EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

12th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

Up to £1 where sold

ISSN 2753-2771

Council response to Epsom and Ewell Green Belt concerns

10 March 2026







In response to the report in the Epsom and Ewell Times, Fresh Local Plan row as councillor questions Green Belt revisions and governance at Epsom and Ewell, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council has responded as follows:

“The Council submitted the Local Plan on the 10th March 2025 for independent Examination.

The Examination process is led by the Planning Inspector who is tasked with examining the Local Plan on behalf of the Secretary of State to determine whether the local plan is sound and legally compliant.

During the Local Plan Examination Hearings, the Inspector requested that the council undertake two discrete pieces of work that required revisiting and updating specific sections of two documents that form part of the Submission Library.

One of these pieces of work was updating Section 4 of the Green Belt Topic Paper in accordance with a revised methodology agreed with the Inspector during the examination hearings. This work was completed and submitted to the Inspector by the agreed deadline under delegated authority.

The Council’s letter to the Inspector dated 11th February 2026 makes it clear that the updated Section of the Green Belt Topic Paper does not consider other constraints to development or conclude whether the sites are suitable for allocation. However, we state that if this information is required to progress the Examination, then the Council can undertake this work.

The Inspector’s letter dated 12th February 2026 confirms that the above work is necessary for the examination to proceed, and has asked the Council to undertake this work along with updates to specific pieces of evidence, notably:

- Housing Trajectory / 5 Year Supply
- The Sustainability Appraisal
- The Habitats Regulations Assessment
- The Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- The Transport Assessment

The Council is now undertaking this work.

The Local Plan Programme Officer confirmed on the 3 March 2026 that the evidence detailed above in addition to the two pieces of additional work submitted in January 2026, will be subject to public consultation.

There are no timescales for the public consultation at present and it is anticipated that the Inspector will require an additional Examination Hearing(s) to be held following this public consultation.

It is the Local Plan inspector who makes the final decision on the main modifications to be made to the Local Plan. Prior to the Inspector issuing her binding report, there will be a six week statutory public consultation on the main modifications which the inspector considers necessary to make the Regulation 19 version of the plan sound.

Once that process ends, if the Inspector is happy to confirm that the Plan is indeed ‘sound’ subject to main modifications, all Members will be invited to offer a view and make a decision at Full Council, where they will then be asked to vote on whether to approve the modified Local Plan or not.”

The Council’s explanation makes clear that revisions to the Green Belt Topic Paper were carried out following requests from the Planning Inspector and submitted under delegated authority as part of the examination process. It also emphasises that the updated section does not itself determine whether sites should ultimately be allocated for development.

However, the statement does not directly address the central issue raised by Horton ward Conservative Councillor Kieran Persand — namely whether revised evidence, including document COUD_021 and related material, was submitted without prior scrutiny by the Local Plan Policy Committee or Full Council. The Council’s response focuses on the examination process and future public consultation, but does not explicitly confirm whether councillors were given an opportunity to

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY

ISSN 2753-2771

review the revised evidence before it was sent to the Inspector.

As the Local Plan examination moves forward — with further evidence updates, public consultation and potentially additional hearings expected — the question of how and when elected members are involved in reviewing changes to the evidence base may remain a point of political debate within the borough.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Related reports:

Fresh Local Plan row as councillor questions Green Belt revisions and governance at Epsom and Ewell

Stage 2 Examination of Epsom & Ewell’s Local Plan opens Tuesday

Epsom & Ewell’s Local Plan under the Green microscope

Epsom and Ewell Local Plan Submitted for Examination

and many more. Search “local plan”.

© 2021-2026. No content may be copied without the permission of Epsom and Ewell Times Ltd. Registered office: Upper Chambers, 7 Waterloo Road, Epsom KT19 8AY