

Epsom & Ewell's Council responds to Local Plan concerns

31 January 2026



Epsom and Ewell Borough Council has responded to questions raised about the handling of its Local Plan examination, following criticism from a local resident that key issues were not discussed at the January meeting of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee (LPPC).

The concerns, raised by Alex Duval and subsequently put to the council by Epsom & Ewell Times, centred on the absence of any Local Plan item on the LPPC agenda, whether revised evidence requested by the Planning Inspector had been submitted on time, and how the plan is being managed during the transition to a new unitary authority.

No committee decision required, says council

Responding to the first point, a council spokesperson said that although the Planning Inspector had requested additional work on two areas of the Local Plan evidence base following the public hearings in autumn 2025, no LPPC agenda item was required on 22 January because no formal decision was needed.

"The Local Plan Inspector requested that the planning authority undertake two pieces of work, as set out in her post-hearing letter dated 22 October 2025," the spokesperson said.

"There was no item on the agenda for the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee on 22 January 2026 as there was no decision to be made in relation to the submission of this evidence base."

Critics had argued that, given the significance of the work and the proximity to the council's own stated submission deadline, the committee should at least have been asked to note or review the position.

Evidence submitted by deadline

On the question of whether revised Green Belt and Land Availability Assessment material had been submitted by the deadline of 22 January 2026, the council confirmed that it had.

"Yes, the work was submitted by the agreed deadline," the spokesperson said.

"The Planning Inspector will review the information in due course and advise how the examination will proceed."

At the time the concern was raised, the updated material was not visible on the examination website, prompting uncertainty among observers about whether the deadline had been met.

Examination remains Inspector-led

Addressing wider concerns about how the Local Plan will be managed as Epsom and Ewell moves towards abolition under local government reorganisation, the council said the examination process remains unaffected.

"Following the submission of the Local Plan in March 2025, approved by Full Council on 10 December 2024, the Local Plan entered its Examination stage, which is led by the appointed Planning Inspector," the spokesperson said.

"This will continue to be the case until the Examination stage concludes."

The council's response does not address whether any further member oversight or discussion of the Local Plan will take place before the examination ends, but confirms that responsibility for the process now rests with the Inspector rather than the council's policy committees.

Sam Jones - Reporter



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