

MP's housing solution for Epsom and Ewell

30 November 2022



Epsom and Ewell and indeed the whole country has a real shortage of homes. We cannot go on with a generation of young people who aspire to home ownership but have little hope of achieving this. And we must have more affordable homes locally.

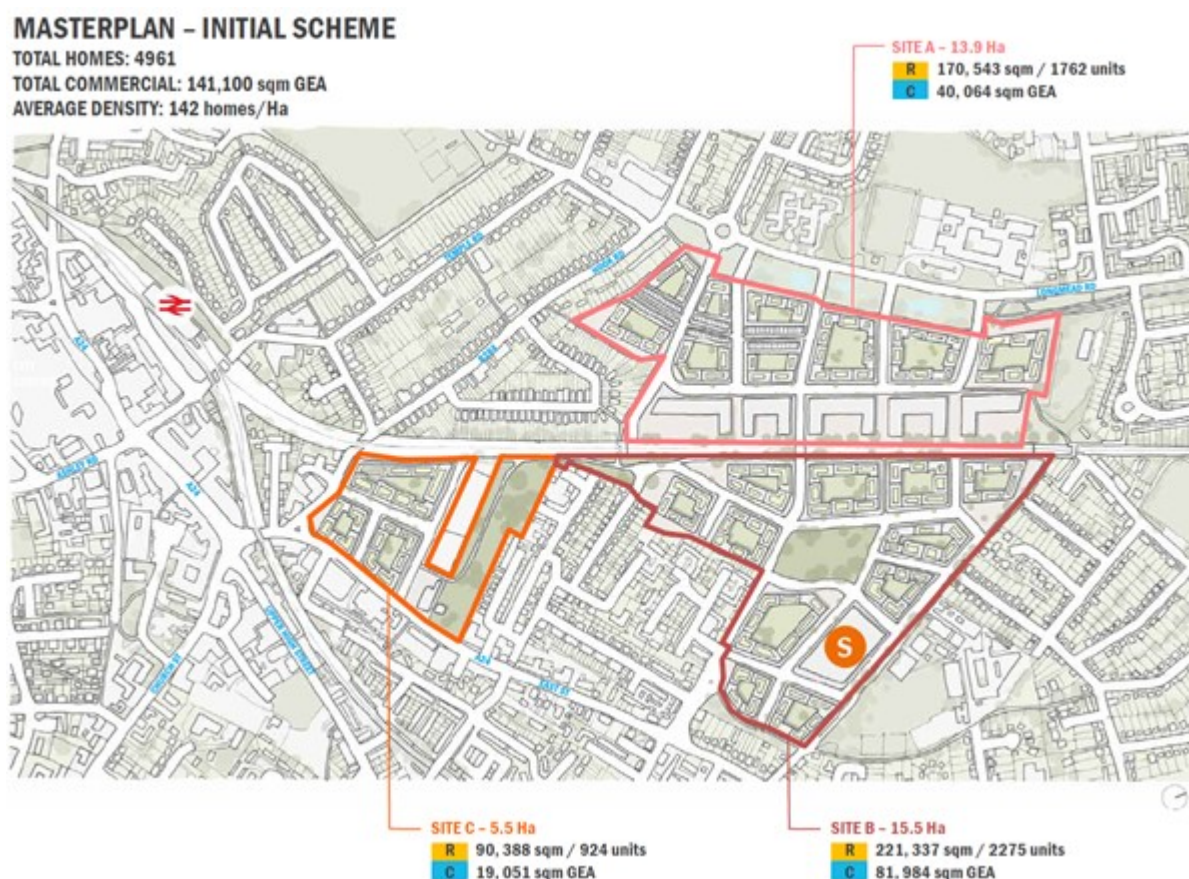
As a country we are already now building more homes than at any time for decades, but there is still more to do. Locally precious little has happened in recent years. Four years ago, just before the local elections, the Borough Council was due to publish its plan for housing and for the area for the future. It was postponed then, and only now is the Council in the process of publishing and developing its local plan for the area for the next 10-15 years.

Every local authority is obliged to do this, and to explain how it will meet housing need, look after its local economy and protect its local environment.

Each council has also prepared an assessment of local housing need, based on national guidance of how to do this. The housing assessment for Epsom and Ewell is though impossibly high - as it is in some other places. It would mean building more than 10,000 homes locally, and inevitably would mean much of our green belt disappearing.

That is why on a national level I have been saying to Ministers that there has to be more flexibility for Councils based on the reality in their areas.

But here we do need to do all we can to meet the housing need and not nearly enough has been done on this locally in recent years. That's why I have proposed a comprehensive redevelopment of the **Kiln Lane** and **Longmead** areas to achieve this without building all over our green belt.



My plan, which has been developed together with a leading firm of architects, involves the construction of a mixed use area of well-designed developments, with businesses on the lower floors and flats above, with some terraced housing on the site as well. This kind of mix is typical of what is being done elsewhere. The buildings would be no higher than those already in and around the town centre.

The scheme provides a similar amount of commercial space to the present plus nearly 5,000 homes. The plan would be to have car showrooms and parking areas built upwards rather than at ground level across large areas of land. But over time I would expect the commercial space to attract more creative businesses, given the presence in Epsom of the **University of the Creative Arts** which is now one of the country's leading institutions of its kind. It would also aim to provide more homes for younger people, meaning more could afford to stay locally and work here, rather than simply building more executive homes for commuters on open land.

And being close to the town centre, I hope it would provide a much needed boost to the businesses there.

I hope that as the local plan develops the Council will adopt this plan. I think it's the best way forward for our area.