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

19th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES

Up to £1 where sold

ISSN 2753-2771

Fresh Local Plan row as residents challenge legality of latest Epsom and Ewell consultation

2 June 2026







A fresh dispute has erupted over Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's embattled Local Plan process after residents challenged the constitutional validity of the council's latest planning consultation.

The row follows an email issued by the council's Planning Policy Team reminding residents that consultation remains open until 15 June on "Additional Documents Submitted by the Council during the Local Plan Examination", ahead of a further examination hearing scheduled for 2 July at Epsom Town Hall.

The consultation concerns documents submitted during the government inspector's examination of the borough's long-running Local Plan — a process that has already generated years of political controversy, debate over Green Belt development, and repeated questions about governance and committee oversight.

In one of a number of near-identical emails reportedly circulated by concerned residents to councillors and senior officers, resident Philip Brown argued that the current consultation "appears to have been launched in breach of the council's constitution" and therefore could not be regarded as valid.

Mr Brown's complaint centres on the role of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee (LPPC), the council committee whose constitutional terms of reference include responsibility to "consider and approve" Local Plan documents for public consultation. According to the resident correspondence, there is no evidence in the published minutes of LPPC meetings in late 2025 and early 2026 that the seven consultation documents had been reviewed and approved by the committee before the consultation was launched.

The email goes further, alleging that at the LPPC meeting of 10 March 2026, "the Chair explicitly declined a request to allow the committee to review the Local Plan documents".

On that basis, the resident contends that "the current consultation appears not to be constitutionally compliant and is therefore invalid", adding that it would be "both inappropriate and pointless for consultees to comment on an invalid consultation". The email asks the council to arrange for the documents to be considered by LPPC and then to issue what it terms a "constitutionally-compliant consultation".

The issue touches on themes previously explored by the *Epsom and Ewell Times* during coverage of the borough's Local Plan disputes.

The Local Plan has divided opinion sharply over housing targets, Green Belt release, infrastructure pressures and the extent of member oversight of the process. Recent EET reporting on the LPPC proceedings highlighted tensions over whether councillors were being afforded sufficient opportunity to scrutinise crucial planning material and the degree to which committee oversight was shaping the evolving plan.

The controversy arrives against a backdrop of political transition. Following local government reorganisation, powers will ultimately pass to the new East Surrey Council in 2027, although Epsom & Ewell Borough Council remains the planning authority for the present Local Plan process.

Among those responding to the resident correspondence was David Buxton OBE, Liberal Democrat Shadow Councillor for Epsom West and Shadow Cabinet Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health on East Surrey Council.

Cllr Buxton stated that he was not involved in the current EEBC Local Plan process and therefore could not determine whether the consultation complies with the borough council's constitutional requirements, saying those matters are for "the Borough Council, its officers and, where necessary, independent legal advice".

However, he described the issues raised as "important matters" and said he would encourage relevant officers "to provide clarification so that residents can have confidence in the process and in any representations submitted".

Cllr Buxton also cautioned elected members involved in future Local Plan deliberations against prejudging specific proposals, saying councillors should remain able to consider evidence, hear residents' views and participate fully in future decision-making processes.

Restating the Liberal Democrats' previously expressed planning position, he said development should prioritise brownfield sites first, "underused land second", and only consider Green Belt land "as a last resort", adding: "no GP provision, no infrastructure, no development."

The latest consultation was initiated following a request by the government-appointed planning inspector in a letter dated 23 April 2026, according to the residents' correspondence.

© 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

EEBC has advised that interested members of the public may attend the further examination hearing on 2 July as observers. Those wishing actively to participate must indicate this in their consultation response and notify the Programme Officer before the consultation closes.

Sam Jones – Reporter



Related reports:

Epsom and Ewell Local Plan next phase

Did Epsom and Ewell councillors approve more Green Belt release?

Persand parses the Local Plan process in Epsom

Next phase in the journey of the Epsom and Ewell Local Plan announced

Epsom and Ewell Local Plan tensions surface as committee debate curtailed by chair

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

Epsom & Ewell's Council responds to Local Plan concerns

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