

Mole Valley Plan Paused

28 June 2023



As Epsom and Ewell's Draft Local Plan's progress awaits a new timetable we take a look at what's happening in neighbouring Mole Valley. Chris Caulfield reports.

The decision on where, and how many, houses will be built in Mole Valley has been paused, again. It means the council's local plan will almost certainly be delayed, the planning inspector said.

Mole Valley District Council was originally given permission to delay the publication of its local plan until after the May 2023 elections and to give it time to understand any Government revisions to the **National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** which had been due for publication in the spring.

The deadline passed and the elections are over however the Government has still to finalise and publish the NPPF.

Writing to Mole Valley District Council, the Planning Inspectorate said that "Given the council's position", that changes to the NPPF "may have implications for its plan, and that the final NPPF changes are yet unknown, it seems reasonable to agree to the council's request (to pause the local plan). The extended pause will enable the council to fully consider the implications of any revised national policy."

Councils waiting for the NPPF update have been told they will not be treated as having out-of-date local plans.

The inspectorate's decision was welcomed by the council's cabinet member for planning, Councillor **Margaret Cooksay**. She said "The Inspector has again recognised that delays in the Government adopting a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - which may include important changes for Mole Valley's draft Local Plan - has created ongoing uncertainty for us as the local planning authority.

"In her most recent response to us, she emphasised that she does not want the examination of our draft Local Plan to become 'unduly protracted'. We could not agree more, and we urge the decision-makers in government to publish the new NPPF quickly so that clarity concerning the impact potential changes could have on our Plan is achieved as soon as possible.

"Whilst we would of course rather not delay further, we know that this is the right thing to do to get the right plan. We will bring you any future updates concerning the Plan via our normal publicity channels as soon as they are made known to us."

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