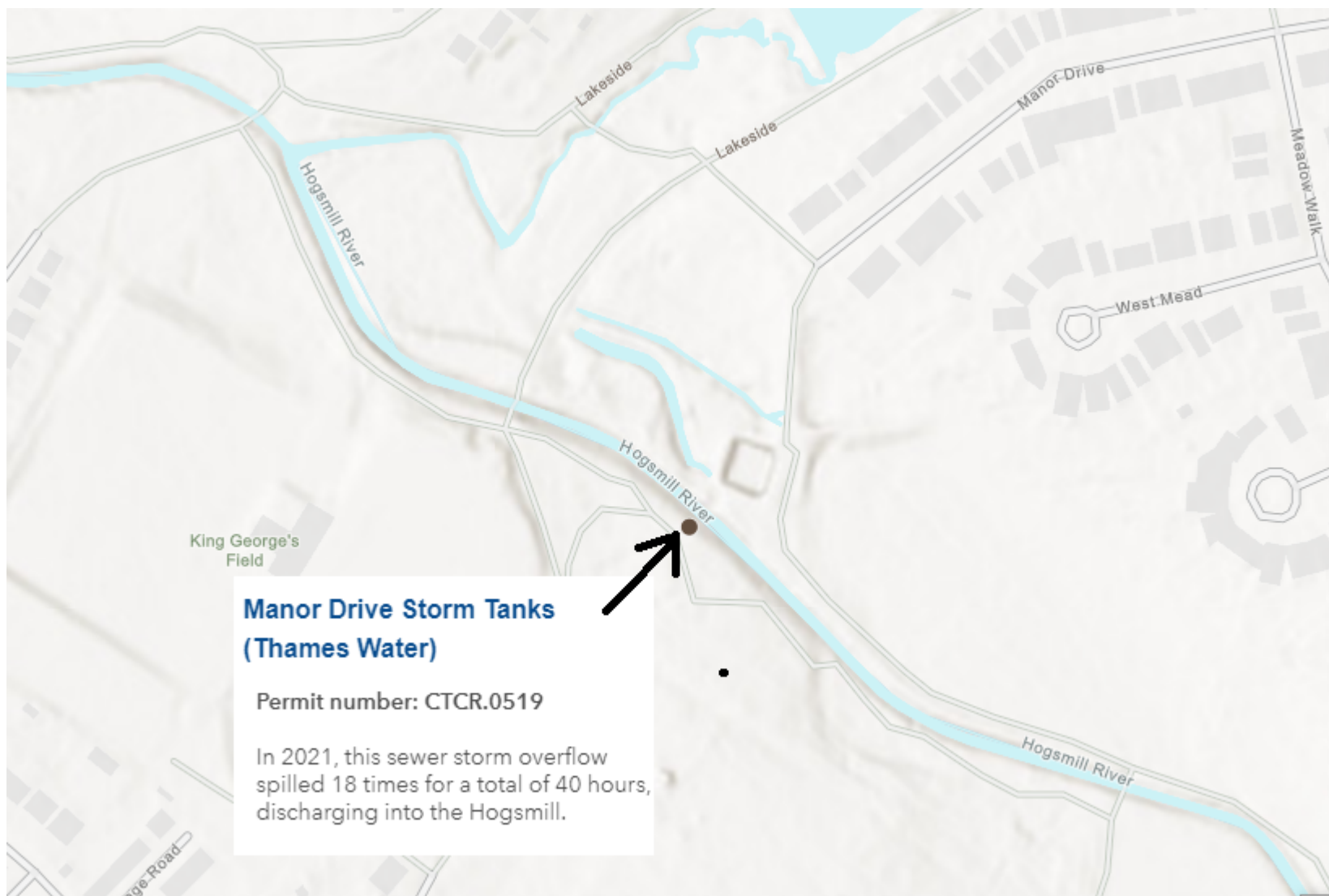
Image- south entrance A3 tunnel at Hindhead. Martinvl cc

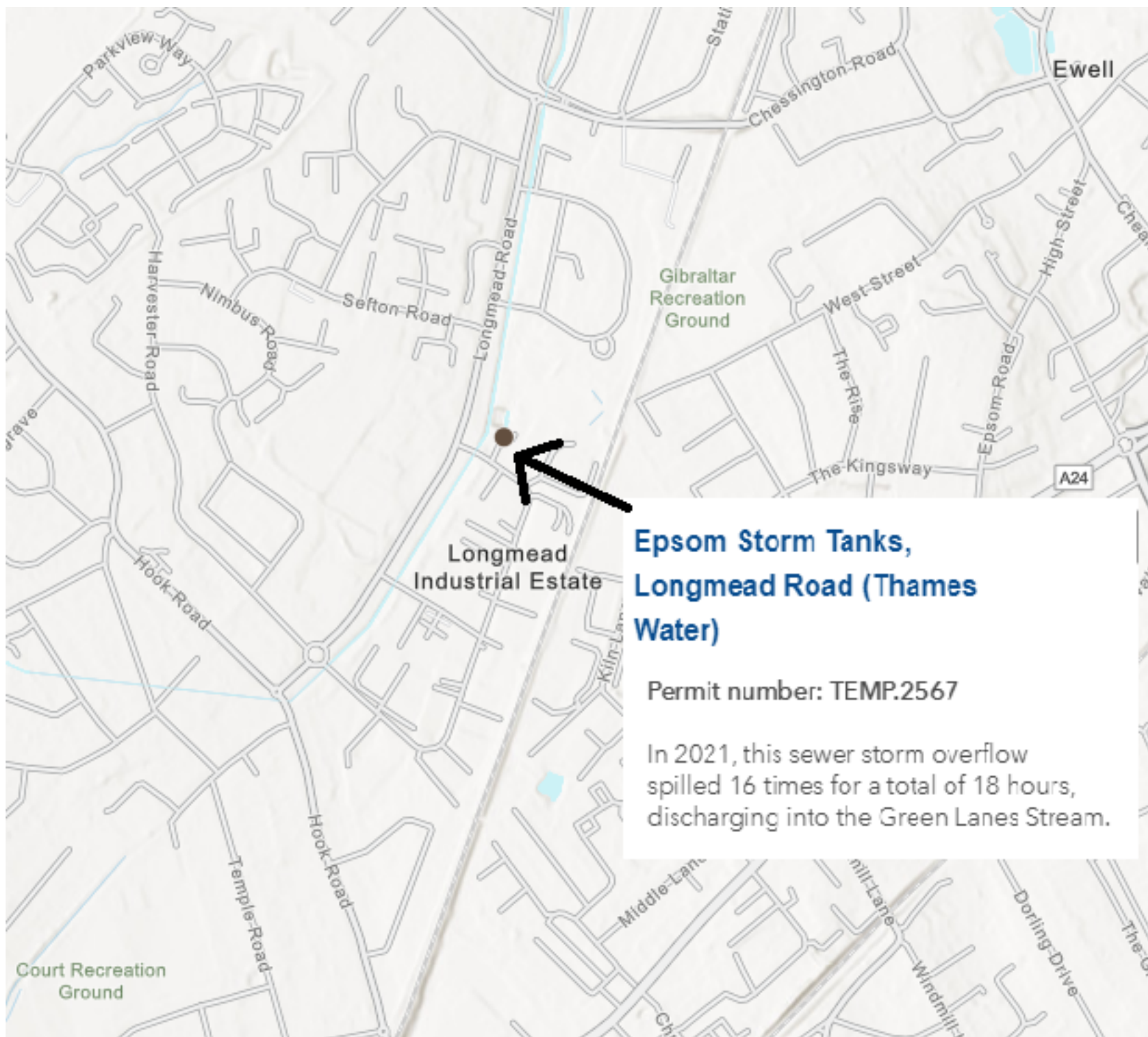
Local sewage uploaded

24 December 2022



Epsom and Ewell's **Hogsmill River** and **Green Lanes Stream** feature in the latest sewage report. The Rivers Trust undertake a review of the health of the nations rivers. Recent publication of the statistics for 2021 has prompted a petition to reduce sewage discharges. The main local water supplier is Thames Water. A company that reportedly has not issued dividends to shareholders other than holding companies for several years. The company's earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation are about 50% of its approximate £2 billion annual revenue. Yet, in July it awarded its chief executive £727,000 of a reported £3.1 million "golden hello" on top of her £2 million annual salary. The announcement came shortly after a damning report from the Environment Agency about the failure of water companies to stop sewage entering our rivers and waterways.





Images and data courtesy the Rivers Trust

Thames Water stated that the spillages from the Longmead arose due to a faulty sensor.

The Rivers Trust provide things you can do to maintain healthy rivers. [CLICK HERE](#) to its website.

The Rivers Trust is a registered charity and an umbrella organisation of 65 member trusts. The member trust for our area is The South-East River Trust

Related stories in the Epsom and Ewell Times:

River “Bogsmill” blights Borough

“Garden of Eden” coming to West Ewell as Wetlands Plan is approved. Will this stop pollution?

[Original: A local Labour Party promoted petition on the Hogsmill reported by us in June 2022 has expired. The local Liberal Democrats are promoting a new petition for general application on river pollution nationwide.]

CORRECTION 22/12/2022: Epsom and Ewell Times apologises to Mark Todd and the local Labour Party. The petition raised by them on change.org is still live. The link may have been temporarily broken when we checked on 12th December 2022. The link to that petition is [HERE](#).

Council elastic on plastic?

24 December 2022



In March 2019 Epsom and Ewell Council agreed to phase out its use of single-use plastics. How is it getting along? Judge

for yourself from the reply of Councillor **John Beckett** (Residents Association – Auriol Ward) to a progress report demanded by Councillor **Julie Morris** (Liberal Democrat – College Ward) at the Council meeting 6th December.

The Chairman of the Environment and Safe Communities Committee reported:

“Since adopting the Single use Plastics Policy as part of the Climate Change Action Plan, the Council has been working to support the reduction in the use of single use plastics within its own operations and across the Borough. We have utilised our communications channels and public events to improve awareness and to support wider behaviour change of our residents and businesses. We installed refillable water stations in 6 of our parks and opens spaces and in our Market place, to encourage use of reusable water bottles,. We have also supported all non-food stall and dry food greengrocers at Epsom Market to stop using single use plastic carrier bags, run a reusable Tote bag giveaway event, and committed to making the Market place Single use Plastic free by April 2024.

We have also reviewed the Council’s own operations to understand where we can reduce single use plastics. We have removed all plastic cups from our operational buildings, encouraging staff to use reusable bottles and cups. We replaced the depot’s old container-based water cooler with a plumbed-in version. We have also introduced segregated office recycling bins to enable improved recycling of plastics in our buildings.

We have stopped buying plastic-based refreshment supplies where possible but where it hasn’t been possible to find a viable alternative, we are unfortunately having to continue to use that option. This does not mean that we will just accept the products but will continue to look at alternative options now and in the future.

As the Climate Change Action Plan is a living document and with changes to industry constantly evolving, we will continue to review our operations for further opportunities to reduce the need for Single use Plastics. This work will also involve partnership working with Surrey County Council, through the Surrey Environment Partnership, to support the delivery of the Single-use Plastics Strategy for the whole of Surrey.

Regarding the small milk pots which are currently used at the hot drink’s machines in the members room, council chamber and committee rooms, alternative options are being looked at with the intention for these to be discussed at the January Climate Change Working Group meeting. After an initial conversation with the councils recycling officer, it is believed that the material used in the pods might be the same as yogurt pots and the solution might be as simple as removing the foil lid and having a separate container for these to be recycled at these locations.

Whilst we acknowledge it wasn’t called an audit a review has taken place of Single use Plastic use and subsequent action taken as highlighted in this reply. Since then, the issue of SuP and the 5 pledges have been incorporated into the climate change action plan and will continue to be picked up through delivery of the plan. These actions are also now robustly supported by incorporating SuP consideration into all our procurement processes. The climate change action plan has member oversight and officer resource attributed to secure its delivery and continuous review.”

Mole Patrol captures pollution

24 December 2022



River Wey and River Mole fail to meet acceptable criteria for four out of five pollutants monitored in new report.

In one of the largest national people-powered scientific studies of its kind six different pollutants – nitrate, nitrite, phosphate, total coliform, pH, heavy metals – have been monitored across 48 sites in England and Scotland. At a national level, **all sites but one (98%) failed to meet acceptable criteria for at least one of five pollutants monitored, while over half, 52%, of sites failed on three or more parameters**, according to Planet Patrol’s *What Lies Beneath Report 2022*.

Image: River Mole near Box Hill Dorking. Credit: Johan J.Ingles-Le Nobel

River Wey near Sutton Green and River Mole near Dorking were amongst the worst for water quality, both failing to meet acceptable levels of nitrate, phosphate, total coliform and pH levels. River Dart in Devon is the only site tested to pass across five parameters.

The report highlights the devastating outlook of the state of UK waterways and urgently warns the Government and polluting industries to take transformative action to reverse the destruction of our freshwater environments.

The *What Lies Beneath Report 2022* is one of the biggest datasets yet, with 57 citizen volunteers having conducted 1,229 water quality readings and 1,178 metal concentration readings.

Additional insights from the report include:

- Nearly half, 46%, of sites showed unacceptable levels of nitrates
- 69% of sites failed to meet acceptable concentration of phosphate
- Over 90% of sites tested positive for total coliform bacteria
- **Over a quarter, 26%, of sites failed to meet recommended PH range due to high levels of acidity.**

The causes of these pollutants are many and go beyond sewage contamination. From growing urban development to farming practices, increased diversity of chemicals and pharmaceuticals used by society, and pollution pressure from transport, addressing the UK's invisible water quality crisis needs a whole systems approach.

The launch of this report follows the latest data from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), which shows that no progress has been made on a key water pollution pledge made four years ago to ensure that 75% of rivers and other bodies of water achieve a "good" ecological status by 2027. The figure remained at 16% in 2021, unchanged since 2017. In response to the Environment Agency's plans to 'amend' this target, Planet Patrol has launched a petition calling on the Rt Hon Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Thérèse Coffey, to reject plans to weaken the legislation.

Lizzie Carr MBE, founder of Planet Patrol, says: "Through our growing community of citizen scientists we've started to uncover what lies beneath to highlight a stark reality: the widespread, poor condition of our freshwater environments. The results have been disturbing and distressing but only by building evidence to illustrate the true scale and extent of a problem, can it be accurately understood, communicated and acted upon.

"We urge the Government to honour its pledge to ensure that 75% of rivers and other bodies of water achieve a good ecological status by 2027. This target is both a major driver of public and private investment into cleaning up our waterways and a vital tool to hold industries with permits to pollute - which include much more than just water companies - to account over water pollution."

As well as rejecting plans to amend this pledge, Planet Patrol, the environmental non-profit, is highlighting four other key policy recommendations:

- DEFRA to bring forward the enforcement date for the increase in Variable Monetary Penalties for polluting water companies to 1st February 2023
- DEFRA to strengthen the effectiveness of the Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan (SODRP) - specifically, reduce the maximum achievement date on all SODRP targets to 2035 versus 2050, and prohibit water companies from increasing water bills to fund the critical infrastructure investment required
- The Environmental Agency to accelerate the speed at which citizen science is integrated into formal data collection activities for developing evidenced-based policies
- Use funds raised from the increase in Variable Monetary Penalties for polluting water companies to increase the criminal prosecution rates of those who damage water quality.

Dr Thomas Stanton, a freshwater scientist from Loughborough University who analysed the data, says: "UK waterways are vulnerable to a number of societal pressures, including pollution, water abstraction, and modifications to river courses. But they are also compromised by weak policy and legislation. Despite its political greenwashing, the environment continues to be an issue that the UK government does not take seriously. Nature is in crisis, but current efforts to fully understand the extent of this are shackled by politicians whose short-sighted priorities lie elsewhere, and who fail to recognise the significance of environmental action today for the lives of those who will outlive their political tenure."

Read the full report here: <https://planetpatrol.co/water-quality-report/>

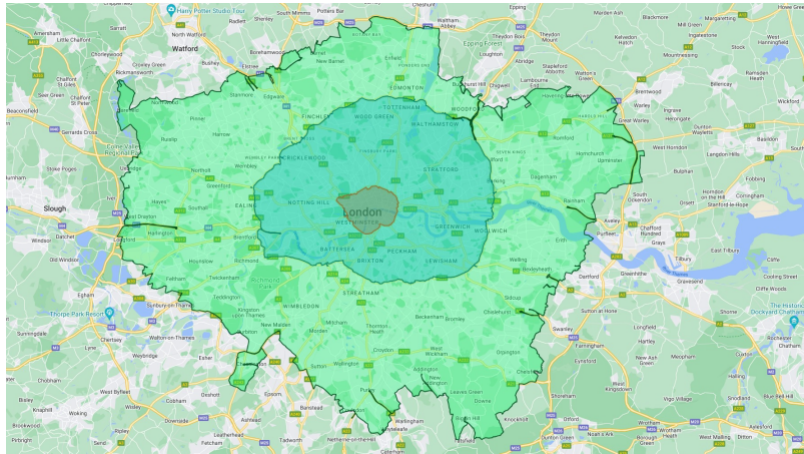
Will Epsom think on the same lines?

24 December 2022



Trams into Surrey have been raised as one "very possible solution" to improving public transport with the expansion of the capital's **Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ)**. The zone's expansion was confirmed on Friday (November 25), and Elmbridge councillors had discussed the matter with a Transport for London (TfL) representative the previous evening at an overview and scrutiny meeting.

Councillors raised issues around public transport in the borough, saying it was not as good as that in greater London, and asking what could be done to improve it so people were less reliant on their cars. The ULEZ will be expanded from August 2023 to cover the area currently in the Low Emission Zone boundary. It will mean the zone, where drivers in non-compliant cars pay £12.50 per day if they enter it, will come up to the border with Surrey.



Speaking before the decision had been announced, Elmbridge Councillor **Graham Woolgar** (The Walton Society, Walton Central) said the question of better public transport in Elmbridge was “one of money”. He said it was unlikely the county council would find more money to improve buses in Elmbridge, and TfL would not help either because the area is outside London.

He asked **Iain Killingbeck**, community partnerships lead - west, for TfL: “There wouldn’t be any prospect of public transport being improved, would you agree with that?” Mr Killingbeck said he did not accept that, though TfL’s responsibility was for transport in the capital. He said getting people out of their cars, especially on shorter journeys, and promoting walking and cycling was what TfL encouraged. He added: “That’s what we do at TfL, that’s what we’re all about. So we can help to collaborate, partner and work with you, but we don’t have the responsibility for the county or for this area.”

According to the Mayor’s office, the existing ULEZ has reduced roadside pollution levels by 44 per cent in central London and 20 per cent in inner London.

Speaking after the meeting, the county council’s leader, **Cllr Tim Oliver** (Conservative, Weybridge) pointed to the authority’s £50million investment in electric buses and the same amount in hydrogen buses in the county. There is also an on-demand electric bus service operating in some parts of Surrey including Tandridge and Mole Valley, and due to be rolled out to other areas.

Cllr Oliver told the LDRS: “We will invest whatever we possibly can. I’m a big believer that we are never going to get people out of their cars if there isn’t a good alternative public transport system.” He said the county council had “put the message across” to the London Mayor about the impact the expansion would have on Surrey residents, including in areas such as East Molesey where drivers will be charged if they cross Hampton Court Bridge towards Bushy Park.

The county council, as well as borough and district councils, responded to a consultation that ran over the summer on the plans, highlighting issues such as scrappage schemes, health appointments and requesting to delay the expansion. Cllr Oliver said: “We’ve done everything we possibly can to say: ‘You can’t do this, it’s not fair on our residents.’”

In Thursday’s Elmbridge meeting, Long Ditton Councillor **Jez Langham** (Liberal Democrat) explained his ward bordered London and agreed public transport needed to be better for residents. He pointed to the success of **trams** in cities such as Sheffield and Manchester, as well as in Wimbledon, though he mentioned the Croydon tram crash of 2016 in which seven people died. Cllr Langham said: “Nonetheless it is a successful line, and given the lack of tubes around, it would seem to be a very possible solution.”

Mr Killingbeck said trams were “relatively affordable” but that there wouldn’t be the option of getting a tram line in place before the August 2023 expansion. He added: “I accept, we need to strengthen public transport.”

Cllr Oliver said trams could work in more urban areas of Surrey such as Guildford or Woking, but believed the on-demand buses were better for many of the more rural parts of the county. He added: “[Trams would be] a major infrastructural investment and if the government were to put some funding behind that, then I’m quite sure we would look at it.”

The Mayor of London, **Sadiq Khan**, said: “Expanding the ULEZ London-wide has not been an easy decision. The easy thing for me would have been to kick the can down the road. But in the end, public health comes before political expediency. We have too often seen measures delayed around the world to tackle air pollution and the climate crisis because it’s viewed as being too hard or politically inconvenient. But there’s no time to waste when people’s lives are on the line and we are facing a climate crisis.”

Defence of Surrey M25 policing

24 December 2022



M25 protesters acting as “dead weights” means they take longer to be arrested, according to **Surrey’s Police and Crime Commissioner. Just Stop Oil** activists brought parts of the M25 to a standstill this month as part of their ongoing campaign calling on the government to take more action on the use of fossil fuels.

Surrey’s Police and Crime Commissioner, elected to hold the county’s police force to account, said she had attended the protests on a day when five were arrested. She added she is “enormously proud” of Surrey Police’s response. Responding to a question from Tandridge District Councillor **Mick Gillman** at a meeting of the police and crime panel on Monday (November 21), **Lisa Townsend** said she disagreed with the view that Surrey Police were not doing enough.

The meeting, at which councillors from each of the county’s authorities can put questions to the PCC, heard she had also received “an awful lot” of criticism from people about police not negotiating with protesters, and not listening to their demands. She said: “It doesn’t matter what reason somebody is breaking the law for. If they’re breaking the law, the police will get involved regardless of what their greater or not aims. I am enormously proud of the action that Surrey Police took over these protests and I will continue to praise them for it.”

Cllr Gillman’s (OLRG Alliance, Burstow, Horne & Outwood) question said he had found it impossible to explain to residents when asked why more action was not being taken by Surrey Police with the protesters. He said: “Residents expect the police to apply the law without fear or favour and there is strong feeling that lack of decisive action by police when the protests started have only encouraged more protests as those involved feel they can get away with this. Can I have an assurance that you will be using all your influence with the police to insist they now apply a zero-tolerance approach to any protesters who block or disrupt the highway?”

He followed up in the meeting that one resident had said to him it should just take minutes to arrest someone, and not “hours of them sitting in the road” as had happened on previous demonstrations by the group. Mrs Townsend said: “The idea that police haven’t acted swiftly I’m afraid is just rubbish and I absolutely won’t accept that criticism at all.”

On a day when protesters were climbing the gantries above the M25, Mrs Townsend said she had seen four of the arrests that took place, and that once the arrest was made, the police then had to ensure it was “absolutely safe” before they went up to get protesters down. She added: “It’s not simply a case of saying ‘you’re arrested’ then they come down quietly. In two of the cases I saw, the protesters followed a well known tactic of playing dead, basically becoming a dead weight and insisting that officers go and physically remove them. That can’t happen in two minutes, although the arrest has been made. The person then needs to be lawfully and carefully removed so that everybody’s safety is protected, not least the Surrey Police officers who are up there.”

Ewell Village to get an uplift?

24 December 2022



High Street improvements to come in **Ewell** to revitalise the town and create spaces that are safer and more attractive? **Surrey County Council**’s Ewell project team has worked closely with a group of residents who originally campaigned for change in the village. **Surrey County Council**’s Cabinet is due to discuss £30 million of funding to deliver seven capital projects identified in the **Surrey Infrastructure Plan**.

The proposals for Ewell state:

Ewell Village currently suffers from significant levels of traffic passing through the village, with an imbalance between traffic and pedestrians, both in terms of space consumed and dominance exerted. Pedestrian movement in the village is notable, particularly that of children travelling to/from school, but resident feelings about road safety are poor given the high volumes of traffic.

This project will deliver improvements to the High Street that will support revitalisation of the village through restricting vehicular access to some degree along the High Street, bringing about more pedestrian-friendly spaces that are safer and

more attractive. It will bring improvements to local environmental sustainability via new street greening in addition to reducing vehicle emissions, will enhance the economic resilience of existing and new retail outlets through the creation of more attractive spaces that encourage longer dwell times, and will enrich social cohesion by bringing about more opportunities for people to connect with one another.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) is committed to continued engagement with SCC to develop plans for the village and welcomes further collaboration with the community and community representatives to help shape the scheme.

The total scheme cost is approximately £2.5 million. SCC will be seeking a contribution of 50% from third party funding. Funding from EEBC will be determined once a preferred option is agreed.

Other proposals for the County include:

Projects include town centre and highway improvements, active and sustainable travel schemes, and flood alleviation schemes.

£8.64million of the funding would come from Surrey County Council, with the rest coming from external funding sources. These projects include the implementation of active and sustainable travel schemes to provide Surrey residents with greener options of travel, whilst improving air quality and creating healthier places to live. There are also town centre regeneration schemes to support economic growth and provide the necessary infrastructure for growing communities. These infrastructure projects are critical for the council to deliver its ambitions for the county now and into the future.

The seven capital projects are:

Town centre schemes

- High Street improvements in both Ewell and Horley to revitalise the town and create spaces that are safer and more attractive. The Ewell project team has worked closely with a group of residents who originally campaigned for change in the village and in Horley, investment is being made following the impact of Covid on how the town is used by residents.
- Town centre regeneration in Caterham through flood mitigation works, improved connectivity and improvement to public spaces in Caterham Valley and Caterham on the Hill.

Active and sustainable travel schemes

- Electric bikes (E-bikes) in Guildford – implementation of a town-wide bike share scheme to offer an alternative to car trips within the borough.
- Woking sustainable transport improvements – improvements for walking, cycling and bus infrastructure in the east of Woking, improving connections between Woking town centre, Sheerwater and West Byfleet. For this scheme Surrey County Council have submitted a bid for £12million to the Department of Housing and Levelling up as part of round two of Levelling Up funding.

Highway improvement schemes

- A320 North of Woking improvements – Plans to make all junctions and roads on the busy stretch between Chertsey and Ottershaw work well together to improve traffic flow. Improvements for walkers and cyclists, including new crossing points and wider foot and cycle paths and improved access to public transport.

Flood alleviation schemes

- Flooding Alleviation Programme 2023/24 – A mix of schemes and interventions focusing on flood resilience measures, flood risk reduction and protection against flooding.

Cabinet will also be reviewing the allocation of £2million funding to support the expansion of the on-street electric vehicle chargepoint roll-out. The funding required would support the installation of a comprehensive network of publicly accessible chargepoints right across the county. This is essential to support residents who don't have off-street parking to transition to electric vehicles. Surrey's Local Transport Plan has identified as one of its top priorities the reduction of emissions and increase in energy efficient vehicles, specifically to promote zero emission and smaller vehicles. Cabinet will also be discussing the appointment of a new supplier to deliver a wider roll-out of chargepoints across the county to meet the increased demand.

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Economy, said: "Investment in infrastructure is essential for sustainable economic growth and to cater for the needs of Surrey's businesses and communities.

"The projects being presented to Cabinet take into consideration changing infrastructure requirements for our communities. Following the Covid pandemic, the way people live and work has changed. These projects consider new travel patterns and behaviours, whilst focusing on improving local places."

Surrey County Council News and with additional reporting on Ewell by Epsom and Ewell Times

July find of rare May fly in Surrey

24 December 2022



The River Thames Scheme (RTS) has discovered a nationally rare mayfly (***Caenis beskidensis***), which hadn't been spotted in the UK for 49 years and has never been seen in the River Thames.

The invertebrate, which was last seen in Herefordshire in 1973, was discovered near Walton Bridge as part of the project's routine survey work. Historically, they have been found in small and medium-sized streams, but have not been seen since 1973, when last spotted in Herefordshire.

This is an incredibly exciting find for the scheme and demonstrates just how important the survey work that the scheme's ecologists do is. By establishing the value of the existing habitats living around the Thames the scheme will be able to put plans in place to protect them during the work and help them thrive for the future.

Speaking on the discovery RTS ecologist Jenny Stephenson said: "It is such an exciting discovery to identify something that hasn't been seen in British water since the 1970's. Now that we have discovered the *Caenis beskidensis* in the River Thames we will be able to monitor it and ensure the colony continues to thrive.

"The discovery of the mayfly, which was found in its nymph stage and part of its aquatic life cycle, represents a major expansion in both the distribution and habitat type the species has historically inhabited. We are confident that with the new habitats that the scheme will create we will encourage these may flies to breed further in the future."



Image of a generic mayfly in its adult form. Please note this is not *Caenis beskidensis* as due to its rarity no image is available.

Mayflies form an important part of the river eco-system and are an important food source for fish and, once transformed into its adult form, insectivorous birds. Although the may flies have historically been found in small and medium sized streams they are also found in the upper areas of lowland rivers where they live in slow flowing shallow water. The RTS will create more of these river habitats so the team are hopeful new colonies will thrive.

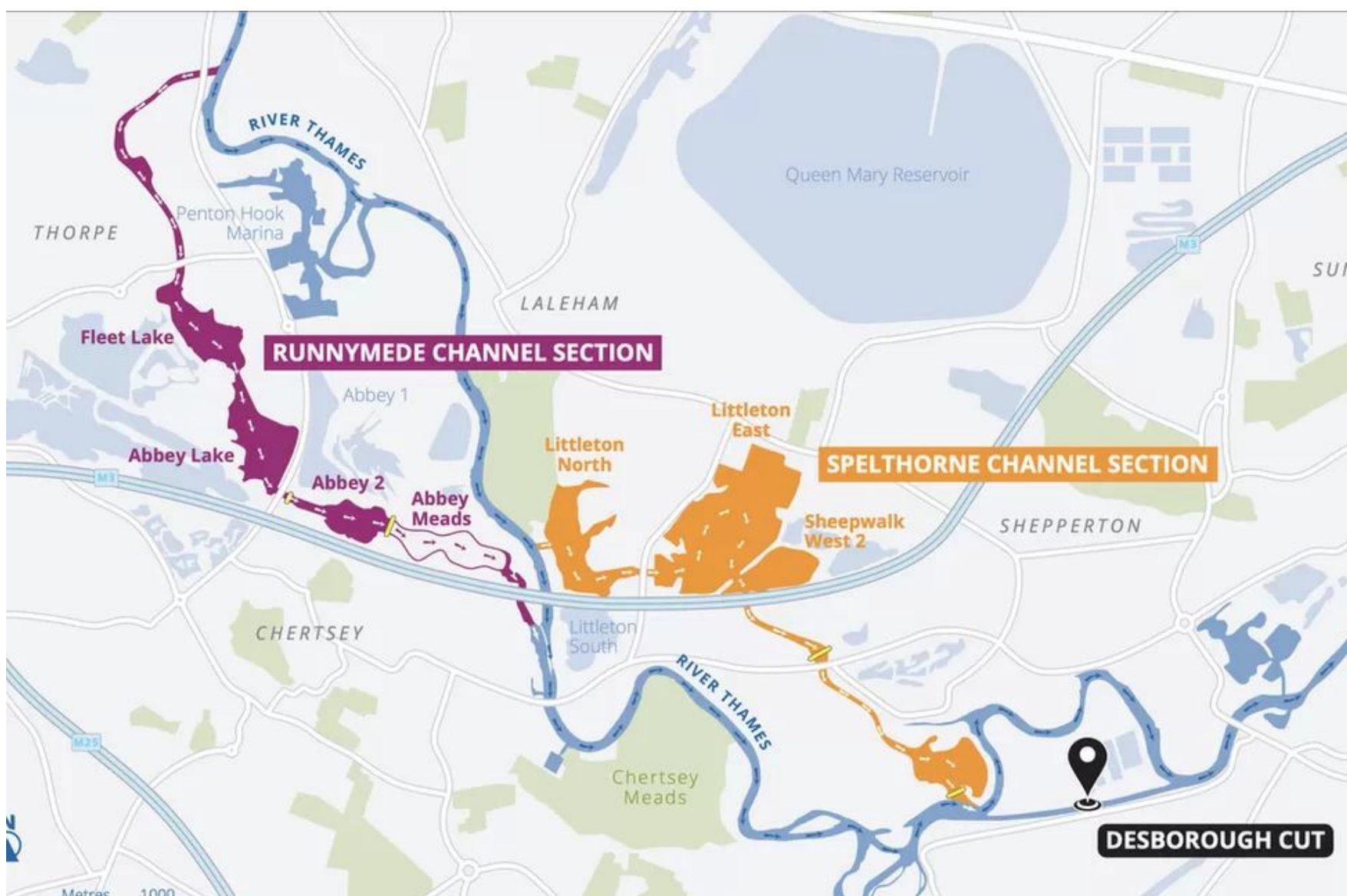
As part of its work to understand the existing environment the RTS carries out hundreds of ecological and environmental surveys every year. A range of species have been targeted in these surveys, including bats (and their roosts), water voles, breeding birds, great crested newts, fish, invertebrates and species of reptiles.

Hannah Packwood, RTS environmental surveys project manager said: "It's so important that we understand the existing environment so we can continue to protect and where possible enhance it through the RTS. Finding rare and unexpected

species is exciting, and we will continue to monitor the environment in our survey work throughout construction and the operation of the scheme”.

A team of ecologists undertake the surveys by observing, measuring, taking notes and photographs, as well as soil and water samples. These surveys don’t cause any significant disturbance to the environment or to land or property.

The RTS is currently holding a six-week public consultation for people to have their say on plans which includes a new flood channel whilst also providing habitat for wildlife and a new feature in the landscape for recreation. The consultation will run until **Tuesday 20 December 2022**. Full details of the consultation events, how to get involved, and to discover all venues that have brochures available to pick up please visit the website at www.riverthamesscheme.org.uk or call the Environment Agency National Customer Contact Centre on: 03708 506 506.



- The River Thames Scheme is being delivered in partnership between the Environment Agency and Surrey County Council.
- The scheme’s wider partners are Elmbridge Borough Council, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, Runnymede Borough Council, Spelthorne Borough Council, Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, Thames Water, Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership, Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership.
- The River Thames Scheme is an integrated scheme which responds to the challenges of flooding, creating more access to green open spaces and sustainable travel, in addition to encouraging inclusive economic growth, increasing biodiversity and responding to the dual challenges of climate change and nature recovery.
- The project aims to deliver many benefits for local communities and businesses. The new flood channel will reduce the risk of flooding to homes, businesses, and infrastructure, while also providing habitat for wildlife and a new feature in the landscape for recreation.
- **The River Thames Scheme will include:**
 - a new river channel built in two sections – one section through Runnymede (between Egham Hythe and Chertsey) and one through Spelthorne (between Littleton North lake and the Desborough Cut)
 - capacity increases around the Desborough Cut and at the weirs at Sunbury, Molesey and Teddington
 - improved access to quality green open space and connections with wildlife, in addition to supporting a more sustainable travel network
 - a network of high-quality habitat to achieve a biodiversity net gain
- The River Thames Scheme will reduce flood risk to people living and working near the Thames, enhance the resilience of nationally important infrastructure, contribute to a vibrant local economy and maximise the social and environmental value of the river.
- There have been serious floods in this area over the past 100 years, namely in 1947, 1968, 2003 and most recently between 2013/2014.
- The new flood channel will reduce flood risk to over 11,000 properties and 1,600 businesses in Hythe End, Egham, Staines, Chertsey, Shepperton, Weybridge, Sunbury, Molesey, Thames Ditton, Kingston and Teddington.
- There will be increased capacity of the Desborough Cut and weirs at Sunbury, Molesey and Teddington by

installing additional weir gates.

- Detailed planning and design are under way. The large scale of the project means the government has directed that it be treated as a project of national Significance. This requires a type of consent known as a ‘development consent order’ (DCO). A DCO removes the need to obtain several separate consents, including planning permission and is designed to be a quicker process than applying for these separately.

Surrey County Council News

Emissions a taxing issue for Council

24 December 2022



Thursday 27th October’s meeting of **Epsom and Ewell’s Licensing Committee** was taxed by emission standards for the Town’s black cabs. Over the summer the Council had circulated a draft hackney carriage and private hire vehicle and driver policy for consultation. One local response was “Black diesel cabs have the highest emissions of any vehicle and they regularly travel up and down my road polluting the air. The most common black cab models in London are polluting the streets with nitrogen oxide (NOX) emissions up to 30 times the level of personal petrol cars of the same age.”

In London since 1 January 2018, taxis presented for licensing for the first time have needed to be Zero Emission Capable. This means having CO2 emissions of no more than 50g/km and a minimum 30 mile zero emission range. First-time taxi vehicle licences are no longer granted to diesel taxis. ZEC taxis with petrol engines need to meet the latest emissions standard (currently Euro 6). Transport for London offers £7500 payments to support taxi-drivers making these changes.

Cllr **Julie Morris** (LibDem College Ward) asked why the proposed new taxi policy could not require all new applications for hackney and private hire vehicle licences to be ULEZ compliant (ultra-low emission zone). Despite issues of emissions being raised during the consultation the draft policy had not specifically proposed such a requirement. The Council officer stated that 12 months would be required to undergo a legally necessary consultation. Ms Morris went on to claim that the Council was lacking in leadership over the climate emergency.

The draft policy requires new vehicle licence applications to comply with Euro 5 (the standard from 2011) rather than the London standard of Euro 6 (applicable to new vehicles from 2015). The officer explained that implementing London’s higher standards would risk reducing the provision of black cabs in Epsom as the income of local black cab drivers was lower than their London counterparts.

The committee’s chair Steven McCormick (RA Woodcote) indicated that he would work with officers and endeavour to achieve the required consultation and bring back a revision on emissions standards within 6 months. The committee approved the new policy to go for decision by the Full Council in due course.

The Local Government Association advises that consultations should last between 6 to 8 weeks and possibly shorter in urgent situations.

Click [HERE](#) for the full report to the committee – pages 11-138 re taxis.